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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Job 36.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Job 36.

Topics.

- Truly my words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge is with you.
- God does not keep the wicked alive, but He watches over the righteous.
- The godless die in youth, but God delivers the afflicted by their affliction.
- God would deliver Job, but he has fulfilled the judgment of the wicked.
- God is exalted in power; extol His work, of which men have sung.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: the book of Job is considered both a theological and a literary masterpiece it is an honest discussion of why God allows good people to suffer. The test of Job's faith, allowed by God in response to a challenge from Satan, reveals God's sovereignty and the supremacy of divine wisdom over human wisdom (personified by Job's four friends). Believing that God is good despite the apparent evidence to the contrary, Job rested in faith alone.

In the depths of agony he could still proclaim, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). In the end God silenced all discussion against the truth that He alone is wise (Job chpts. 38–41). Yet he vindicated Job's trust in him (chpt. 42), proving that genuine faith cannot be destroyed. The unknown author was probably an Israelite writing sometime between 2000 and 500 B.C.

Helpful facts: before reading Job it is helpful to understand when Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu are speaking they are not speaking, "thus sayeth the LORD", they are simply giving their opinions on how they personally perceive things to be. Amongst their conversations there is truth and wisdom, but it must be kept in mind not everything they are saying is true or even wise, in fact God rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and tells them they have spoken foolishness, but Job has spoken what is right (Job 42:7-9). The book of Job is not about doctrinal truth, but human suffering and the questions regarding God that arise during a person's calamity and pain.

Elihu speaks

Truly My Words are Not False; One who is Perfect in Knowledge is With You.

Job 36:1-4 ----- ¹And Elihu continued, and said: ²"Bear with me a little, and I will show you (Job), for I have yet something to say on God's behalf. ³I will get my knowledge from afar and ascribe righteousness to my Maker. ⁴For truly my words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge is with you.

The previous chapter ended with Elihu accusing Job of being a prideful man and saying that he opens his mouth in empty talk and multiplies words without knowledge (Job 35:16). Now in these verses Elihu is claiming that he is speaking the truth and his knowledge is perfect. How amazing is this, Elihu in the previous chapter accused Job of being a prideful man and speaking empty words and yet he now claims to be perfect himself in knowledge, how prideful is that? We know that Elihu's claim that Job was speaking empty words was a false accusation, because in the final chapter the LORD said His anger burns against Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar because they have not spoken of Him what is right, as His

servant Job has. Then the LORD told Job to pray for them and He will accept his prayer not to deal with Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar according to their foolishness, for they have not spoken of Him what is right, as His servant Job had and Job prayed and the LORD accepted his prayer. (Job 42:7-9)

God does not keep the Wicked Alive, but He watches Over the Righteous.

Job 36:5-12 ----- 5"Behold, God is mighty, and does not despise any; he is mighty in strength of understanding. 6He does not keep the wicked alive, but gives the afflicted their right. 7He does not withdraw his eyes from the righteous, but with kings on the throne he sets them forever, and they are exalted. 8And if they are bound in chains and caught in the cords of affliction, 9then he declares to them their work and their transgressions, that they are behaving arrogantly. 10He opens their ears to instruction and commands that they return from iniquity. 11If they listen and serve him, they complete their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasantness. 12But if they do not listen, they perish by the sword and die without knowledge.

Elihu's perspective of God: Elihu says, God gives death to the wicked because that is what is due to them, but He establishes the righteous forever. Nevertheless if the righteous are found to be behaving badly then God will reveal it to them and according to Elihu's understanding if they turn from their wrongdoing they will complete their life in prosperity and at ease, but if they don't they will die.

Elihu's theology: is summed up in his words, "God opens the ears of the wicked to instruction and commands that they return from iniquity, if they listen and serve Him, they complete their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasantness, but if they do not listen, they perish by the sword and die without knowledge. (Job 36:10-12).

Elihu's theology is certainly true when held in the light of the LORDS Day of Judgment and the light of eternal death and eternal life, but when applied to mortal human life in this world and especially applied to Job it is flawed, simply because Job was not a wicked man. We know that Job was not a wicked, corrupt or self-righteous man because God Himself said Job was His servant a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil and that there was not a man like him on the earth who holds fast his integrity even though Satan had incited Him against Job to destroy him without reason. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

It should be mentioned here that this is not about inward sin (as many assume), but about outward behaviour. Job didn't trust in his own self-effort or good works to be counted righteous by God and saved to eternal life, but upon his Redeemer. Job in chapter nineteen said: -

- I know that my redeemer lives, 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 (Job 19:25-26).

The only reason anyone trusts in a Redeemer is because they are fully aware that they cannot save themselves or attain to the perfect demands of the law and the pure Holiness of God. These words of Job clearly show that his faith was not set upon his own righteousness, but upon his redeemer and Saviour the Messiah the Christ. Though Job knew he had not committed any outward sin worthy of such harsh suffering he was aware that if God did examine him inwardly he would not be counted as a man that was blameless or righteous. In chapter nine Job said: -

- Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless, God would prove me perverse. (Job 9:20).

These words shine a brilliant spotlight upon the fact that Job was aware that sin dwelt within his fallen corrupt body. Though I am in the right refers to him being right in saying that outwardly and in his behaviour he was not the wicked and corrupt man Eliphaz and Bildad accused him of being, but even though he knew this to be true he was also fully aware (as are all the faithful) that should he stand before the Holiness of God and be judged he would not be able to justify himself.

If Job (or any of us) could attain to the glorious state of living a sin free life Christ died for no reason. When God referred to Job as being blameless He was not saying he was without sin, but that he was a decent man of integrity who did no harm to others and who helped the poor and did what was right before God. There has only ever been one man who walked on earth without sin before God and his name was not Job, but the Lord Jesus Christ. There would have been no need for God to sacrifice His only Son so that whoever believes in him would not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16) if we could attain to a sin free life by our own efforts and good works. Christ did not die so that we could attain to the perfect standard of the law and the perfection of God's Holiness, but because it is impossible for us to do so. Elihu wrongly assumed Job was a wicked man and therefore wrongly reasoned that God by using calamity and suffering is trying to reveal to Job his wickedness.

NOTE: Elihu and Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar did not know that Job was blameless, upright, feared God, turned away from evil and even after Job had tested him greatly he still continued to hold fast his integrity and his righteousness (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3) we only know this because the writer of the book has told us in the very first chapter of the book.

The Godless Die in Youth, but God Delivers the Afflicted by their Affliction.

Job 36:13-15 ----- ¹³"The godless in heart cherish anger; they do not cry for help when he binds them. ¹⁴They die in youth, and their life ends among the cult prostitutes. ¹⁵He delivers the afflicted by their affliction and opens their ear by adversity.

Elihu says God uses affliction to show the righteous their transgressions, but He takes the life of the godless and the wicked in their youth. Anyone who takes an honest look at the human population and reads what many of the writers of Psalms say will realise that this is not a correct statement. There are people who have lived to a ripe old age and yet never given God a thought and there have been, and still are godly people who have been taken in their youth. I personally have known very faithful men and women who have died of cancer and such like illness's long before reaching old age.

God would Deliver Job, but He has fulfilled the Judgment of the Wicked.

Job 36:16-21 ----- ¹⁶He would have removed you (Job) out of distress into a broad place where there was no cramping (anguish), and that which would be set on your table should be full of fatness. ¹⁷"But you have fulfilled the judgment of the wicked; judgment and justice seize you. ¹⁸Because there is wrath beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: ¹⁹Will your cry for help avail to keep you from distress, or all the force of your strength? ²⁰Do not long for the night, when peoples vanish in their place. ²¹Take care; do not turn to iniquity, for this you have chosen rather than affliction.

The word cramping (straightness in KJV) comes from the Hebrew word (*muwtsaq*) it literally means narrowness; figuratively it carries the idea of distress and anguish. Elihu warns Job to be careful that God's wrath does not take his life. He is saying in these verses that God would have delivered Job out of his afflictions, distress and sickness and set him at ease, but He hasn't, because Job has followed the way of the wicked and because of his corrupt way he is now suffering God's justice that is normally only accorded to the godless. Elihu sees Job's suffering as the beginning of God's wrath upon Job and warns Job to be very careful that God's wrath does not reach its full climax and take his life.

Elihu's wrongful accusations against Job are stunning since he started his speech in (Job 33:7) by telling Job there is no need to fear him because he is on his side and will not terrify him as Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar did or pressure him with a heavy burden, yet here he is telling Job that He is suffering God's wrath because he has followed the ways of the wicked. Who would want these men for friends and counsellors especially during times of suffering and grief? We know Elihu's assumptions and reasoning concerning Job is wrong because we are told Job was a righteous man and God Himself considered Job blameless. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3). Added to this Job helped the poor and needy we know this because in the following verse Job said: -

- I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to help him
¹³The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. (Job 29:12-13).
- I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. ¹⁶I was a father to the needy, and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know. (Job 29:15-16).
- Did not I weep for him whose day was hard? Was not my soul grieved for the needy? (Job 30:25).
- If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, ¹⁷or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it ¹⁸(for from my youth the fatherless grew up with me as with a father, and from my mother's womb I guided the widow), ¹⁹if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or the needy without covering, ²⁰if his body has not blessed me, and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep, ²¹if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate, ²²then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket. (Job 31:22).

It is amazing the length Elihu will stoop too, to demean and degrade Job and inflict upon him even greater misery than he is already suffering. For some reason he appears to have a hostile spirit against Job very much like the religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) had against Jesus.

God is Exalted in Power; Extol His Work, of which Men have Sung.

Job 36:22-33 ----- ²²Behold, God is exalted in his power; who is a teacher like him? ²³Who has prescribed for him his way, or who can say, 'You (God) have done wrong'? ²⁴"Remember to extol his work, of which men have sung. ²⁵All mankind has looked on it; man beholds it from afar. ²⁶Behold, God is great, and we know him not; the number of his years is unsearchable. ²⁷For he draws up the drops of water; they distill his mist in rain, ²⁸which the skies pour down and drop on mankind abundantly. ²⁹Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thunderings of his pavilion? ³⁰Behold, he scatters his lightning about him and covers the roots of the sea. ³¹For by these he judges peoples; he gives food in abundance. ³²He covers his hands with the lightning and commands it to strike the mark. ³³Its crashing declares his presence; the cattle also declare that he rises.

Elihu in these verses is basically telling Job he should stop complaining against God and instead look up, appreciate creation and exalt God. Once again we see the total lack of empathy and compassion in Elihu, he could be likened to a legalistic teacher who has no insight into the spirit of person or their needs, and because of this lack of perception and compassion use the word of God as a legal document devoid of grace and mercy and instead of bringing life to those they minister to simply add to the suffering and hurt they are already experiencing.

Job in all his conversations is not complaining against God, he is simply expressing his honest heart felt feeling before Him. He is in confusion and bewilderment since he knows he is not a wicked and evil man and therefore cannot understand why an innocent man should be suffering in such an extreme manner. He wants to stand before God as one would stand before a judge in a courtroom and plead his case, not to condemn God, but to try to get some understanding. We know that even though Job is greatly confused and does not understand why he is suffering as he is that his love and faith in God is not dented or shattered because he states: -

- God has granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit.
¹³Yet these things you hid in your heart. (Job 10:12-13).

These words of Job give us a beautiful insight into his great faith, even in all his suffering he is able to say God has preserved his spirit and given him steadfast love, yet He has kept His steadfast love hidden from him. This is a fascinating insight into Job's faith, he credits God for all his loss, agonising suffering, and his

despair and does not feel God's love in his inner most being, but despite this he knows God loves him and is keeping his spirit (meaning keeping him alive). This shines a brilliant spotlight upon Job's great faith and that it soars far beyond his emotions and troubling circumstances.

Even though Job suffered great affliction his attitude was: -

- Though he slays me, yet will I trust in him (Job 13:15).
- I know that my redeemer lives, 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 (Job 19:25-26).

The following words of Job give an interesting insight into Job's faith: -

- Men have gaped at me with their mouth; they have struck me insolently on the cheek; they mass themselves together against me. ¹¹God gives me up to the ungodly and casts me into the hands of the wicked. (Job 16:10-11).

As Christians we often feel we can only acknowledge good events in our lives as being from the hand of God, but Job's faith was not like this. He saw every event that came to him as being from the hand of God. He even says it was from God's hand that the wicked strike him and speak evil of him. To Job there was not a moment or event in his life that God was not in control of. Job lived in God, he had this enormous faith that whether a situation was good or bad God was implementing it and in control of it, which means for him there was never a moment in his life that he was without God.

This type of faith is not unique to Job, but common to the faithful of the Old Testament they saw God as the Saviour and King of their life and every circumstance, good or bad as being in the hand of God. Habakkuk a faithful prophet when praying began his prayer by saying, "Even though his body trembles at the power of the LORD and he feels weak and feeble because of the enemies who are coming to invade his land, he will quietly wait for the day of trouble." He then ends his prayer with the following great words of faith.

- Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, ¹⁸yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. (Hab. 3:17-19).

Habakkuk as did Job and all the faithful of the Old Testament made the LORD their fortress and refuge by making him their greatest love, their best thought and the passion of their heart and mind and rested in the knowledge that if everything fails in this life they would be raised to be with the Lord in eternal glory where happiness everlasting dwells and while living in this life rested in the confidence and faith that the Lord was with them by his Spirit, his love and his grace.

A personal note: I have seen a man born with no legs and no arms (Nick Vujicic) who to the natural mind would appear a mistake made by God, but this man lived his life before God worshipped him and kept a right attitude as did David, Job Habakkuk and all the faithful of old. Nick is an amazing testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and went on to become one of the world's greatest motivational speakers. He is an encouragement to hundreds of thousands of people who are suffering their own difficult circumstances.

I have heard testimonies of teenage girls who have suffered absolute horror, terror and abuse find the love of God and go on to become the source of comfort to many hurting girls in similar circumstances and help them live a life of mental and emotional freedom and joy. We may not all reach hundreds of people, but if we take the right attitude to difficult circumstance we can all be an amazing testimony to God and to those who know us. While on this side of eternity no-one is exempt from trouble and difficulty, it is the attitude and who we go through it with that makes the difference. God does not promise freedom from trouble but He does promise comfort, love and strength to cope and grow from it.

Sadly some today do not perceive the love of God and because of this lack of perception of God's love and grace tend to determine whether God loves them by their good or bad circumstances. They feel if life is charmed and blessed God loves them, but if it suddenly takes a turn for the worse and trouble comes they feel God has withdrawn his love, but this is superstition and judging God according to the fickle circumstances of this world.

When anyone today who believes in Christ doubts God's love all we have to do is look back to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and see what it cost the heart of the Father to save us and how much his Son suffered to redeem us and spiritually crown and cloth us with his royal and majestic robe of righteous so that we could be justified and granted eternal life in everlasting glory apart from self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions.

FOOTNOTE: always keep in mind that Elihu is not speaking, "Thus saith the LORD," but giving his own personal opinion concerning Job and his suffering and because it is his own viewpoint it should be remembered that even though some of what he says maybe true it does not mean that his reasoning and suppositions are according to the word of the LORD or right for Job's particular situation. (Job 32:6) (Job 32:10) (Job 32:17).

It seems Job's three friends based there theology on the following verse: -

- The LORD'S curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous. (Proverbs 3:33).

This proverb is true in the sense that those who do good and do what is right will certainly live a far more peaceful and trouble free life than those who live a life of wrong-doing and crime, but it cannot be used as a dogmatic statement to say that the righteous and the innocent will never suffer affliction or sorrow. Many things are spoken as the general rule of the whole matter, but in this fallen and corrupted world there are always exceptions to the general rule of everything.

Two different levels of focus: it is almost as though Elihu, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar are speaking on one spiritual level and Job is speaking on another. This is because almost everything Elihu, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar say concerning Scripture is true if applied to the Day of Judgment and eternal life, but the principles though basically true in a general sense cannot be applied to life in this mortal, corrupt and fallen world as an absolute truth to every individual man and woman dwelling on earth. In contrast to this almost everything Job says is true when applied to mortal human life on earth and though some of what he says maybe true when applied to the Day of Judgment and eternal life most of what he says only applies to life in this fallen corrupted world.

For further information concerning the Day of Judgment, see the title: -

- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.
- In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

End.