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

Job 4.

(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 4.

Topics.

- Job has instructed and strengthened many and made firm the feeble knees.
- The innocent never perish, but the wicked perish by the breath of god.
- Eliphaz has a vision in the night and a spirit glided past his face.
- Eliphaz has a vision in the night and a spirit glided past his face.

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.

Eliphaz speaks

Job has instructed and Strengthened many and Made Firm the Feeble Knees.

Job 4:1-6 ----- ¹Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: ²"If one ventures a word with you (Job), will you be impatient? Yet who can keep from speaking? ³Behold, you have instructed many, and you have strengthened the weak hands. ⁴Your words have upheld him who was stumbling, and you have made firm the feeble knees. ⁵But now it has come to you and you are impatient; it touches you, and you are dismayed. ⁶Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope?

After listening to Job complaining and wishing he had never been born or had died in his mothers womb in the previous chapter Eliphaz cannot remain quiet any longer, he firstly speaks by complimenting Job saying he had instructed many comforted the weak and helped the less fortunate and by his words he had saved many from going the wrong way. This is what is meant by the words Job was a righteous and blameless man, we don't use the word blameless and righteous when referring to men and women, today we would say Job was a kind and generous man who did good to others and treated people with decency and respect.

Eliphaz then goes on to tell Job that the hardships that had come upon all the people he had helped has now come upon Job, he is the one in trouble, weak and sick, bewildered and impatient. He then goes on to tell Job that instead of wishing he had never been born or struck dead (see previous chapter) he should from the integrity of his heart and his fear of God set his hope upon God and the glory and promise of eternal life and everlasting happiness.

The innocent never Perish, But the wicked Perish by the Breath of God.

Job 4:7-11 ----- ⁷"Remember: who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? ⁸As I (Eliphaz) have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same. ⁹By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of his anger they are consumed. ¹⁰The roar of the lion, the voice of the fierce lion, the teeth of the young lions are broken. ¹¹The strong lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

- The roar of the lion and the voice of the fierce lion refer to cruel and powerful kings.
- The teeth of the young lions are broken refers to those in the kings family who are next in line for the throne and the power and authority of the king.
- The strong lion perishes for lack of prey means that even the strongest king eventually decays, withers and dies.
- The cubs of the lioness are scattered, carries the idea that the kings family and all who rule his Kingdom alongside him in counsel eventually come to ruin.

Some feel Eliphaz statement, "what innocent and upright person has ever perished or been cut off refers to this mortal world in that those who do what is right and good will never reap sorrow and suffering, because only those who sow iniquity reap trouble. This of course is not a true statement since one only has to read the Bible and see that even the most faithful (David, Job, Jeremiah) suffered and many of the Psalmists ask God, "Why do the righteous and innocent suffer while those who do not even acknowledge God prosper." The following verses speak of the wicked prospering and the righteous suffering: -

- I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. (Psalm 73:3).
- The wicked are always at ease, they increase in riches. (Psalm 73:12).
- Why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power? (Job 21:7).
- Jeremiah asked the LORD: why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who are treacherous thrive? (Jer. 12:1).

The righteous and innocent suffering: -

In Psalm forty-two one of the faithful sons of Korah wrote: -

- As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? ³My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me continually, "Where is your God?" (Psalm 42:1-3).

Now go to verse five: -

- Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation ⁶and my God. (Psalm 42:5-6).

Now go to verse nine: -

- I say to God, my rock: "Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" (Psalm 42:9).

In Psalm forty-three a faithful Psalmist wrote: -

- You are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? (Psalm 43:2).

In Psalm eighty-eight one of the faithful sons of Korah's ns wrote: -

- LORD, God of my salvation; I cry out day and night before you. ²Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry! ³For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. (Psalm 88:1-3).

Now go to verse thirteen: -

- I, O LORD, cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you. ¹⁴O LORD, why do you cast my soul away? Why do you hide your face from me? ¹⁵Afflicted and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am helpless. ¹⁶Your wrath has swept over me; your dreadful assaults destroy me. (Psalm 88:13-16).

Habakkuk wrote: -

- The law is paralysed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted. ? (Hab. 1:4).
- You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and are silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he? (Hab. 1:13).

The faithful of the Old Testament saw God as the King of their life and every circumstance, good or bad as being in the hand of God, Job, David and Habakkuk (as did all the faithful of the Old Testament) had this same great faith. Even though Job suffered great affliction his attitude was: -

- Though he slays me, yet will I trust in him (Job 13:15).

Habakkuk begins his prayer 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).

David, Job and Habakkuk 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 and Habakkuk. He is an amazing testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and went on to become one of the world's greatest Christian 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.

It is in the context of eternity, in that that the righteous and the innocent will never be eternally cut off from God whereas in contrast to the faithful those who sow iniquity and trouble will be cast away from God forever, regardless of whether they are powerful kings like the lion or feeble and needy like the lion's cubs.

Eliphaz has a Vision in the Night and a Spirit Glided Past His Face.

Job 4:12-21 ----- 12"Now a word was brought to me (Eliphaz) stealthily; my ear received the whisper of it. 13Amid thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, 14dread came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake. 15A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh stood up. 16It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, then I (Eliphaz) heard a voice: 17'Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? 18Even in his servants he puts no trust, and his angels he charges with error; 19how much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed like the moth. 20Between morning and evening they are beaten to pieces; they perish forever without anyone regarding it. 21Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them, do they not die, and that without wisdom?'

In a deep sleep Eliphaz has a vision in the night that caused him to tremble, a form appeared before his eyes then he heard a voice say, "Can a mortal person be in the right and pure before God their creator?" God does not even put trust in his servants, and even more he charges his angels with error so how much more will He find wrong in those who are made of dust.

Eliphaz in this conversation with Job makes the following astounding statement, "God charges his angels with error," (v18), yet there is nowhere the in the Bible that God actually charges his angels with error so how can Eliphaz statement be harmonized, especially considering the Bible also says that all the angels are ministering spirits sent out from God to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? (Heb. 1:14).

Following are the three most common answers to this question: -

1. Angels in this context means messengers and can refer to supernatural angels or human men who God gives great gifts, power, authority and responsibility, such as Moses, Elijah, the prophets and apostles, John the Baptist and Paul etc. The problem with this idea is that Eliphaz is contrasting humans (being the weaker) against angels (being the superior).
2. In chapter forty-two when the LORD comes to Job God said to Eliphaz: "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." (Job 42:7). It seems not everything Eliphaz said in his conversations with Job was absolutely correct. Remember Eliphaz is simply a friend trying to counsel Job he is not speaking, "Thus saith the LORD," but giving his own opinion.
3. In the first two chapters of Job Satan is an angel that has absolutely no power to do anything unless God allows him which means he is totally under the control of God and is therefore a ministering spirit/angel sent from God to prove to the world that the faithful worship God regardless of whether circumstances are good or bad, whereas Satan was claiming that Job only worshipped God, because he was rich and blessed. God also used this angel named Satan to bring Job into a greater spiritual relationship with God and a greater faith. We know this because after the LORD had finished speaking to Job, Job answered the LORD saying: -

- I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you;
⁶therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:3-5).

Clearly God could charge the angel named Satan with error since Job proved his statement to God that Job only worships Him because he is rich and blessed was totally wrong. How thrilled God must have been as He watched Job's overcoming and enduring faith when tested against such extreme trials.

Their tent-cord is plucked up within them: (v21) refers to that power that gives life everlasting to the human body. This power has been taken out of the human body that is why everyone dies, the life-force in the human body is limited, it has an expiry date, everyone is mortal, fading and dying.

SUMMARY: it is important to keep in mind that we only know Job is blameless before God because the writer of the book tells us, but Eliphaz does not know that God considers Job a righteous man. Eliphaz underlying thinking seems to be that the righteous and those that do good are blessed and the unrighteous and wicked suffer, this will be true at the judgment seat of Christ, but it is certainly not true of the life we live in this corrupted fallen world that we live in today. Based on this line of thinking Eliphaz seems to be implying that Job must have done something wicked or he would not be suffering like he is. (Job 4:7-11).

End.