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

Job 33.

(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 33.

Topics.

- Hear me Job the breath of God gives me life. Answer me, if you can.
- Why do you contend against God, saying, "He will not answer man?"
- God speaks in fearful night visions to turn man from pride and the grave.
- God rebukes with sickness to save the suffering from death.
- I have sinned he has redeemed my life I shall look upon the light.
- O Job, speak to me, for I desire to justify you and teach you wisdom.

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

Hear Me Job the Breath of God gives Me Life. Answer Me, if You Can.

Job 33:1-7 ----- ¹"But now, hear my (Elihu) speech, O Job, and listen to all my words. ²Behold, I open my mouth; the tongue in my mouth speaks. ³My words declare the uprightness of my heart, and what my lips know they speak sincerely. ⁴The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. ⁵Answer me, if you (Job) can; set your words in order before me; take your stand. ⁶Behold, I am toward God as you are; I too was pinched off from a piece of clay. ⁷Behold, no fear of me need terrify you; my pressure will not be heavy upon you.

In the previous chapter Elihu directed his speech toward Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. He told them not to get puffed up in pride believing they had rightly answered all Jobs questions or flatter themselves that their reasoning and

supplications that Job's afflictions and suffering was proof that he must be a hypocrite and a corrupt and wicked man, especially since they had not proven this to be the case or shown that Job was wrong in what he had said.

Now in this chapter: Elihu directs his speech toward Job he tells him that he will speak sincerely and from the honesty of his heart. Elihu begins by identifying himself with Job by saying that he is made from the same clay as Job was made and kept alive by the same breath of God that keeps Job alive. He then tells Job not to fear him because unlike Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar he is not going to lay a heavy burden on him and then challenges Job to listen to him and then prove him wrong in what he is about to say.

Why do You Contend against God, saying, "He will Not Answer Man?"

Job 33:8-13 ----- 8"Surely you (Job) have spoken in my (Elihu) ears, and I have heard the sound of your words. 9You say, 'I am pure, without transgression; I am clean, and there is no iniquity in me. 10Behold, he (the LORD) finds occasions against me, he counts me as his enemy, 11he puts my feet in the stocks and watches all my paths.' 12"Behold, in this you are not right. I will answer you, for God is greater than man. 13Why do you contend against him, saying, 'He will answer none of man's words'?

Elihu summarizes Job's speeches by saying that he had made the following four statements: -

1. He was pure, without transgression and clean and there was no iniquity in him.
2. The LORD finds occasions against him and counts him as his enemy.
3. The LORD puts his feet in stocks and watches all his paths.
4. The LORD will not answer man's words.

We know that Job was not a wicked, corrupt or self-righteous man because at the beginning of the story 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). Then at the end of the story the LORD said to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, "My anger burns against you for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has," and then tells Job to pray for them that the LORD will not deal with them according to their foolishness, because they had not spoken of the LORD what was right as Job did. (Job 42:7-8)

It should be mentioned that in this context blameless does not mean that Job was without sin, it simply means he was a decent man who did no harm to another human and that he helped the poor and did 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, if anyone of us could attain to the glorious state of living a sin-free life Christ died for no reason.

Added to this in chapter nineteen Job 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. We know Job was aware that sin dwelt within his fallen corrupt body because in chapter nine he 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).

Though I am in the right refers to him being right in saying that outwardly and in his behaviour he was not a wicked and corrupt man, but even though Job 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. It should be mentioned that when God referred to Job as being blameless it does not mean that Job was without sin, it simply means he was a decent man who did no harm to another human and that he helped the poor and did 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. 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 is now going to present his own personal opinion (Job 32:6) (Job 32:10) (Job 32:17) concerning Job's four statements, he begins by telling Job that he is wrong in what he says and then in the following verses starts to show why he considers Job to be wrong and that God does answer man, but in the way and manner that most don't recognise

God Speaks in Fearful Night Visions to Turn Man from Pride and the Grave.

Job 33:15-18 ----- ¹⁵For God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it. ¹⁵In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, while they slumber on their beds, ¹⁶then he opens the ears of men and terrifies them with warnings, ¹⁷that he may turn man aside from his deed and conceal pride from a man; ¹⁸he keeps back his soul from the pit, his life from perishing by the sword.

Elihu tells Job he is wrong in saying that God does not answer a person then tells him there are two ways in which God speaks to people (in dreams and in sickness), but they don't perceive that it is God speaking. Job in previous chapters said that he would try to go to sleep to escape his pain, but it was no good because God would terrify him in the night. Elihu relating to this tells Job that God speaks to mankind in their dreams. He is basically saying that fear and terror in dreams carry one of the following three warnings from God for the person having such dreams: -

1. To turn from the evil deed they are contemplating to do.
2. To turn from pride and arrogance (i.e., the haughty spirit in seeing oneself as being superior and looking down upon others as less).
3. To turn to God and save their lives from spending eternity in the darkness of the grave and instead be raised to eternal life.

In the past I have been in churches that used these verses to teach the assembly that God talks to us in our dreams, but it should be kept in mind that this is simply Elihu's opinion it is not "Thus saith the LORD". That is not to say that God will never communicate something to someone in a dream, it may happen, but it is the exception not the rule. It can be a dangerous thing to look to dreams to find God's will. Having said this, it would be safe to suppose that should anyone of us be plotting evil or is thinking of committing adultery or some other offense before God that any fearful dream is not only a warning from God that we are heading for trouble if we follow such a path, but also warning us to turn from our wicked way.

God Rebukes with Sickness to Save the Suffering from from Death.

Job 33:19-26 ----- ¹⁹Man is also rebuked with pain on his bed and with continual strife in his bones, ²⁰so that his life loathes bread, and his appetite the choicest food. ²¹His flesh is so wasted away that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen stick out. ²²His soul draws near the pit,

and his life to those who bring death. ²³If there be for him an angel, a mediator, one of the thousand, to declare to man what is right for him, ²⁴and he is merciful to him, and says, 'Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom; ²⁵let his flesh become fresh with youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor'; ²⁶then man prays to God, and he accepts him; he sees his face with a shout of joy, and he restores to man his righteousness.

In previous chapters Job said that his skin was falling off his body, his bones ached he loathed his life and felt that he was near to death. Elihu relating to these words of Job says that God speaks to a person through pain and continual sickness so that they will seek for God and their life will be delivered from death, but they do not perceive it.

Elihu goes on to say if there is an angel, a mediator, or a counsellor, to show the sick and suffering person what they need to do to be right before God and they do it, then if the angel, the mediator, or the counsellor is merciful and asks God in prayer to deliver the suffering person from death and heal them, then God heals and delivers them from death.

Elihu says, God will use terrors in dreams and suffering in sickness many times to speak to those suffering such things so they will seek after God and they will be delivered from death and saved to eternal life. It is true many people only begin to consider God and life after death when they are actually facing death it is also true that if they do humble themselves, repent and accept God's plan of salvation they will be saved to eternal life.

Based on this theology Elihu seems to be implying that God is speaking to Job in his terrifying dreams and his suffering and sickness that he should confess his secret sin and wickedness, return to God and accept His plan of salvation. This is clearly a false assumption since God is not afflicting Job because he is a wicked and corrupt man, but to prove to Satan (and by extension the world) that Job (and by extension the faithful) do not worship God, because they are blessed as Satan accused Job of doing, but worship and praise God regardless of circumstances.

NOTE: there is something beautiful in the story of Job that is often overlooked. God is not afflicting Job because he is a wicked and corrupt man, but to prove to Satan (and by extension the world) that Job (and by extension all the faithful) do not only worship God, because they are blessed as Satan accused Job of doing (Job 1:8-11) (Job 2:3-5), but worship and praise Him regardless of circumstances.

So what is the beauty that is often overlooked, simply this: God must have had tremendous confidence and faith in Job, if he had turned from his faith (as many do under such circumstances) it would have proved Satan's accusation to be true and God's sovereign plan with Job would have completely failed!

I have Sinned He has Redeemed My Life I shall look upon the Light.

Job 33:27-30 ----- ²⁷He sings before men and says: 'I sinned and perverted what was right, and it was not repaid to me. ²⁸He has redeemed my soul from going down into the pit (gave), and my life shall look upon the light.' ²⁹"Behold, God does all these things, twice, three times, with a man, ³⁰to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be lighted with the light of life.

Elihu reasoning is that when a person realizes that they are going to die and desire eternal life they recognizes that they have sinned and perverted what is right before God, so they pray and God accepts their prayer and they are by faith redeemed from the grave and with this understanding they sing for joy. In regards to redemption and salvation what Elihu is saying is correct, but to say that God was using Job's terrors in the night and his suffering in sickness to bring him to God was not. At no time during Job's lack of understanding and amongst all his confusion, affliction and suffering was Job separated from God. We know this because in chapter ten Job said: -

- 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 Job's 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.

Also in chapter nineteen Job 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).

Job was not a man of weak faith, but of great faith, many would have forsaken their faith and turned from God by now, but Job holds fast his faith and endures to the end knowing that his redeemer lives, and that he will stand at the latter day upon the earth and even after worms have destroyed Job's skin and his body, he knows in his flesh he will see God. (Job 19:25-26).

God does all these things, twice, three times, with a man: (v29) means that God will continue to give fearful dreams and sickness to mankind in the hope it will motivate the person suffering such things to consider life after death and begin to seek after God and His way of salvation.

O Job, Speak to Me, for I Desire to Justify You and Teach You Wisdom.

Job 33:31-33 ----- ³¹Pay attention, O Job, listen to me; be silent, and I will speak. ³²If you have any words, answer me; speak, for I desire to justify you. ³³If not, listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you wisdom."

Elihu says he desires to justify Job and teach him wisdom, but that does not necessarily mean he is actually going to speak wisdom. Remember Elihu began by saying he is going to give his opinion (Job 32:6) (Job 32:10) (Job 32:17). No doubt in his eyes what he speaks is wisdom, but when we are listening to a speaker we must always ask ourselves the following question, is this actually wisdom and truth or simply what the person speaking believes is wisdom and truth?

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 much of what he says maybe true it does not always mean that his reasoning and suppositions are always according to the word of the LORD or right for Job's particular situation. (Job 32:6) (Job 32:10) (Job 32:17).

End.