

A Guide To The Reader

Pastor recommends that to obtain maximum benefit from his comments you read in full from the Bible every reference whenever one appears. Otherwise the reading of the comments is simply a skimming over the surface. They are rather designed to make you stop and meditate and even look up further references as the Holy Spirit guides you. Do pray before you read that the Holy Spirit will be your Tutor and that the time you spend will be time spent with Him.

An overview of Job

The design of the Lord in the book of Job is to reveal the hidden warfare between God the Trinity and the enemy of our souls (Satan), and to show how someone who is privileged to be afflicted in His service because of involvement in this battle will be ultimately rewarded. God trusts Job's reaction implicitly.

From the outset we know what Job and his friends do not know namely that Job stands approved before God and is unwittingly caught up (from his standpoint) in a greater cause. It follows, then, that not all individual suffering is directly due to personal sin; and this commonly held notion is once and for all disproved in this book.

Interwoven with this theme and of direct consequence to it the book of Job also declares the righteousness of Christ which alone saves, in contradistinction to the eclectic mishmash of accumulated religious ideas (some of which in themselves are fine) held by Job's friends.

Firstly, we are introduced to Job. Then we move to a scene in heaven where God initiates a conversation about him with Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" (1.8). He receives two insolent and disparaging answers each of which God sets out to disprove because of their falsehood. The first is that believers like Job (and all believers in Christ) only hold the faith because of personal advantage first and foremost. If their property is damaged or destroyed they will curse God. Still more, if their persons are afflicted they will vehemently curse Him. God denies this to be the case and allows Satan to put it to the test with Job, whom He trusts in this matter.

Satan administers the maximum affliction within his remit in each of these spheres and, despite the provocation of his wife (2.9), Job does not in fact curse God, though he curses the day of his birth (3.1,3,4).

Three friends then come to visit him to comfort him but Job's meditations upon his afflictions do not please them. They are Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and each introduces arguments which they hope will persuade Job of the folly of his reasoning. Each speaks in turn and is answered by Job in turn. This happens three times (except that Zophar is only allowed two opportunities). Another character, Elihu, appears and

proposes a different approach. Finally, God Himself appears to silence them all. At the conclusion the Lord commands that Job should pray for his friends and when he does so he is restored; in health; with a similar number of sons and daughters; and double in respect of his property.

The end clearly shows that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8.28).

Such mentions of Job in Ezekiel 14.14,20 and James 5.11 leave us in no doubt that he was a real person, else the Ezekiel and James references would be meaningless. But who was he?

The nearest we are likely to come is to take note of a comment at the end of the Septuagint translation of the book of Job which, though not part of the text of the book, and therefore not inspired, seems authentic. It reads:-

“This man (Job) is described in the Syriac book as living in the land of Ausis, on the borders of Idumea and Arabia: and his name before was Jobab; and having taken an Arabian wife, he begot a son whose name was Ennon. And he himself was the son of his father Zare, one of the sons of Esau, and of his mother Bosorrha, so that he was the fifth from Abraham. And these were the kings who reigned in Edom, which country he also ruled over: first Balac the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dennaba: but after Balac, Jobab who is called Job: and after him Asom who was governor out of the country of Thaeman: and after him Adad, the son of Barad, who destroyed Madiam in the plain of Moab; and the name of his city was Gethaim. And his friends who came to him were Eliphaz, of the children of Esau, king of the Thaemanites, Baldad sovereign of the Sauchaeans, Sophar king of the Minaeans.” (Sir Lancelot Brenton: translation of the LXX.)

Now compare this with 1 Chronicles 1.43-46 (which is inspired). Count also the generations from Abraham from verse 34 to trace the descent. Abraham. Isaac. Esau. Reuel. Zerah. Jobab (Job). Note also the appearance of other names familiar in the book of Job:- Eliphaz (verse 35), Uz (verse 42) and Temanites (verse 45).

Certain things emerge. That Job is identified as the Jobab of 1 Chronicles 1, making him the fifth from Abraham. That he was a descendant of Esau, and therefore an Edomite. That his home town was Bozrah. That he was one of the dukes of Edom and that two of his friends, Bildad and Zophar, were contemporary but lesser dukes (for Job was the greatest of all the men of the east – Job 1.3). Eliphaz was the senior man, Job’s grandfather’s brother, and therefore speaks first consistently throughout. He lived well before Saul became king over Israel (1 Chronicles 1.43). Similar information may be sourced in Genesis 36.

Job, then, was not of the line of the elect nation Israel, but was personally elect. It is noteworthy that he had retained, or rediscovered under the gracious guiding hand of the Lord, the original faith of Abel and Seth though the descendants of Esau had moved away from the true faith, while still geographically close by.

The book reads as if Job himself wrote it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The speeches (which are stylized) would then be a précis of the arguments; except it is to be thought that when the Lord spoke, His words would not be in any way tampered with.