

Out of the Storm

A Study of Job

Part 3 – “My Only Comfort”

Job 1:13-2:10

The action in this passage comes to us in three acts or “scenes.” The first scene describes the series of terrifying calamities visited upon Job, his family, and servants. The second scene describes another “day” in the heavenly courts where once again the satan challenges the sincerity of Job’s faith. The third scene takes place on earth where the satan is the immediate means of Job’s suffering by inflicting him with “loathsome sores.”

Main Idea: Whether our circumstances are pleasant or painful the proper response is to worship the Lord.

1. Job’s Suffering

- Vv. 1:13-19; 2:7-8

Job’s suffering was comprehensive. His children were killed, his wealth plundered, his health shattered, and his reputation ruined. Also, the causes of these losses were comprehensive as well. Job was the victim of natural disasters, human evil, sickness, and social ostracism.



a) Job suffered due to natural disasters.

b) Job suffered due to human evil.

c) Job suffered due to sickness.

The comprehensive nature of Job’s suffering does not allow him any solace outside the sovereignty of God. What is more, the three-fold sources of natural catastrophe, human evil, and sickness do not allow the reader to escape the conclusion that God is ultimately the sovereign origin behind these events. To deny this would be to relegate God to the role of a mere bystander or absent altogether.

The extremities of Job’s suffering contrasted with his status as the most righteous man on earth become a significant means by which we more fully understand the purpose of his life and loss.

2. Job’s Response

- Vv. 1:20-22

“Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD’” (1:20-21).

Job’s response involved at least three elements:

a) Grief

- “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground...”

Job gives full expression to his grief. The tearing of the outer garment served as an outward expression of the tearing apart of the heart. Shaving the head was another common way for a mourner to express his grief. It may have been a way to illustrate a feeling of total loss. Yet in all of this we are told that “Job did not sin or charge God with wrong” (1:22).

b) Worship

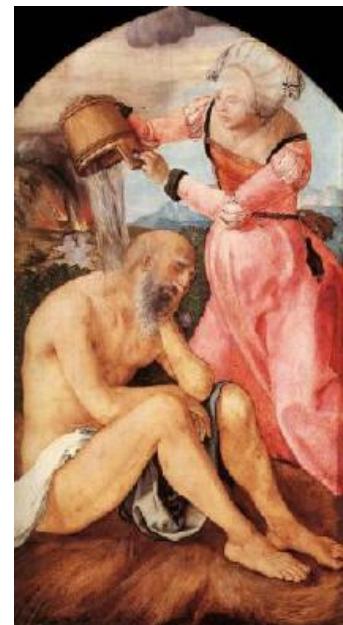
- “Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

There is not a clean separation between Job’s grief and his worship as though his grieving had to cease in order for his worship to be sincere. Rather, Job worships in the midst of his grief. His worship is a grieving worship. His grief is worshipful.

c) Perspective

- ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away...’

Job knows that he was born with nothing and he will leave the world in a similar way. He understands that none of his earthly comforts will accompany him beyond this life. His words also reveal an appreciation for the fact that all his earthly comforts were gifts. In Paul’s words, “What do we have that we did not receive?”



3. Job’s Theology

- Vv. 1:22; 2:9-10
- “But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips” (2:10).

Job’s wife is often cast as a villain of sorts but the text does not make this clear. Most likely her motive is simply for Job’s suffering to come to an end. But her counsel is foolish and ultimately only heightens his sense of abandonment. Job’s response demonstrates the depth of his theology. He knows God to be the Sovereign One. He knows that no plan of the Lord can be thwarted (Job 42:2).

Job’s theology is the key to his worship and perspective. Apart from his confidence that God is sovereign over all things that come to pass, including his calamity, Job would have to conclude that there is a power in the universe equal to or greater than God. Not only would this evacuate any real reason for worshiping the Lord but would also render meaningless his God-honoring perspective of his blessings and loss.

Heidelberg Catechism

1. Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong – body and soul, in life and in death – to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to Him, Christ, by His Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.