

Preparation

Through the upcoming week of Daily in the word, we will close out our walk through the book of Esther and begin looking at the book of Job. Esther has brought a great reminder and incredible lessons concerning the battle between flesh and Spirit. To recap the key players in the book of Esther and what each pictures, take a look at the list below:

- King Ahasuerus = human soul (mind, emotion, will)
- Vashti = human spirit (old nature)
- Mordecai = Holy Spirit
- Esther = human spirit (new nature)
- Haman = human flesh (enemy)

As Paul reminds us in Galatians 5:16-17, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Again, as we’ve already mentioned, we should all be grateful to God for the Book HE has preserved and allowed us to hold, (Romans 15:4)

On Tuesday, we begin our journey through the book of Job (pronounced “Jobe”). Job contains 42 chapters, 1,070 verses, and 18,098 words. It is the oldest book in our Bible being written well before 1700 B.C. Job is a picture perfect example of what the nation of Israel will face in the Great Tribulation, what our Lord and Saviour faced while He was on the cross, and what a lost man will face in Hell. The word “Job” means, “one persecuted”, therefore, giving further insight into the direction this book will take in dealing with great suffering. Job, practically speaking, lost it all. To honestly say that we can relate to what he went through means we have experienced some incredible trials in our life. In the end we find that God had a specific purpose in mind, although probably not what Job was expecting, much less looking for. The lessons that we can learn from these 42 chapters are innumerable. In preparation for this week’s reading, let’s keep in mind the following scripture and pray that God will allow us to have this same mindset as we walk through trials in our own life: “Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” (Job 1:20-22) It is to that point we strive to mature in our lives where we can truly worship in the midst of persecution.

TODAY'S READING: ESTHER 8-10

OVERVIEW:

King Ahasuerus issues another decree allowing the Jews to defend themselves and destroy their enemies; the Jews defeat and destroy their enemies; the feast of Purim is instituted to commemorate this victory; Mordecai's prosperity and promotion.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Once Haman is destroyed, peace reigns in the palace. Mordecai was given the power once held by Haman and now everyone knew that Esther was a Jew. This change of power illustrates for us the Spirit-controlled life once the flesh has been put to death. Peace reigns and joy is unspeakable (8:15- 16)!

One big problem remained, however. The king could not cancel his decree because that was part of the law of the Medes and Persians (8:8). So the king issued another decree allowing the Jews to defend and protect themselves from their enemies on that day. The king did not cancel the old law; he just issued a new one that superseded it! This perfectly pictures for us the law of sin and death (the Old Testament Law) which is now superseded by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2). On a side note, Esther 8:8 is an incredible verse when looked at in light of the eternal security of God's children. It teaches us that whatever the king seals, no man can reverse (not even the king himself in Media and Persia). When you compare that to Ephesians 1:12-14 and 4:30, you can see that our King, Jesus, sealed us with Himself (the Holy Spirit) until the day of redemption the minute we trusted Him alone for our salvation! Ephesians 1:14 even calls this seal the earnest (or guarantee) of our inheritance! Suffice it to say, that if the King of creation seals you with His Holy Spirit, you are most certainly secure for all of eternity (see also Dan. 6:17)!

Esther 8:10-14 is a beautiful illustration of taking the gospel to the entire world. This was a matter of life and death! The scribes hurried to write the messages and the official ambassadors quickly took it to the corners of the entire Kingdom! Many different people were employed in spreading the good news of the king's new commandment, just as God uses many different people today. When the message of the good news was received by the Jews, it brought rejoicing and deliverance.

In Chapter 9, the Jews avenged themselves of their enemies and destroyed them all. Note that they did not take of the spoil of their enemies (9:10), even though King Ahasuerus permitted them to do so (8:11). They obviously didn't want or need the physical riches, for they had God on their side. The feast of Purim was instituted (9:26-32) as a day for remembering how God once again had delivered them from utter destruction. Chapter 10 concludes the book of Esther with a report on the greatness of Mordecai (10:2), the man who believed God's promises and stepped out in faith to save God's people.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through MORDECAI – Esther 10:3. He became "next unto the king" after delivering God's people from sure destruction. Jesus sat down on the right hand of God after delivering us all from sure destruction (Heb. 10:12-14).

TODAY'S READING: JOB 1-6

OVERVIEW:

Job's godly character and wealth; the dialogue between God and Satan; Satan permitted to afflict Job; the negative counsel of Job's wife; Job's three friends come to visit; the first speech of Eliphaz; Job's response.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The chapters in today's reading are familiar to most, and easy to understand for all. A few practical things to glean from these chapters:

Concerning Satan –Satan is extremely powerful, but not all-powerful. Though he *"goes to and fro in the earth... walking up and down in it,"* the Book of Job lets us know he's actually on God's leash! He can only go as far as God permits him. That lets us know that everything that takes place in our lives is either APPOINTED by God, or ALLOWED of God. Take heart!

Concerning Suffering –Suffering is not a matter of misfortune or bad luck, nor is it always chastisement from God for some wrong that we have refused to remove out of our lives. Sometimes we suffer for doing what is right. God's own testimony of Job was that he *"was perfect and upright and one that feared God, and eschewed evil"* (1:1).

Concerning People –As well-meaning as people can sometimes be, they can also be used by Satan as in the case of Job's "friends," to criticize, accuse, and condemn, thinking they have things all figured out, when they don't really know all of the facts, and are functioning off of humanistic reasoning and half-truths.

Some of the things in the Book of Job that are not as easily seen as some of those practical gleanings just listed, have been laid out in one of the most incredible commentaries I have ever read, that happens to have been written by a man I have a great amount of respect for, Jeff Adams. The commentary is entitled: Job: Adventures in the Land of Uz! and can be obtained by visiting www.realityliving.org.

Jeff writes,

In Job, God gives us an incredible illustration of believers in tribulation. If ever anyone qualified for enduring tribulation it was Job! Remember that the next

major event on God's prophetic calendar is a seven-year period we often call the "Tribulation" which will fall upon this earth. Some of the prophecies in the Book of Revelation are incredible and probe the limits of our imagination. To help us understand, God has given us the story of a man named Job. More than a simple story about his trials, Job is a wonderful picture of the coming time of Tribulation, and helps us to better understand the future.

As you approach the Book of Job, consider the picture that is drawn. The parallels between what happened to Job and the prophecies of the coming time of Tribulation are too many to be mere coincidence...

The story of Job takes place in the land of Uz, exactly where the faithful remnant of Jews will be hidden during the Tribulation. Uz always has a connection with Edom in the Bible, and the famous "Petra" (from the Greek word for "rock") is in Edom, the refuge God has prepared for His people...

Job sits in his misery for seven days, while his friends look on speechless. In the coming Tribulation the Jews will suffer at the hands of the Antichrist for a seven-year period. The world will be powerless to help, and most will genuinely believe that they are only getting what they deserve. Don't think that World War II did away with anti-Semitism.

Actually, the "Great Tribulation" is the last half of the seven years, though we often apply the word "Tribulation" to the entire period. The first three and a half years are a time of false peace, when the Antichrist comes into power through a brilliant series of treaties that brings peace to the Middle East, and structures a disarmament. (Daniel 8:11-14, 25, 9:27; Isaiah 28:18)

At midpoint of this seven-year period the Antichrist breaks his treaty with Israel, and in the reconstructed Jewish Temple declares himself to be God. This is the abomination spoken of by Daniel. (Daniel 9:27; 8:13-14; 11:31; Matthew 24:15) These last three and a half years are of world war and great destruction. The Book of Revelation counts it as a period of 42 months. (Revelation 11:2) Chapter divisions in the Bible were not added until several hundred years ago, and most people may not believe that God had anything to do with it. But it is interesting to notice that Job has 42 chapters...

Very few people can boast that the Devil himself has personally persecuted them, but Job could. He was the direct target of Satan. This is also a figure of what will happen to Israel in the time of Tribulation. Israel will be attacked by the very Devil...

At the end of the book of Job, Job's captivity is turned, and he receives double all that he lost. In similar way, the captivity of Israel will be turned around after the purging of the Tribulation, and will be restored to the position of blessing.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In the dialogue between God and Satan – Job 1:6-12 (Through it we can understand the meaning of Christ's statement to Peter, that Satan desired to "sift them as wheat" – Luke 22:31).

TODAY'S READING: JOB 7-11

OVERVIEW:

Job continues his response to Eliphaz: Job reproaches his friends; Bildad's theory about Job's tribulation; Job's response to Bildad; Zophar's accusations against Job.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we saw in yesterday's reading, Eliphaz was the first of Job's friends to offer his "counsel" (job. 3-4).

In chapter 6, Job responds to Eliphaz' speech. As we move into chapter 7 today, Job continues his response. As he opens his soul, he cries out, "If there is a set time for man to be upon the earth, surely my time is about up!" (7:1). Job has been brought to the total depths of despair. He feels there's nothing left to his life but long, empty days, and sleepless nights (7:3-4). On one hand, he's afraid his life is over, and on the other hand, he's afraid that maybe it isn't. In the midst of it all, Job has no idea what is happening to him is actually because of how blessed God was with Job's character and heart. Job simply assumes that everything that has happened to him has happened because God is mad at him. Your heart has to go out to the guy as you read the story. We put ourselves in Job's situation, and there's no problem understanding why he is so distraught. He just wants to die (7:15-16). Paul lets us know in Philippians 1:21, however, this side of the cross, there is a different perspective possible! Paul had that perspective. He said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." As Laodiceans, we typically reverse that. Our perspective says, "For me to live is gain, and to die is Christ."

As Job brings his response to Eliphaz to a conclusion at the end of chapter 7, he readily admits that he is a sinner like everybody else, but holds tenaciously to the fact that his "tribulation" is not because of some secret sin in his life he refuses to confess.

Then in chapter 8, Bildad, the second of Job's friends begins his "counsel." Where Eliphaz at least made an attempt to grace his accusation that Job must be guilty of some secret sin, Bildad goes right for Job's spiritual jugular. In effect, he tells Job that he is sick of listening to his excuses, and that he's full of hot air. If that weren't assaulting enough, he even has the audacity to tell Job that his 10 children had to be guilty of sin, and that they had gotten from God's hand exactly

what they deserved. With friends like Bildad, who needs enemies?! Do be aware that there are “Bildads” in every church. They are typically well-intentioned, but misinformed. The only problem, like Bildad, you would never be able to convince them of that. Bildad basically points the finger at Job and tells him that if he would simply pray and earnestly seek God, all of his “tribulation” would go away. Be very careful that as your wealth of biblical knowledge increases, that you don’t think that you know why every person goes through the things they go through. As Job can tell you, it can be extremely hurtful.

In chapter 9, Job responds to Bildad’s accusations. Though there were many things he could have said to defend himself, much of what he chose to do was admit the truth of Bildad’s words. Do note that most of the things that Job’s friends say to him were true. They all possessed a great deal of information about God and His ways. They were simply off in their timing and their application of that truth.

Note the seven “IFs” in chapter 9.

The first “IF” – (9:16-18)

The second “IF” – (9:19)

The third “IF” – (9:20a)

The fourth “IF” – (9:20b-26)

The fifth “IF” – (9:27-28)

The sixth “IF” – (9:29)

The seventh “IF” – (9:30-35)

As chapter 10 begins, Job sets forth a series of questions for God. Job wants to know how God could understand the sufferings of a man, since He had never been one. Job could say that in his day. But no one has been able to register that complaint against God for over 2000 years, because God has since become a man. We now have a God who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; because He became one of us, and was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Because of that, Paul tells us in Hebrews 4:15-16, that we can *“come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help him in time of need.”*

In chapter 11, Zophar, the third of Job’s friends begins to offer his “loving counsel.” He, too, comes on with both feet (11:23), saying, “I’m not going to let you get by with all of your meaningless talk and lies!” He, like the others, tells Job that it is obvious that what he needs to do is repent, get his heart right with God, and everything would be all right.

Have you ever been an Eliphaz, Bildad, or Zophar in somebody's face, thinking you knew what they needed, when what they really needed was someone to simply be a loving friend to them? Maybe there's someone you need to call today, to seek forgiveness.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through JOB'S SORROWFUL CONDITION – Job 7:1-6 (Christ is called "*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*" – Isa. 53:3; Mark 15:34)

Through the "DAYSMAN" (mediator) Job longed for – Job 9:33 (The Lord Jesus Christ is the only mediator between holy God and sinful men – II Tim. 2:5).

TODAY'S READING: JOB 12-16

OVERVIEW:

Job's affirmation of faith in God's wisdom; Job's defense of his righteous testimony; Eliphaz' intensified accusations and condemnation; Job's complaint of God's dealing with him.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As yesterday's reading came to a close in chapter 11, Zophar had just completed his scathing accusations against Job. As Job's three friends have all taken their turn to pound him, Job has been so overcome with grief, he hasn't actually addressed the attacks they've hurled against him. That changes in chapter 12. He's had just about all of their pious, "godly counsel" that he could stand! Something in our humanness says, "Go, Job!" Job tells his friends, in effect, that their problem is that they have a whole lot of knowledge, they just don't have a whole lot of wisdom and understanding. Nothing could be more descriptive of many (most?) believers in the Laodicean church period (Rev. 3:14-22).

In chapters 13 and 14, Job continues his answer to his critics, who see themselves as his counselors. Job is finally collecting his thoughts and verbalizing them with much greater boldness, as he defends the righteousness of his testimony. In 13:9-12, Job hurls some accusations of his own. He accuses his three friends of mocking God, of secretly accepting persons (being a respecter of persons), of not fearing God, and failing to remember that they are also mortal bodies of clay that will ultimately return to ashes.

By the time we come to verses 20-22 of chapter 13, Job presents God with two conditions: 1) "Knock off the tribulation." 2) "Let's talk! Either you ask me, or allow me to ask You, what in the world is going on!" Recognizing that God hadn't seen fit to take away his trials, Job decides that he'll ask God a series of four questions that he wants Him to answer (13:23-25).

As we move into chapter 14, Job is still addressing God, not his human counselors. In chapter 15, however, Eliphaz throws his hat back into the ring. He begins with a series of questions for Job, along with a few carefully placed and spaced "digs." He tells Job that he has a heart problem, and that it can even be detected in his eyes. He tells Job that his spirit is in rebellion against God, and the proof is in the words that he has spoken.

As we begin chapter 16, Job begins to unload his frustration. Historically, he is simply sharing what he is going through, however, it is an incredible chapter in a prophetic sense. As Jeff Adams points out, chapter 16 is one of six chapters in the Old Testament that show us what was taking place in the heart and mind of the Lord Jesus Christ as He hung on the cross. The other chapters are Psalm 22, Isaiah 50, 52, and 53, and Job 30. In this chapter, Job is a picture of Christ, deserted by the Father, and hanging on the cross in our place.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through the SMITING OF JOB – Job 16:10 (Christ was also struck by His accusers – Matt. 27:29-44; John 18:22-33; Psalm 22:7-8; 109:25; Isa. 53)

Through JOB SUFFERING NOT FOR HIS OWN SIN – Job 16:17 (II Cor. 5:21)

TODAY'S READING: JOB 17-21

OVERVIEW:

The continuation of Job's defense of himself; Bildad's continued accusations; Job's response to Bildad; Zophar's accusation that Job is a wicked man; Job's response to Zophar.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As yesterday's reading came to a close in chapter 16, we saw that Job's expression of what he was going through speaks prophetically of what was taking place in the heart and mind of the Lord Jesus Christ as He hung on the cross. As Job continues his speech in chapter 17, the picture continues. In verse 7, *"Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow"* (17:7), we see a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ consumed with the weight of our sin. *"The innocent"* in verse 8, who *"shall stir up himself against the hypocrite,"* is obviously a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom Job's innocence foreshadows. Christ is the innocent Savior who died for the guilty. This chapter is a great reminder of one of the great paradoxes of life. Many times the godly suffer, while the wicked prosper and assume that they are godly. The fact is, winners don't always win, and losers don't always lose.

In chapter 18, Bildad offers his second attempt to convince Job that there must be some secret sin that has been the cause of his intense persecution and suffering. As only God's supernatural Book has the ability to do, God's record of Bildad's words provide us unbelievable information about the Antichrist and time of Tribulation. The subject of the passage appears for the first time in verse 5 – "the wicked." The reference to "the wicked" in the Book of Job is a prophetic foreshadowing of "that Wicked" (the Antichrist) whom Paul mentions in II Thessalonians 2:8. Verse 21 of this 18th chapter looks to the coming Antichrist, and to his destination in hell: *"Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth that God."*

Chapter 19 opens with Job's response to Bildad's discourse. Job's words are like a triple-exposure picture pointing to Christ's suffering on the cross, the Jew suffering in the Tribulation, and the lost man suffering in hell. The common denominator shared by these three pictures is the fact that they are all the objects of God's wrath (19:11-12). The three-fold imagery is further seen in 19:13-19, as it points to Israel as a proverb and a by-word of reproach; Christ

counted as an enemy by the armies of God as He hung on the cross; and the lost man forever separated from everyone he knows and loves in hell. Verses 25-27 of chapter 19 are the spiritual climax of the Book. Job's words in these verses comprise one of the greatest confessions of faith in the entire Bible. He declares that the Redeemer is alive and well; that He will physically be present on the earth in "the latter day," and that the believer will live in a new physical body.

In chapter 20, it's Zophar's turn to take his shots at Job. Once again, the record of his words give us greater insight into the coming Antichrist, "that wicked."

In chapter 21, Job has been brought to a place of utter frustration with his counselors. His words point to the future judgment and conquest of the Antichrist's false system by the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As "THE INNOCENT" – Job 17:8 (Christ is the innocent Savior who died for the guilty – Matt. 27:4)

Through JOB as the one whom God's WRATH was presumably kindled against – Job 19:11 (II Cor. 5:21)

As the REDEEMER – Job 19:25 (Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:14; Rev. 5:9)

Saturday – June 10, 2017

Reflection

Reflecting on our week of Daily in the word, we began by concluding the book of Esther. Wow. What an incredible book God preserved for us in that small book of ten chapters. To recall, Esther, devotionally speaking, painted a picture of the battle between flesh and Spirit. In understanding the context of each character within the book, we found that the only possible way to win the battle is to:

1. “Mortify the deeds of the body” (Romans 8:13), which was signified through the death of Haman ultimately as a result of his attack against Esther (a picture of our spirit being controlled by the Holy Spirit).
2. Offer yourself as a “living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1), which was pictured through Ahasuerus sacrificing himself (Esther 9:25) for the role he played in the attack on Esther and her people.

Without either one of these actions being played out in our lives on a daily basis, the flesh will, without fail, have the upper hand in this spiritual battle that we face. Therefore, hindering us from following what Paul recorded in Galatians 5:16-17, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

Of course, after the conclusion of Esther, we dove straight into the 42 chapters found in the book of Job. Almost immediately the stage was set for the persecutions Job faces throughout the book, therefore, picturing the Jew in the tribulation, and the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. As we’ve already mentioned, considering the content that is covered through this book, there may not be a more profitable book for the individual Christian to study and glean from. What’s important to note and reiterate is the testimony the Bible provides in regards to Job. Job 1:1 tells us, “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” Job was definitely not a novice in the things of God. In fact, he would have been considered mature in his faith. Despite this very fact, through the chapters we read this week, we find his “friends” accusing him of being the very opposite. Up to chapter 21, Job has remained confident and steadfast in his own justification and relationship with God. Although we haven’t discussed this point, what’s interesting to see is the difference between Job, living well before even the law was provided, and a mature Christian living in this day and age. The Bible tells us in Isaiah 64:6, “But we are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” And then in Romans 3:10 we find that “As it is

written, There is none righteous, no, not one.” The contrast between a believer today and Job can be found in Job 27:6, “My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.” And then in Job 29:14, which reads, “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.” If nothing else, Job’s standard had to be much higher than ours for him to “hold fast” to his righteousness. This is proof to the fact that God doesn’t change, however, the way He deals with man throughout different periods of time does. We should all be thankful that because “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” we do not have to stand before God clothed in our own. But rather, we, as believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:25-16). To that we can say Amen and Amen!

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

Esther 9:25 “But when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.”

Job 1:9-10 “Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.”

Job 11:6 “And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.”

Job 12:9-10 “Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.”

Job 18:21 “Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.”