

“ONE MEDIATOR”

[Read Job 16:1-22]

I. BACKGROUND. The book of Job, itself, is considered by some to be the oldest book written among the Scriptures. I believe that it's possible but not probable. If it was among the first writings, it had to have been written after God revealed Himself to Moses at Midian's burning bush because of the references to the name of God, יהוה, used from the very 1st chap., & the Scripture states that God was known before that time as אֱלֹהֵי שָׂדֵי, “And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I *am* the LORD (אֲנִי יְהוָה): And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty (אֱלֹהֵי שָׂדֵי), but by My name JEHOVAH (שְׁמִי יְהוָה) was I not known to them” (Ex 6:2-3). The book of Job is a poetic writing, included in the Hebrew Scriptures called כתובים (The writings”).

And though it is poetic in nature, it is considered by most Bible scholars as historical, that a man named Job *did* exist in the days prior to the exodus of Israel from Egypt, in the period called the patriarchal times, during the times of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob. The prophet Ezekiel mentions the righteousness of Job side-by-side with 2 other upright men, Noah & Daniel (Ezek 14), suggesting that Job is not some fictitious character.

II. THE STORY. [Job 1] Job was a prosperous man (1:1-3), who was “perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” (1:1); that is, Job desired to do righteously before God, AND because he revered God, Job despised & shunned evil. [v 6] One day (וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם) the angels of God presented themselves before יהוה, and Satan (שָׂטָן) did as well. [v 7] The LORD has a conversation with Satan & asks him: “From where have you come?” Satan: “From going to & fro in the earth, & from walking up & down in it.” [v 8] God: “Hast thou considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?” [vv 9-11] Satan: “Does Job fear God for nothing? Haven't you protected him, his house, & all he has? Haven't you blessed the work of his hands & increased his cattle upon the land? If you smite all that he has, he will curse You to Your face.” [v 12] God: “Okay, all that Job has is in your power; ONLY, upon himself, don't put forth your hand.” It is interesting that in this, we see the sovereignty of God. Satan cannot do anything apart from the permission of God. So, Satan leaves God's presence & in vv 13-

19, Satan destroys Job's crops, destroys his livestock, & kills Job's children. [**vv 20-21**] Certainly, Job mourned but he did not blame God: "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (**1:22**).

A. [**Job 2**] Again, Satan comes before God & God asks the same question [**v 3**]: "Hast thou considered My servant Job?... & although you moved me to destroy him without a cause, he still maintained his integrity!" [**vv 4-5**] **Satan**: "Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life... put forth your hand now, & touch his bone & his flesh, & he will curse You to Your face." [**v 6**] **God**: "Okay, Job is in your hand; but spare his life." [**vv 7-8**] Satan inflicted Job with boils, covering his body from the very top of his head to the very soles of his feet; he was so smitten that he took a piece of broken pottery to scrape the festering pustules from the skin of his body. Job was a painful, oozing, infected mess. Job was in such a miserable condition that his loving wife couldn't bear to see him in that condition. "Curse God & die," she advised him. She figured that cursing God was a sin worthy of death so if he would just do that, at least Job would be put out of his physical misery. I believe that it was sincere & well-intended counsel but it was poor theology, & just plain blasphemy. Any counsel that would suggest to someone to blaspheme God by cursing Him, accusing Him, or thinking of Him apart from what He has revealed about Himself in the Holy Scriptures is a sin that violates the great commandment & the 2nd commandment. [**v 10**] **Job**: "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks..." & in all these things Job did not sin with his lips. He sat in silence for 7 days while three of his friends, who heard of his affliction, sat with him: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, & Zophar the Naamathite.

B. After those 7 days, Job "opened his mouth," and though he didn't curse God, he "cursed his day" and basically said that it would have better had he died at birth. Job was miserable in his condition, sorrowful in his predicament, and mournful in his ignorance. We have the advantage of the heavenly perspective. We read about the sovereign hand of God upon Job's life. We read how God was pleased that Job revered God in holy fear & desired to live upright before God, hating evil. Job didn't know what was spoken during this heavenly scene prior to all of this.

Listen, many folks, who have lost jobs, homes, loved ones, suffered trials & tribulations, have often thought, or even expressed the same things Job has expressed... AND even

Christians, will sometimes vent because of the corruption of the flesh we have inherited from Adam in the fall, forgetting that God is in control; that He is sovereign; that He is King of kings & Lord of Lords no detail in all His creation escapes Him; that His love & care for all that are His are worked together for His good in order to conform us to the image of His beloved Son. Remember, Satan’s temptations are to separate us **from God**; but the testings **of God** are allowed **by God** in order that we might draw nearer **to God**: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (**1 Cor 10:13**).

C. Yet, once Job vents, his friends chime in & offer their opinions. So for the next several chapters, until **Job 32**, there is a conversation between Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, & Zophar— Eliphaz, Bildad & Zophar accusing Job of wickedness, hypocrisy, & so on, while Job alternately defends himself before them. Then, a younger man, Elihu, who was not named as one of Job’s friends speaks up in **Job 32-37**; considered merely an acquaintance because he was so much younger than the elder men. These men offered opinions that, although there may have been some true things spoken, the overall content of what they spoke were accusations against Job—AND blaspheming the character of God, suggesting God was either punishing Job or correcting Job, &etc., tho we know that that was not the case from the Scripture’s narrative in **ch.1-2**.

Once, many years ago, a dear member of a church I pastored was down & depressed because his family had to leave him in Alaska while his wife went to take care of her father when he had taken ill. He gave me a call to express his misery & I told him that it would be presumptuous for me to tell him that I knew what he was going thru. I told him that I loved him & that I would pray for him & he told me that that was the best counsel he had received. My silence concerning his situation touched his heart in his time of sorrow. Job’s accusation against his friends was correct (**16:2**), they were “miserable comforters.”

D. In **Job 38-41**, the LORD God speaks to Job from a whirlwind & asks him question after question: “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?... Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?... &etc.

Job didn't sin after the calamities by foolishly accusing God. He did sin, however, because: (1) he is a sinner; Job is a descendent of Adam, as are we all; **Rom 3:23**, "For all have sinned & come short of the glory of God; AND (2) Job specifically sinned in attempting to vindicate himself, justify himself before his friends. Why is that a sin? The guilt of sin upon fallen, sinful man can never be just in itself. In short, the vindication of man before men is merely vanity & pride, because apart from the righteousness of Jesus Christ, man has no righteousness in himself, no goodness in himself, & nothing redeemable in himself. This is what is known in theology as the Total Depravity of man.

II. During the conversations, there are a couple of truly important truths spoken in this book, but one of the most important truths (if not THE most important) is our Scripture text [**16:21**]. Job seeks someone to plead for him; someone to vindicate him; someone to justify him. He desires a mediator to plead for him before God. He desires an intercessor to pray for him to God on his behalf. He desires an advocate, a defense attorney to stand at the judgment bar before him. He is asking for Jesus Christ, the Holy & Righteous One. This is what the Cross of Jesus Christ is all about!

A. Job is a TYPE OF CHRIST. Those things written about the sufferings of Job reflect & point to the suffering Servant of God, the Christ who was sent to save sinners. When you read **ch.16**, read it with a perspective on the gospel of Jesus Christ & in Christ's death, burial, & resurrection in particular. [**v 2**] as a flower cut down= the crucifixion of the Innocent One. [**v 3**] the question of man's judgment relieved because of the judgment of Christ revealed. [**v 4**] the regeneration that occurs by grace thru faith, the unclean being made clean. [**v 7**] the death of the Righteous Branch which sprouts Eternal Life. [**v 8**] the Eternal existence of Christ. [**vv 8-13**] His burial in a tomb for "a set time" (3 days & 3 nights). [**vv 14-15**] the Resurrection. [**vv 16-19**] the vicarious atonement of Christ as the substitutionary sacrifice: as God hath made Jesus Christ sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (**2 Cor 5:21**).

B. Even Job's pleading for a mediator in our text speaks of Christ as the One: [**16:21**]. In Hebrew, it can be translated, "That a man has justice with God as the Son of Man (בן אדם) for His neighbor!" In the gospels we read that the Lord's most used term

for Himself is “the Son of Man.” He referred to Himself by this title more than any other.

C. Even Job’s name speaks of Christ. In Hebrew, אִיּוֹב (persecuted or suffering). The Scriptures speak of Christ as the Suffering Servant in **Isaiah 53**: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?”

D. Christ’s incarnation, God becoming a man, living a righteous, sinless, perfect life, suffering rejection & hatred from the world, crucified as a criminal though innocent, taking upon Himself the full fury of the holy wrath of His heavenly Father against sin, dying this cruel death, to be buried in a borrowed tomb for 3 days & nights, rising again, glorified & ascended. Sin was nailed upon Calvary’s tree & His work w/regard to the atonement for sin is finished, complete, sufficient, & fulfilled. Yet, His work is not yet finished as He is seated at the right hand of Majesty on high as the only Mediator between God and Man.

“For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (**1 Tim 2:5**). Not Mary. Not the pope. Not Joseph Smith. Not a priest. Not Bro. Jon. JESUS CHRIST & Him alone. *Solus Christus*. Jesus is our “go-between,” our great high priest that stands before God on behalf of fallen men & stands before men as the very God of the universe.

Not only that, but Jesus prays for us continually that we would grow in grace & sanctification. He is our great intercessor because His work upon the Cross was sufficient & powerful enough to save the sinner to the uttermost, Christ also “ever liveth to make intercession” for us (**Heb 7:25**).

Not only that, because He is our mediator & intercessor, & because of His finished work upon the Cross, Jesus Christ is our defense attorney whenever on of His sheep, saved by God’s grace, sins: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (**1 Jn 2:1**).

III. In the end, Job was rebuked by God for trying to justify himself. Job failed to recognize the sovereign & glorious providence of God... & God's in-workings & out-workings of His love for God's only glory. God is so holy that He needs not to be justified before men... Job's friends were rebuked by God directly for their ignorance & blasphemy against the character of God. God commanded Eliphaz, Bildad, & Zophar to have Job interceded in prayer & sacrifice on their behalf because of their misspeaking against the character of God. **Job becomes the mediator between God & his friends**, the very desire he had in **Job 16:21**.

A. In the end, by God's grace, Job had twice as much prosperity restored to him as well as his progeny restored to him, in 7 sons & 3 daughters thru his loving wife.

IV. What does this mean for us?

A. For all of us, whether you are saved by God's grace or not, all humanity is responsible & accountable to God, the Holy Creator, regardless. God has made us. We must all answer to Him. If you are not saved, you must repent & believe. Trust in Christ. & it is only by the supernatural power of God's holy Word that can change us from vile, wretched sinners, unto new creatures in Christ. If God is stirring your heart, don't wait, come & talk w/me after the service. Today is the day of salvation! Who knows what tomorrow may bring?

B. If you are saved, God is conforming you into the image of His beloved Son. The Christian life is not made about suffering or not suffering, but about salvation & sanctification (truth & holiness); it's not about comfort or discomfort, but God conforming us to the image of His beloved Son. When we find ourselves growing by God's grace, we find He is making us mediators, intercessors & advocates on earth for others as Christ is in heaven for us.