

## JOB 1

## A MAN IN THE LAND OF UZ

The Book of Job begins the section of the Old Testament that we call the Poetical Books. The purpose of this Book is to manifest the sovereign grace and love of our faithful God to His tried and afflicted people, notwithstanding all the outward circumstances and sufferings with which they are surrounded. And at the same time, the Book demonstrates – in the conduct of the Lord’s afflicted ones – how His grace can lead them to a great extent of patience, and even joy, in trials. Moreover, in the sufferings of Job himself, and in his patience under them (as far as God’s grace enabled him to be victorious in his sorrows), he makes a beautiful picture of our blessed Redeemer! And after Job’s recovery, when the Lord appointed him to be an advocate for his friends, we behold a sweet resemblance to our Savior’s exaltation before the Father’s throne in heaven, as the glorious Intercessor for His people!

Job lived in the land of Uz, which was situated toward the east of Chaldea. It was probably not the same as Ur of the Chaldees, where Abraham was from; but it could not have been far from there. Job probably lived around 2150 BC – about the time of the birth of Abraham’s father, Terah. This would be roughly two centuries after the global Flood, and approximately 100 years after the Tower of Babel. At this time, the earth was being affected by the Ice Age (caused by the aftermath of the global Flood); and Noah himself was even still alive!

Job was prosperous, and yet he was also pious. Although it is hard and rare, it is not entirely impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Job is described as perfect and upright – which does not mean sinless perfection; but rather, a general sincerity of conduct. The account of Job’s piety and prosperity comes before the history of his great afflictions, showing us that neither will secure us from troubles. But Job was also a man who was concerned that his family members were worshipers of the Lord. He beheld the harmony and comforts of his sons and daughters with satisfaction, but his knowledge of the human heart made him fearful for them. He took care to sanctify them – that is, he reminded them to examine themselves, to confess their sins, and to seek the Lord’s forgiveness. And as a man who hoped for acceptance with God through the promised Savior, he offered a burnt-offering for each of his children. Herein we see his care for his children’s souls, and his entire dependence upon God’s mercy in the way which He had appointed.

Job’s afflictions began from the malice of Satan – but by the Lord’s permission, for wise and holy purposes. The evil spirit – the enemy of all righteous-

**Outline of the chapter:**

- ❖ An account of Job’s piety and prosperity – verses 1-5
- ❖ The Lord gives Satan permission to try Job’s constancy – verses 6-12
- ❖ An account of the grievous troubles that befell Job all at once – verses 13-19
- ❖ Job remains patient and pious, even under these afflictions – verses 20-22



ness – is continually seeking to distress and lead astray those who love God. How far his influence may extend, we cannot say; and so we are exhorted to be sober and watchful (1 Pet. 5:8). But it is a comfort for us to remember that God's people are taken under His special protection, and that He has the devil in a chain (Rev. 20:1). He has no power to lead men to sin, except what they themselves give him; nor does he have any power to afflict men, except what is given to him from the Lord.

As for the trials of Job, they went from smaller to greater, up to a climax of the most distressing circumstances.

First, there was the slaughter of his servants; next, the loss of his cattle; and after that, the death of all his sons and daughters. And to aggravate all, Satan was thereby tempting Job to horrid rebellion against his God. But let us not fail to discover the hand of God upholding His servant under all these trials; for otherwise, it would have been totally impossible for human flesh and blood to have ridden out such a storm. Mark this down as a truth that is perfectly unquestionable: no matter how great and heavy the trial may be – yet if the eternal God is our refuge, with His everlasting arms underneath us; then we are made more than conquerors, through His grace supporting us! (Deut. 33:27)

Job tore his clothes and shaved his head, which were signs that he was humbled under the terrible change of circumstances that had come upon him. And he also bowed down upon the ground, and worshiped God – thereby showing that he recognized the Lord's hand in his affliction. It is only natural to give vent to grief when we are under great afflictions; if Job had not showed his sorrow thus, it would have displayed a hard and insensible heart. Even Jesus Himself grieved at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35). But in Job's heart, while nature wept, grace triumphed! What except God's grace could have induced the sentiments which Job uttered here? Whether the Lord gave him blessings or recalled them after He had given them, His love was still the same!

Let us look within our own hearts. Have our lesser trials had this same blessed effect on us as the afflictions of Job had on him? Do we behold Jesus and cling to Him in all of them? How sweet it is to have the Lord's grace when we are under similar sufferings! When the Providence of God seems to frown upon us, how sweet it is to still rest upon the love that is in the Lord's heart. "Though he slay me," Job later said, "yet will I trust in him!" (chapter 13:15). Discontentment and impatience charge God with folly. But against these, Job carefully guarded himself; and so must we. May the malice and power of Satan render our Savior more precious to our souls – Who came to destroy the works of the devil; and Who, for our salvation, suffered far more from that enemy than Job did!

*Lord, we repent of times when we have complained of affliction; and we pray for Your grace to work in us, so that we may imitate Job's patience under trials! Amen.*