

JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

There was upon a time, a righteous man before God and man, a leader of the community in which he lived, and respected by all. There was a day, however when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan also came among them, who had been gone to and fro on the earth and from walking up and down on it, when the Lord made mention of this man's righteousness to Satan, he answered, Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not put a hedge about him and his house and all that he has on every side? You have conferred prosperity and happiness upon him in the work of his hands and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has, and he will curse You to Your face.... God then put Job to the test. Satan wanted Job destroyed to prove to God that he was righteous because he was blessed with riches. The Bible says that **Satan moved God against Job without cause**. As a result, he lost everything including his health, his children, and his properties. Job was covered with sores in his body. Day and night, he struggled without sleep. Life was now for him a moan and groan, for pain had taken his entire body. In that condition, he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself. Seeing the misery he was in, his wife suggested to him to curse God and die. But Job called her a fool (and said), Shall we accept good at the hand of God and shall we not accept misfortune?... In all this, Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 2). Thinking about Job's experience, it comes to mind the two women Eve and Sarah who changed the world for their idea contrary to God's plan for the world.

Much we learn when we read the book of Job, for its poetic writings and for his knowledge of God in Job 9:4-10: "God is wise in heart and mighty in strength; who has [ever] hardened himself against Him and prospered or even been safe? God, Who removes the mountains, and they know it not when He overturns them in His anger; Who commands the sun and it rises not; Who seals up the stars; Who alone stretches out the heavens and treads upon the waves and high places of the sea; Who made [the constellation] the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades and the [vast starry] spaces of the south; Who does great things past finding out, yes, marvelous things without number." This was the God Job knew and feared and worshipped.

Job had a close relationship with God by the way that he expresses himself. It shows throughout the book. "Oh, that I knew where I might find God, (was his

desire) that I might come even to His seat! I would lay my cause before Him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would learn what He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me... He knows the way that I take. **When He has tried me, I shall come forth as refined gold;** I have not gone back from the commandment of His lips; I have esteemed and treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food; He performs [that which He has] planned for me, and **of many such matters He is mindful**" (Job 23:3-5,10,12-,14). Amidst his sufferings, Job never denied Who God was; he believed in God's sovereignty and also in God's works of sanctification. Knowledgeable of God's creation, he understood his position with God's protection and guidance. His relationship with God showed his spiritual maturity in those days when there was not a Bible to be guided by. He was an amazing man of faith, believing even the resurrection of the righteous in the last days, saying, "For I know that my Redeemer and Vindicator lives and at last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin, even this body, has been destroyed, then from my flesh or without it I shall see God, Whom I, even I, shall see for myself and on my side! And my eyes shall behold Him, and not as a stranger! My heart pines away and is consumed within me" (Job 19:25-28).

The Bible mentions that Job had three close friends. Close enough that when they had heard of all the evil that Job was suffering, they made an appointment together to come to console with him and to comfort him. "And when they looked from afar off and saw Job [disfigured] beyond recognition, they lifted up their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe, and they cast dust over their heads toward the heavens. So they sat down with [Job] on the ground for seven days and seven nights and none spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief and pain were very great" (Job 2: 11-13). We see here a true sense of sorrow for Job from his friends in the situation he was in, just what a true friend would do. However, when Job's situation lingered longer than they expected they turned against him; Job was now at their mercy. No longer they cried with him, but instead set their minds to accuse him as if he was guilty and deserving of God's judgment. Now, Job not only had the physical pains to deal with, but also the mental and emotional, which was just as bad. Job said to them, "To him who is about to faint kindness is due from his friend, lest he forsake the fear of the Almighty" (Job 6:14). We understand how words spoken against someone can pierce the soul with torment. This is the reason why the Lord warns us concerning the tongue. In his physical, mental and emotional weakness, it was hard for Job to deal with the tongue of his friends. At one time he pleaded them for mercy,

saying, Have mercy on me! But God however, had not forsaken Job. In His time, God visited Job and challenged him concerning what he had said in the past of his ordeal. He challenged Job with many questions, question Job could not answer, but be convicted. He could not face the holiness and the power of God without repenting saying, **"I had heard of You [only] by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You. Therefore, I loathe [my words] and abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."** (Job 42:5-6). The prophet Isaiah, when faced with God's holiness, reacted by saying, "Woe is me! For I am undone and ruined, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (Isaiah 6:5). At the end of Job's trials, the Lord turned against Job friends saying, **My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as my servant Job has; now therefore, take seven bullocks and seven rams and go to My servant Job and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering and My servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer that I will deal not with you after your folly...** So, they did as the Lord commanded them and the Lord accepted **Job's prayer.**" The Bible says that the Lord turned the captivity of Job and restored his fortune, **"when he prayed for his friends;** also, the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." (Job 42:8-10). Forgiveness speaks loudly and clearly here. The Word of God teaches us to love, forgive and to pray for our enemies. There will be spiritual, physical, emotional and mental, restoration when we obey. YAHSHUA left us the example of true love and forgiveness for His enemies when He prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" while the Romans were nailing Him to the cross.

Valleys have been set before us many times in our life time. Hard to travel through, we struggle to get out of it without understanding God's work of sanctification and purpose for us, for The Bible says that the steps of a righteous person is directed by God. If yours and my steps are directed by God, then the valleys are part of His plan for us. Job understood in part and was rewarded for it. He said, "Though He slay me, yet Will I wait for and trust Him." (Job13:15). And David said, "Though, I walk through the valley of the shadow of death (dark valley), I will fear no evil, for God is with me; His rod and His staff, they comfort me" (Ps. 23). It is in the valleys that the love of God is made perfect in us. Paul confirms it in Romans 8:35-39: "Who shall ever separate us from Christ 's love? Shall suffering and affliction and tribulation? Or calamity and distress? Or persecution or hunger or destitution or peril or sword? Even as it is written, For

Thy sake we are put to death all the day long; we are regarded and counted as sheep for the slaughter; yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain surpassing victory through Him Who loved us; for I am persuaded beyond doubt that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things impending and threatening nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ YAHSHUA our Lord." So, I say that nothing in the passage of life can separate us from God's love! When Satan comes to God in order to accuse us, YAHSHUA shows him the deed- which is a thing done; a document under seal that states a contract. The deed that sealed our salvation with His own blood. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect... Who shall come forward and accuse or impeach those whom God has chosen? The Bible says that there is now no more condemnation for those who are in Christ YAHSHUA (Rom. 8: 1).

PRAYER

Lord, we thank you for the places of restoration- the valley and the wilderness. Hold our hands tightly, so we do not let go of Yours in fear. We pray Your staff will lead us closer to You and the light of Your countenance will show us the way You have for us. Touch each one of us here present with endurance and the joy that emanates only from You. Amen!

Arise and shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you! (Isaiah 60:1). Arise and shine!