

## OT LESSON 32

# “I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH”

by Ted L. Gibbons

**INTRODUCTION:** In the play and movie *A Man For All Seasons*, Sir Thomas More was confined in prison because he refused to sign an oath with which he did not agree. While he was there, his daughter Margaret was allowed to come and visit him to try and convince him to sign. The following dialog is from their discussion about this matter:

**Margaret:** In any state that was half good, you would be raised up high . . . for what you’ve done already. It’s not your fault the state’s three-quarters bad. Then if you elect to suffer for it, you elect yourself a hero.

**More:** That’s very neat But look now, Meg. If we lived in a state where virtue was profitable, common sense would make us good, and greed would make us saintly. And we’d live like animals or angels in the happy land that needs no heroes. But since in fact we see that avarice, anger, envy, pride, sloth, lust and stupidity commonly profit far beyond humility, chastity, fortitude, justice and thought, and have to choose, to be human at all . . . why then perhaps we must stand fast a little—even at the risk of being heroes (*A Man For All Seasons*, by Robert Bolt, Vintage Books, New York, 1962, p. 81).

This lesson is about a man named Job who chose in spite of danger and disaster to stand fast a little.

### 1. JOB IS SORELY TESTED.

Job’s trials are a warning to us that personal righteousness will not protect us from trials and tribulations. Job was a very good man. A careful reading of his story shows us the following about his excellence.

He was perfect (1:1)

He was upright (1:1)  
He feared God (1:1)  
He avoided evil (1:1)  
He instructed many (4:3)  
He strengthened weak hands (4:3)  
He supported those who were falling (4:4)  
He strengthened the feeble knees (4:4)  
He walked in the Lord's ways (23:10)  
He did not turn away from the commandments (23:11)  
He loved the Lord's words more than food (23:12)  
He delivered the poor (29:12)  
He cared for the orphans (29:12)  
He helped those whom no one else would help (29:12)  
He gave the widow cause to sing with joy (29:13)  
He was eyes to the blind (29:15)  
He was feet to the lame (29:15)  
He was father to the poor (29:16)  
He searched for people in need of his assistance (29:16)  
He never found joy in the suffering of his enemies (31:29)  
He never wished evil on his enemies (31:30)  
He opened his home to strangers (31:32)  
He did not try to hide his sins (31:33)  
He would not follow a multitude to do evil (31:34)  
He refused to be silent because of the disapproval of others (31:34)

What a man! But his undiluted goodness did not protect him from trials. When the Lord used Job's goodness as evidence of the success of the gospel plan, Satan responded with a challenge:

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. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face (Job 1:9-11)

Let me try to paraphrase this observation from Lucifer. *"Of course he loves you and obeys you. You bless him in everything he does. Being good is making him wealthy. But let him suffer a little and he will not keep his*

*covenants nor serve you.”*

How do you feel about your covenants. Would your commitment to them waver if they offered no protection? Are you determined to honor your covenants no matter what happens? Lucifer was sure that Job was not.

And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath [is] in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD (Job 1:12).

Read Job 1:13-19. The visits of the four servants with their announcements of awful calamities cannot have occupied more than five minutes, and yet in those few moments Job received word that he had lost everything he had—his oxen, his asses, his sheep, his camels, most of his servants, and all ten of his children.

Satan was of course wrong about the nature of Job’s reaction to this devastating setback. Job did not curse God nor blame him for this catastrophe. He 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 (Job 1:21).

The Lord pointed out to Satan that Job had remained faithful in spite of Lucifer’s attempts to destroy his faith (see Job 2:2,3). To this observation Satan replied,

Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face (Job 2:4,5).

And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life (Job 2:6)

*“Job has not suffered physically,”* the Adversary pointed out. *“When the pain is personal, he will not keep his covenants.”*

I had an associate in Arizona who got a single boil on the end of his nose. We called him “Rudolph” for the duration of his discomfort. And he had some discomfort. His nose was so sore that he breathed only through his mouth, refusing even to afflict his nasal membranes with the passage of air. Job had “sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown” (Job 2:7) This affliction, which might have been a result of a disease like elephantiasis, caused Job to be severely disfigured. When his three friends came to comfort him in his calamity, they “knew him not” (Job 2:12). He said of his affliction,

My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome (Job 7:5)

And

My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest. By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat . . . My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. (Job 30:17,18,30)

Job was so miserable that he “took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes” (Job 2:8). His wife did the very thing Satan was sure Job would do.

Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die (Job 2:9).

To this challenge, Job gave one of the finest lessons in scripture:

But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? (Job 2:10).

That is, *if we believe that God is smart enough to know when we need a blessing, then we must believe that he is smart enough to know when we*

*need a trial.*

These first three trials—the loss of property and family and health—were tragic. But they were only the beginning of his troubles. The next struggle came when Job tried to sleep. Instead of escaping pain and anguish in restful slumber, Job found his sleep filled with nightmares and discomfort

When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions . . . (Job 7:13,14).

So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day (Job 7:3,4).

The 5<sup>th</sup> trial came in the form of ridicule from those who had respected him. He was humiliated because of his afflictions. There was a time when men listened to Job and respected him greatly (see Job 29:21-25),

But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock . . . They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth. And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face. Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me. Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction. They mar my path, they set forward my calamity . . . (Job 30:1,8-13).

In the midst of this adversity, Job might have found some solace in the solicitations and associations of family and friends. But this did not happen, and its absence is the 6<sup>th</sup> trial:

He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine

house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight. I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I intreated him with my mouth. My breath is strange to my wife, though I intreated for the children's sake of mine own body. Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me. All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me . . . Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. (Job 19:13-19,21).

Job's own expressions show us a man whose pain is multiplied by the fact that the Lord will not answer his prayers and explain to him why he is being punished so severely. This 7th trial must have been particularly distressing.

I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me (Job 10:2).

Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me. How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy? (Job 13:22-24).

Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment (Job 19:7).

Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me. There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge. Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him . . . (Job 23:3-9).

I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not (Job 30:20).

Life for Job finally became a nearly unbearable burden. He wished he had never been born, or that he could die. This is the 8<sup>th</sup> trial.

Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months . . . . Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck? For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest . . . . There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures . . . . (Job 3:3-6, 10-13, 17-21).

Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off! Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One. What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life? (Job 6:8-11).

Finally we come to Job's conversations with his friends. They had come to comfort him,

And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven

nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great (job 2:12,13).

This kind of compassion is promising. Their shared grief seems to say a great deal about their love for him. But this apparent humanity does not last long. Before much time has passed, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar arrive at a mistaken conclusion of the cause of Job's suffering and accuse him of grievous iniquity. Why else would God punish him so thoroughly.

**ELIPHAZ:** Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed (Job 4:7-9).

**BILDAD:** If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous (Job 8:6).

**ZOPHAR:** Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed? thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; 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 11:3-6).

Job was, we have been assured, pure and upright—even perfect----and he knew it. How unfair it was for his friends to assume that his tribulation came because of wickedness.

The final verses of the Sermon on the Mount make it pretty clear that storms blow into the lives of the good and the bad; that is, those whose lives are built on the Rock and those whose lives are built on sand. The story of Job offers compelling evidence of this. In the entire book we do not read any evidence that he was evil in any way. But it is a natural reaction to think that



those who suffer are under some kind of condemnation. Job teaches us that this is an assumption we cannot make.

## 2. JOB WONDERS WHY HE HAS BEEN SUFFERING

Job seems to have some of the same feelings about suffering that are shared by his three accusing friends.

Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps? (Job 31:3,4)

The question he is asking is, "Why is this happening to me? God must know that I have been good." In a compelling series of verses, Job describes his freedom from sin. Perhaps he could understand his afflictions if he had done anything at all to deserve them. The following statements are Job's affirmation of things he has not done.

- (31:5) If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit
- (31:7) If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands
- (31:9) If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door
- (31:13) If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me
- (31:16) If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail
- (31:19) If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering
- (31:24) If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence
- (31:29) If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him
- (31:33) If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom

Finally Job cries out for understanding:

Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me (Job 31:35).

There is a lesson here for us as well. When trials come, and they will, we must not ask the wrong questions.

When you face adversity, you can be led to ask many questions. Some serve a useful purpose; others do not. To ask, Why does this have to happen to me? Why do I have to suffer this, now? What have I done to cause this? will lead you into blind alleys. It really does no good to ask questions that reflect opposition to the will of God. Rather ask, What am I to do? What am I to learn from this experience? What am I to change? Whom am I to help? How can I remember my many blessings in times of trial? Willing sacrifice of deeply held personal desires in favor of the will of God is very hard to do. Yet, when you pray with real conviction, "Please let me know Thy will" and "May Thy will be done," you are in the strongest position to receive the maximum help from your loving Father (Richard G. Scott, "Trust in the Lord," Ensign, Nov. 1995, 17).

### **3. JOB OFFERS US THREE KEYS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING.**

Job kept his covenants in spite of his pain and his lack of understanding, and he tells us how he did it. Three great passages show us how to keep our covenants and God's commandments when our lives are collapsing around us.

#### **1. INTEGRITY**

As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul; All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live (Job 27:2-6).

"I made my covenants with my eyes wide open, and they were not

conditional. I will keep them regardless of the cost.”

## **2. TESTIMONY**

Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another (Job 19:23-27)

“I know that my Redeemer lives and no matter what happens to this body (even if it is eaten by worms), I will see Him, in my flesh, for myself.”

## **3. TRUST**

Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will. Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand? Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him (Job 13:13-15).

“I know God loves me more than I love myself. I trust that whatever he does to me is better than anything I could ever do for myself.”

## **5. AFTER JOB HAS FAITHFULLY ENDURED HIS TRIALS, THE LORD BLESSES HIM.**

God did answer Job (Job 38:1), but it was not the answer he had hoped for. God described himself to Job in most dramatic and unusual terms. The underlying message is that God is so great that no man can question his purposes or his actions. The following questions God asks come from Job 38 and 39. Each of the questions contains an inference of the greatness of God.

(38:4) Where were you when God laid the foundations of the earth?

(38:6) On what were the foundations of the earth fastened?

(38:8) Who shut up the sea behind doors?

(38:12) Have you ever commanded the dawn?

(38:16) Have you walked in the depths of the sea>

- (38:17) Have you seen the gates of death?
- (38:18) Can you comprehend the expanse of the earth?
- (38:22) Have you entered the storehouses of the snow?
- (38:25) Who cuts the channel for the torrents of rain
- (38:29) From whose womb comes the ice?
- (38:31,32) Can you bring forth the constellations?
- (38:35) Can you send the bolts of lightning on their way?
- (38:37) Can you count the clouds?
- (38:37) Who tips over the bottles of rain when the earth needs rain?
- (38:39) Do you hunt prey for the lioness?
- (38:41) Who feeds the ravens?
- (39:5) Who decided the wild donkey should be wild
- (39:9) Will the wild ox consent to serve and help you?
- (39:13) Why are the ostrich and peacock so different?
- (39:19) Did you give the horse his strength?
- (39:19) Did you decide what the horse should look like?
- (39:26) Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom?
- (39:27) Does the eagle soar at your command?

These questions seemed to reach deep into Job's heart and to show him his mistake in questioning God's purposes:

Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further (Job 40:3,4)

God speaks again to Job of his (God's) powers and greatness. Job again responds:

I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes (Job 42:2-6).

The initial conversations between God and Satan disappear in the second

chapter of Job. The book becomes more than a demonstration of the goodness of Job and the power of his plan. Much of the book is a picture of a man who suffers and keeps his covenants anyway, knowing that God is good and also just.

And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters (Job 42:10-13).

## **CONCLUSION:**

Can we return to the play *A Man For All Seasons*? More has one more thing to say about men like Job. The statement he makes about his own commitment to his consciousness of right and wrong is one of the finest quotes I have found in my life.

When a man takes an oath [or makes a covenant], he's holding his own self in his own hands, like water. And if he opens his fingers then—he needn't hope to find himself again. (Robert Bolt: Vintage Books, New York [1962], p. 81).

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