

**July 17<sup>th</sup> 2005: BOOK OF JOB: FULLY UNDERSTANDING GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY**

**How many.....read Job ???** Recently ?????????  
How many can truly say that you enjoyed it ??????

**One of the main reasons.....**is because it is poetic.....presented in cultural style  
I find Shakesphere hard to handle

**So when you come to read....Job.....LET me suggest....**approach it as a Play reading  
Theres no change of scene.....and indeed the main characters remain on stage  
**Job is there.....3 friends + Elihu.....Job's wife plays a bit part**  
And finally the Voice of God speaks out.....

**Like in many plays.....there is a Narrator**  
And he gives the audience/reader.....information that the Actors are unaware of  
Information that sets the scene for all that follows.....and at the end....glimpse of future

**In fact what** the Narrator does in chapter 1 & 2.....SHOWS us....more to this account  
Than is happening on earth alone.....**HE takes us into the throne room of God**

**THAT SHOULDN'T SURPRISE US**  
We may read it and have some questions like.....

**When I say..... Job comes across as a play**  
.....I'm not suggesting....work of fiction  
**Far from it** →Job is mentioned as an historic figure in Ezekiel 14: twice....James 5:11  
Elihu was a descendent of Abraham's brother....Nahor

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Although we are first told about Job.....his goodness and the tragedies that befell him  
In chapter one  
We don't meet him in person till 2:8- where we read in verses 8-10.....

**The place where we find him is the dung hill....amongst the ashes**  
(One writer gives the following description of such a place:-

*The dung.....is carried in baskets in a dry state to that place outside the village, and there generally it is burnt once a month.....If a place has been inhabited for centuries, the dung hill attains a height far greater than that of the place itself. The rains of winter reduce the layers of ashes to a compact mass, and gradually convert the dung hill into a solid hill of earth....There lies the outcast who, smitten by loathsome disease, is no longer admitted to the dwellings of men....There lies the dogs of the village, gnawing perhaps some fallen carcase, such as is often thrown there.)*

**Here we find Job sitting.....** for he is now considered an outcast  
He has been driven from his home....village.....Because he is seen as suffering...  
***the Judgement of.....And others don't want to be caught up in it:::***

**This explains the advice of his wife**  
Like the rest she feels that he is as good as dead already.....He is judged by God  
For him to now curse God....and bring merciful relief in God's blasting death stroke  
couldn't make his relationship with God any worse.

**But of course Its here we see the reality of Job's Faith**  
He can't understand his terrible suffering.....but he will not believe that God has cast  
him out.....

**Then there arrives on the scene.....Job's three friends**  
Men of wealth and position.....they have traveled far to sit with him  
They had heard of his plight.....and had accepted it as just  
**Job had been judged by God**.....From then on he was a Dead Man  
So they came to spend the time of mourning....7....with him on the dung...

### **They came not to talk.....or to listen....but to grieve**

They definitely did not come to argue.....

To convince Job that this judgment must be deserved for it was from God

### **They presumed Job would know that.....And accept it without challenge**

So they expected....to spend those 7 silent days with....Then to walk away.....

And to close the book on Job's life forever

**But on the 8<sup>th</sup>...**before they had chance to leave.....We read in chapter 3

That Job opened his mouth and cursed.....**From there it went downhill**

**He saw himself as a victim.....without blame....unjustly hedged in by God**

**WHEN they heard his words....they were shocked....responded with a defense...**

### **Its useful at this point.....to look at these four men.....Diff ways they approached...**

#### NOTES

	<i>Eliphaz</i>	<i>Bildad</i>	<i>Zophar</i>	<i>Elihu</i>
<b>Characteristic:</b>	Theologian	Historian, legalist	Moralist, dogmatist	Young theologian, intellectual
<b>Relies on:</b>	Observation, Experience	Tradition	Assumption	Education
<b>Personality:</b>	Considerate	Argumentative	Rude, blunt	Perceptive, some conceit
<b>Voice of:</b>	Philosophy	History	Orthodoxy	Logic
<b>Argument:</b>	<i>"If you sin you suffer"</i>	<i>"You must be sinning"</i>	<i>"You are sinning"</i>	<i>"God purifies and teaches"</i>
<b>Advice to Job:</b>	Only the wicked suffer	The wicked always suffer	The wicked are short-lived	Humble yourself and submit to God
<b>Key verse:</b>	4:8; 5:17	8:8	20:5	37:23
<b>Concept of God:</b>	Righteous; punishes wicked, blesses good	Judge; immovable lawgiver	Unbending, merciless	Disciplinarian teacher

So here we have these four characters.....and the basic arguments they bring against Job. And in the end they become quite horrible.....as they seek to convince him....great sinner

**What we need to realize**.....is that there approach to.....understanding of God  
Was entirely different to ours  
**God has revealed Himself to us**....as an approachable God.....a loving heavenly Father  
Our mistake too often.....forget how mighty, holy, just, and mysterious He is.

### **They saw God in terms of black and white**

If a person went thro a time of severe suffering and tragedy.....then only God could be.  
And He would only cause it because the person was a major sinner  
It was Judgment.....end of argument

**The problem for Job**.....consisted in the fact.....that such had been his belief  
Until now.....For all this had happened to him.....**Yet he was not a great sinner**  
**That he didn't deserve.....**

**He even begins to recognize**.....that too often it's the wicked who flourish  
While good people seem to get a raw deal of this life

**Let me read you some of Job words.....23--24.....***From the Message*

**Well after all the discussion is over**.....God speaks in all His power and Majesty  
And the substance of what God says.....is that any man....even Job  
Is so minuscule alongside God.....

**How could we ever think that we could possibly comprehend God's ways**

**Even today....with all our cleverness**.....and how man dapples with things like  
cloning  
We have barely scrapped the surface....in our understanding of the mysteries of creation  
**And yet creation is just the visible tip**....of all that God has done  
It only reveals a little of the majesty of this awesome God

**And yet Job.....dared to question God**  
And his friends.....dared to think that they had God all worked out

**And God was** more pleased with Job's honest questioning....than with his friends daring to make judgments in God's name...  
about things they could not totally understand

**So the main conclusion**.....Is that man cannot always understand the ways of God and God does not always will to reveal them to men.

**There are things I can't**.....Things I find hard to accept  
.....neither will you ::::::: **There will be things** in your life that you will never be able to match....with your view of God

**But the conclusion of the book of Job**....is that God is so big....that Job can trust Him  
Even without that understanding

**That he can live without the answers**....because God has the answers...  
And because God .....out of undeserved mercy.....chose to touch Job's life

**God has touched your life too**.....He has drawn you here.....spoke to your heart  
At times so strongly.....that you have felt emotional deep within

**Yet you may well be holding back**....because of questions...issues....injustice  
He shows you again how great He really is....Great enough to honour your trust

**Then He calls you to commit**.....not on the basis of finding the answer.....  
**But on** the basis that He has touched you with pure love  
And that for now....must be enough

