May 9
Greetings, DGCC Family.

Today we will continue our walk through the books of the Bible in order by taking a look at the book of Job this week.

Job is one of the so-called “wisdom” books in the Old Testament and admittedly can be a difficult book to read. It has lengthy discourses by Job, his friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, another man named Elihu, and finally, God Himself. At first blush, it would seem that God causes Job to be treated terribly unfairly, but in reality, that’s a very incorrect interpretation. As we will see during our study this week, the real lesson from the book of Job is the absolute sovereignty of God.

At the beginning, we are told that Job was “blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil” (1:1). Further, we learn that “He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East” (1:2-3).

With that, we cut to a very curious scene, which is a dialog between God and Satan:

“The Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.’

‘Does Job fear God for nothing?’ Satan replied. ‘Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ‘But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.’

The Lord said to Satan, ‘Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger’” (1:8-12).

Notice here that Satan requires God’s permission to do his evil work. Notice also that while God doesn’t cause the calamities that will soon befall Job (despite what Job and his friends will think), nonetheless, He does allow them to take place.

Soon we learn that through a series of calamities, Job’s sons and daughters will be killed as well as all of his servants and livestock. Nonetheless, we read that “Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing” (1:22).

To round out the prologue, God and Satan have another discussion, and God allows Satan to have another run at Job. This time, Satan afflicts Job with “painful sores
from the soles of his feet to the top of his head” (2:7). In response, Job’s wife says to him: “Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!” (2:9).

But Job replies: “You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble? In all this, Job did not sin in what he said” (2:10).

So, what on earth (and in heaven) is going on here? Are God and Satan conspiring against Job? If so, why? And why not pick some evil so-and-so instead of someone described as “blameless and upright?”

Tomorrow: Job’s three amigos.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
May 10

Grace and peace to you this day.

Our scene for today finds a despondent Job sitting on an ash heap scraping his sores “with a piece of broken pottery” (2: 8). His three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar join him and sit with him for a week and the four engage in an extensive conversation. Job starts their dialog by regretting that he was even born: “May the day of my birth perish, and the night that said, ‘A boy is conceived!’ That day—may it turn to darkness; may God above not care about it; may no light shine on it” (3:3-4).

During the conversation, his friends advise him that his troubles have been caused by his sin, and that if he confesses and repents, his troubles will fade. For example, this is what his friend Eliphaz says to him:

“But you even undermine piety and hinder devotion to God. Your sin prompts your mouth; you adopt the tongue of the crafty. our own mouth condemns you, not mine; your own lips testify against you” (15:4-6).

Nonetheless, Job steadfastly maintains his innocence and now bemoans his unfair treatment by God:

“Yet if I speak, my pain is not relieved; and if I refrain, it does not go away. Surely, God, you have worn me out; you have devastated my entire household. You have shriveled me up—and it has become a witness; my gauntness rises up and testifies against me. God assails me and tears me in his anger and gnashes his teeth at me” (16:6-10).

Later on, Job continues to blame God for his situation and seeks pity from his friends: “Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me” (19:21).

Job has mistakenly blamed God when, in fact, it was Satan who was the source of his troubles.

Soon, a fifth person enters the scene: Elihu. He is a young man who believes he has the answer. He tells the friends that they have it all wrong, and that one cannot understand all that God allows, but that we must still trust in him. That was the best answer so far, but is still incomplete.

Tomorrow: God responds.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
Greetings to you in the name of the Messiah.

After listening to Job and his friends for a week, and after Job repeatedly cries out to God and blames Him for all that has happened to him, God responds. Since the Lord really doesn’t need me to add to what He personally has to say (who knew?), I will simply get out of the way and let the Lord speak for Himself today, just as He did to Job that day. I won’t include it all here, since it is quite lengthy, but here’s the start of it. As you read it, I would encourage you to do so remembering that these are the words of God Himself, from Job chapter 38:

“Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said:

2 “Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge?
3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.

4 “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand.
5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it?
6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—
7 while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

8 “Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb,
9 when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness,
10 when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place,
11 when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt’?

12 “Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place,
13 that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it?
14 The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment.
15 The wicked are denied their light,
and their upraised arm is broken.

16 "Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea
or walked in the recesses of the deep?
17 Have the gates of death been shown to you?
Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness?
18 Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth?
Tell me, if you know all this.

19 "What is the way to the abode of light?
   And where does darkness reside?
20 Can you take them to their places?
   Do you know the paths to their dwellings?
21 Surely you know, for you were already born!
   You have lived so many years!

22 "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow
   or seen the storehouses of the hail,
23 which I reserve for times of trouble,
   for days of war and battle?
24 What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed,
or the place where the east winds are scattered over the earth?
25 Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain,
   and a path for the thunderstorm,
26 to water a land where no one lives,
   an uninhabited desert,
27 to satisfy a desolate wasteland
   and make it sprout with grass?
28 Does the rain have a father?
   Who fathers the drops of dew?
29 From whose womb comes the ice?
   Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens
30 when the waters become hard as stone,
   when the surface of the deep is frozen?

31 "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades?
   Can you loosen Orion’s belt?
32 Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons
   or lead out the Bear with its cubs?
33 Do you know the laws of the heavens?
   Can you set up God’s dominion over the earth?
34 "Can you raise your voice to the clouds
   and cover yourself with a flood of water?
35 Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? 
   Do they report to you, ‘Here we are’?
36 Who gives the ibis wisdom\[f\] 
   or gives the rooster understanding?\[g\]
37 Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? 
   Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens 
38 when the dust becomes hard 
   and the clods of earth stick together?
39 "Do you hunt the prey for the lioness 
   and satisfy the hunger of the lions 
40 when they crouch in their dens 
   or lie in wait in a thicket?
41 Who provides food for the raven 
   when its young cry out to God 
   and wander about for lack of food?

Tomorrow: Tying it all together.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
Greetings to you this day.

Yesterday we read that God asserts His authority and sovereignty in response to Job. One important lesson here is this: God hears and responds. It may not be the response we are looking for, but rest assured, just as with Job, God hears us, and He answers. I would encourage you to read the entirety of God’s answer, which can be found in chapters 38-41 (38 is the chapter we read yesterday.)

At the end of our story, Job acknowledges his error and also acknowledges God’s sovereignty. As a result, “the Lord made him prosperous again, and gave him twice as much as he had before” (42:10).

So, what do we make of all this? Here’s what I think:

The first lesson is this: God is sovereign over all, and nothing happens outside of His authority and sovereignty. To be sure, much of it is also outside of our understanding.

Second, Job seems to think that there is some kind of “law of fairness or justice” that is outside of, and above, God’s sovereignty. His accusations imply that this law is somehow higher and more absolute than God and is even binding upon God. Said another way, Job believes that God must act in response to that law in order to be fair. Job appeals to this law, rather than God.

In reality, God in His holiness and perfection is Himself the standard for fairness and justice. He uses His power in accordance with His own moral perfection, and therefore everything He does is just and fair, even if we don’t understand it. Our proper response is to appeal to God Himself directly.

Lastly, and perhaps this is the hardest lesson of all, if we believe that God is sovereign over all things, then we believe that God is sovereign over, well, all things. The good times and the bad. The health and the sickness. And again, while God is never the author of anything but perfect goodness and holiness, nonetheless, in His sovereignty, He allows fallenness to exist in the world for His ultimate purpose. And so, our best response is trust…and obey.

There you have it. The trials of Job.

Next week: Psalms.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
May 13

Happy Friday the 13th!

As always, here is your musical devotion for the week. Turn up the volume and enjoy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll1QJS6UkSY

IHS,

Pastor Lou