

A Glimmer of Light

(My Single Greatest Lesson
From Job)

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At Paul's conversion God gave him
these instructions.

To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me. (Acts 26:18)

This was the purpose and goal not only of his ministry but also his New Testament letters.

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Introduction

“The Old Testament book about Job is . . . one of the best gifts of God to men.”

F. I. Andersen¹

You never forget the important lessons in life. You always carry them with you and they affect almost every action and situation in your life. They are such a part of you that you cannot separate them from yourself. They helped make you who you are today.

One of God’s lessons from Job is that kind of a lesson for me. It has helped me understand how God can love me so much and I can still be so miserable. How I can feel important but my life looks so unimportant, irrelevant, and small. And, most significantly, how God can promise such great victory and yet I personally feel and am regarded by other people as a failure.

This single lesson from Job was, and still is, so powerful that it fills me with hope when I’m at my worst.

A Simple Overview of the Book of Job

“Job is a battleground between God and Satan, between heaven and hell, between the truth about human nature at its deepest and the lie the devil is telling.”

G. Campbell Morgan²

One person, one test, ultimate suffering, ultimate betrayal, ultimate rejection, no validation, and no earthly reward for victory—this is the story of Job.

The value of Job’s life is only found in his simple and unrewarded obedience by refraining his lips from cursing God. This restraint affected his entire life in

¹F. I. Andersen, “JOB,” *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), p. 15)

²G. Campbell Morgan, “*The Answers of Jesus to Job*,” (Baker Book House, 1973), p. 19

unusual ways. And its ultimate value was not completely revealed for thousands of years, not until the New Testament was completed. And consequently, I can not understand the New Testament without this single lesson from Job.

God's Sovereignty

“There is no greater book in the Bible on the ultimate sovereignty of God than this.” Morgan, G. Campbell,³

How do you like the picture of God that is presented in the book of Job? In the beginning of the book God releases Satan to test Job by bringing massive suffering upon him. At the end of the book rather than giving Job comforting answers to his questions about his trials and suffering, God emphatically asks “Who are you to question me?” (Job 38:1–42:17) While this may not be a comforting question from God it does reveal His position as the supreme owner and ruler of all He has created. God is sovereign (the only one with supreme authority over all creation).

God's Plan

As I began to grasp this lesson it began to change my understanding of God's plan, Christ's earthly ministry, and God's will for my life.

This book is not a technical presentation of the grammatical construction of the book of Job. It is about my personal lesson from Job. This lesson completely changed my daily relationship with my Savior, Jesus Christ.

I will never forget this *single, simple lesson*. It helps me to understand God. It helps me continue building a more knowledgeable, accurate, and intimate relationship with God and I feel more secure in that relationship, even when everything around me is falling apart.

³Morgan, G. Campbell, “*The Answers of Jesus to Job*,” (Baker Book House, 1973), p. 22

This single lesson applies to every situation in my life. *It* determines how I treat every person I come in contact with. *It* clarifies how I understand and treat myself and how I do my work. And during these turbulent, violent, and uncertain worldly times, *it* reminds me how important my daily obedience to my wonderful Lord truly is.

This *single lesson* lays a solid and unchanging foundation that allows me to stand firm and punch through the bad times and continue on.

*I am eternally grateful to Job
who was kept in the dark
so that we might be given this light.*

Chapter 1
Unity
(We Are Not Alone)

I know it sounds like a bad science-fiction movie, but—*we are not alone*.

In the very first paragraph of Job, people, animals, the Lord, the sons of God, and Satan are interacting and affecting one another (vv.1–12). They are not living in detached realms with little or no effect on each other. The Lord God is not aloof and unaware of His creation and what is taking place; He is intimately involved with His entire creation.

Satan is walking around on the earth among the people. Through-out the book it is revealed that Job is living in a relationship with the Lord, his family, workers, friends, and animals. This presents a clear picture that while on this earth I have interactions with many different types of beings.

Therefore no matter where I am, whether I am with another person or not—I am not alone.

The Lord God and Satan are interested in what I am doing. God already knew and pointed out to Satan that Job was a righteous and blameless man. God had not only been watching what Job was doing, He also knew Job's character. Satan's reply indicated that he was also familiar with Job. Satan had been watching Job! Whether Job was aware of it or not, his family, friends, servants, and animals were not the only ones in his life. He was not alone.

But does the New Testament continues to bear out the fact that we are not alone? James 4:7 says to submit to God and resist the devil; Ephesians 6:12 says that I am involved in a struggle that is not against flesh and blood but against evil forces in heavenly places. Ephesians 3:10 also reveals that those same evil heavenly forces, come to a greater understanding of God's wisdom through us.

The New Testament clearly reveals that invisible beings are observing us and involved in our lives.

We are not alone!

Chapter 2

God's Heavenly Glory

“Everyone who is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made.”
(Isaiah 43:7)

But Job was so miserable he wanted to die!

Because of a disagreement between God and Satan, drastic things happened on this earth: Job's enemies captured all his donkeys, all seven thousand of his sheep were killed, all three thousand of his camels were stolen, all ten of Job's children were killed, and all but four of his servants were killed or taken into slavery. (The number of humans killed could easily have been in the hundreds.) After all that, Satan destroyed Job's health and covered Job's entire body, from the

top of his head to the soles of his feet, with boils. All because of a disagreement between God and Satan!

How was God glorified?

Then Job's friends came by! They wrongly accused him of sin for thirty-four chapters and attacked every area of his life. Job was suffering and his friends were of no help; they only made it worse. There was no human who knew and understood what was going on, not even Job!

Since no human understood the attacks on Job and his sufferings so how was God glorified?

Even at the end of the book when God appears on the scene, He does not explain why all this happened. How was God glorified?

God was glorified *in* the heavenly realms among the sons of God (Job 1:6). But *how* was God glorified? He was glorified by proving He was right and Satan was wrong. This means that hundreds of people were killed, many others were taken into slavery, and thousands of animals were killed so that God could be glorified solely in the heavenly realms!

From this observation I realized a few things. The first thing I realized was that revealing God's glory in the heavenly realms is more important than my physical life on this earth. I also realized that obedience to God does not always bring physical, earthly, rewards. Then I realized that my physical life and, my comfort and goals on this earth, are less important than God's glory being revealed and proven in the heavenly realms. But the hardest realization was that I could be completely obedient to the Lord and no human on this earth will praise me or give glory to God because of my obedience.

Woe is me when all I seek for my obedience to the Lord is recognition and validation from humans and earthly blessings from God.

*It is all for God's glory,
wherever He chooses to reveal it!*

Chapter 3

Proof

What would I do if I were God? I occasionally ask myself that question and the answer is always disappointing. But, when I asked myself this question while looking at the book of Job, a new idea sprang to mind.

If I were God and Satan asked me, “Does Job fear God for nothing?” I would not have answered him as God did. I would have answered Satan as God answered Job: “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?” (38:2). And why did God even answer Satan? It would have been simpler to say: “I don’t have to provide any answers to you Satan. Be gone!” Best of all, that would have been the end of the meeting and Job would not have had to go through all that suffering. And my actions toward Satan would have saved a lot of pain for a lot of people and animals!

Why did God prove Satan wrong? Knowing that God is perfect, loving, just, and sovereign I knew He had to have a good reason for proving Satan wrong. Therefore I will trust Him concerning His proof to Satan. Then came the next question. Why did God use humans to prove His point to Satan? There is more going on here! There is a bigger picture.

Then I remembered there is a heavenly court where the angels and Satan are allowed to present their issues, and even arguments, before God. As I thought about it I remembered that this heavenly court continues to be revealed throughout the Bible. God is *always* the judge, Satan is *always* the accuser or protestor, Christ is *always* the defense attorney, and we are *always* either the area of proof or somehow involved in the ensuing legal action.

It appears that the legal battle is never about which humans are chosen to be saved but about how the chosen will act in the face of certain trials or about Satan questioning the righteousness of God’s chosen. God and Satan have many disagreements on these points and when those disagreements need to be put to a

test for validation and proof, *we are the active proof!* A more accurate way to express this is: God's chosen are used as proof by which legal heavenly issues are resolved.

For the first time, all the trials and sufferings in my life that were not a result of my disobedience or ignorance began to look pretty important. I saw the importance of my obedience to Christ in a totally different light. I realized my obedience was of major importance, with or without resulting blessings, or without any understanding by any human – including me.

My obedience to Christ glorifies God by proving Satan wrong and validating God's system of rulership.

*My earthly obedience provides important proof
to spiritual beings in the heavenly realm.*

Chapter 4 Blessings

What do I consider to be blessings?

I thought of a few things and quickly realized that what I considered to be godly blessings was dependent on the value I place on certain material items. For example, some might consider a plate full of liver and onions a blessing while some of us *know* that it's a punishment and even possibly a food curse.

For a big dose of reality, I examined my life. (Remind me not to do that again!) I looked at what I spend my time, money, and energy on because those are the things I like and consider to be blessings. I made a list of what I consider blessings: friends, health, money, good movies, a new phone, a motorcycle, no debt, a house, and, of course, money. (Did I mention money twice? Oh well, one can never have enough money.) Everything else falls into one of two categories,

“necessities” or “icing.” A necessity is something I might not want but I need in order to live. Icing is something really nice but not anything previously desired or necessary to bring me joy. Oh, it might bring me joy for a little while but as for “icing” I can take it or leave it.

Then the *big* question: “What does God consider to be blessings?”

Back to Job to find out how God blessed him. God blessed Job with children and earthly wealth. Oh joy, oh joy! God considers the same things as blessings that I do! But then a surprise came.

I looked at how and when God blessed Job.

I had always considered God’s blessings simply as the results of my doing what was right. It was sort of “don’t lie, don’t steal, be kind to everybody, keep the commandments I agree with, go to church, and always smile.” If I did all that, God would somehow send blessings to me. But that’s not what He did with Job.

Because Job lived a godly life, by God’s standards, God turned him over to Satan to be horribly tested. That’s no blessing!

And then another surprise hit me. God blessed the “work of his hands.” Job’s labor somehow played into his blessings, God did not bless Job because he was simply a good person. And that reminded me of Proverbs 14:23: “In all labor there is profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.”

The greatest surprises came when examining Job’s blessings at the end of the book, after his severe trial. God blessed Job for forgiving his friends: “The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends.” (42:10). God did not bless Job for being faithful during the trial brought on by Satan. Had God blessed Job for being faithful to God in that trial, Satan would have been proven right and glorified. And God would have been proven wrong! Second, I realized that had Job not forgiven his friends, he could have ended up like the poor beggar, Lazarus, in Luke 16.

Like Job, Lazarus was poor and his body was covered with sores. He and Job

were in the same situation but the Lord did not bless Lazarus as He had blessed Job. For his entire life Lazarus had to beg for his food and we are told he was so hungry that he longed simply for *the crumbs* from a rich man's table (Luke 16:20–31). It was only after Lazarus died that he received his reward by going to Abraham's bosom, which could have been how Job ended up had he not forgiven his friends—blessed only after death!

From all this I realized that obedience to God does not necessarily produce earthly blessings but does produce blessings (also called “rewards”) (*cf* Hebrews 11:6). God's definition of a blessing is definitely larger in scope than mine. God may hold back His temporary, earthly blessings and bless me with permanent eternal blessings. I guess that's what James was thinking when he wrote:

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2–4)

Bummer!

I took another look at blessings. It seems that Job and the Bible consider obedience to God its own blessing. I thought about spending the day with my favorite movie star and then being interviewed as to my thoughts about and experiences with that person. I thought in some very small way, in the heavenly realm, that's the blessing of obedience to Christ. What a blessing it would be to have God say:

Have you considered My servant *insert your name*
 ? For there is no one like him/her on the earth, a blameless and upright person fearing God and turning away from evil. (Job 1:8)

Wow! I would love it! Wouldn't you?

*God can bless me
now with temporary earthly blessings
or
later with much greater eternal blessings.*

Chapter 5 Thirty-three Facts and One Lesson

My Connection with the Heavenly Realm

1. God, Satan, and all the angels – rebellious and obedient – are involved in my life (Job 1:1–8).
2. Some of my trials can originate in the heavenly realm, not from any sin in my life (Job 1:8–12).

The Importance of the Heavenly Realm

3. On earth all Job's businesses were destroyed and all his laborers, children, and thousands of animals were killed and later his health was also taken from him. All this happened just to settle a dispute in heaven (Job 1:13–2:10).
4. Revealing God's glory in the heavenly realm is more important than my comfort here in the physical realm (Job 1:1–2:13).

The Importance of This Physical Realm

5. Points of dispute between God and Satan are resolved in the physical realm

among humanity (the book of Job and the rest of the Bible).

6. Godly truths and God's character are being revealed to the rebellious angels in the physical realm among God's saints (Job 2:3; Ephesians 3:10).

My Personal Reality Checks

7. Never curse, blame, or speak poorly of God (Job 1:11; James 1:13).
8. God's glory in the heavenly realm is more important than me being alive and comfortable on this earth (Job 1:1–2:13).
9. All unjust sufferings on this earth pay huge benefits for all eternity. (2 Corinthians 4:16–18; 1 Corinthians 3:8–15).
10. My obedience to God may not always be understood on this earth but will always be understood and bring glory to God in the heavenly realm (Job 1:1–38:1).
11. There is a future state of being that is eternal, but my present physical state of being is only temporary; therefore, my present temporary state is only important because it impacts the eternal (2 Corinthians 4:16–18).
12. Because of the above points, it is important that I handle the undeserved trials in my life in a godly manner. (James 1:2–4)
13. God is still in complete control over both realms and all beings (Job 2:3).
14. Job's trial was brought upon him because he was blameless, upright, feared God and turned away from evil (Job 1:8).
15. At the time of Job's trial, it was not designed to be fully understood by humans in the physical realm (Job 1:6–12).
16. In some trials my friends and other saints will be of no help to me (Job 4–37).
17. I don't always have to explain myself or give a verbal witness to other humans (Job 4–37).
18. Sometimes all I have to do to glorify God is to keep my mouth shut (Job

- 1:11).
19. I will not always know the reasons for the trials in my life. “A test is not a test if you know the answer” (Job 38:1–42:6).
 20. God did not bless Job at the end of the book for the trial he had just come through but because he prayed for his friends. If God had blessed Job for enduring the trial, then Satan would have been proven right and God’s rulership would have been proven unjust and faulty. (Job 42:10)
 21. A righteous life can bring unexpected suffering (Job 1:7).
 22. My greatest trials may not only come from Satan’s camp but also from other Christians (Job chapters 4–37).
 23. God does not have to explain Himself to me (Job 38:1–42:6).

My Comfort Aids

24. It’s okay to be hurt emotionally, physically, and spiritually and ask “why” (Job 4–37).
25. It’s okay to not know why an undeserved trial came upon me (Job).
26. It’s okay to feel bad and want to die during a trial (Job 3:1–26).
27. Even when I’m hurt, questioning why, and wanting to die, it is still possible to be in the center of God’s will (Job 1:21–21; 3:1–26).
28. All undeserved trials can strengthen my faith (Job; James 1:2–4).

My Personal Conclusions

29. I am God’s creation and He has the legal right to do anything to me or allow anything to happen to me (Job 38–42).
30. Trials can come into my life that are for God’s purposes (Job 1:7).
31. I must have a heavenly view of life and eternal goals before my earthly life will make any sense (Job; Colossians 3:1–2).

32. The logic of cause and effect, which only considers the physical realm and physical information, is incomplete and inaccurate because it does not consider the spiritual (heavenly) information (Job 3–37).
33. I am here to serve God and carry out His plan, not to have God serve me and carry out my plans (Job 38; Isaiah 43:7).

My Single Greatest Lesson

My obedience to Jesus Christ affects God’s entire creation. Presently its greatest witness is to the rebellious angels in the heavenly realm. And if God deems it necessary, I will forgo His temporary, earthly blessings and wait for His much greater eternal heavenly blessings.

Chapter 6

The A. O. C.

At one time in his life Job could have applied for membership in an exclusive club, the A. O. C. This club is found in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11 contains a record of the people from the Old Testament who exhibited godly faith. In the first part of the chapter they received miraculous blessings. They conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped death many times, and even though they were weak they were made strong. They became mighty in war and put foreign armies to flight. Many women even received back their dead by resurrection (Hebrews 11:32–35). But half way through verse 35 things change. We are told of others:

and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (*people* of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised (Hebrews 11:35–40).

This group of people I refer to as the AOCs, the “And Others Club.”

The AOCs are not pointed out as having less faith, they actually “gained approval through their faith.” They are mentioned as a group because they did not receive earthly blessings for their faith and yet they held fast to their faith! They held fast to their faith even when it cost them all their daily comforts and eventually their lives.

What made them hold fast to their faith? What made them stand firm when they were out of jobs, hungry, naked, cold, and not receiving any blessing from God? If this sounds like your life at times, then welcome to the AOC.

You have suffered, waited for the Lord’s blessings, and been disappointed—just like Job. Maybe you have been rejected by your religious church while trying to be faithful to Christ—just like Job.

The times are hard and getting harder. This world is tearing itself apart and all the forces of evil are turning on God’s children, His chosen. Let Job and the AOCs be your comfort.

When we strive for the eternal and not the temporal blessings, we will not be disappointed by the hardships and sufferings of our present earthly life (Hebrews 11:16). Nor will we fail to recognize His true blessings of strength, stamina, personal discipline, and a godly love for all humanity.

Where is your Savior? He is still here, in His written Word, the Bible. Learn

it and live it no matter the cost.

I suggest that at this time you go back to chapter 6 and each day reread one of the thirty-three facts. By reading only one fact a day it will increase your understanding of the value of each fact and hopefully clarify your relationship with the Lord.

For a full lectureship series on this topic

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