



1 INTRODUCTION: JOB BECOMES MY GOOD FRIEND

As I mentioned in *Finding a Face*, I was given the gift of a pink journal from a dear friend who came over to hope gun some errands for me.

In July I wrote:

I get tired of looking like a monster but am amazed that people engage me in conversation, hug me, and treat me as human being. I've been blown away by others' love.

Because my face became a physical mess looking crusty and ugly, I felt drawn to study Job's life. He had been afflicted with painful boils from head to toe—his physical disfiguring malady and excruciating pain were beyond understanding. Some of my friends felt that reading the book of Job would not be so uplifting. "It's such a depressing book." But I sensed I would be encouraged to look into Job's life more closely. He suffered severely and yet remained faithful to God. I needed to learn from him.

I began to read with an open heart.

THE REAL DEAL

The book of Job was not a made-up story. Job was a real man. According to biblical authors of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the New Testament, Job was seen as a living, breathing man of God. And admired as so.

The prophet Ezekiel describes Job when he wrote what the LORD himself declared:

"the righteousness of Noah, Daniel, and Job together would not be enough to save the evil of the house of Israel, but their righteousness could only save themselves." *Ezekiel 14:14*.

Notice how he placed Job as a major part of a mighty trio—Noah, Daniel, and Job. According to the prophet, Job was a real man of great righteousness just like Noah and Daniel. If Noah and Daniel were actual, chronicled people of history, so was Job. His extraordinary life and story matters as much as the stories of Noah and Daniel matter.

Additionally, in the New Testament, James (Jesus' brother) deliberately picked out Job as the supreme model of living faith. He wrote,

"As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord . . . You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful." *James 5:10-11*.

James describes Job as a man of suffering, patience, and endurance. He was equally as admired as the brave and faithful prophets. While the prophets of God admonished people to come back to God, many were persecuted and some were killed—by the very people they were trying to save. Job was admired and placed high in honor like the

prophets because of his heroic endurance. He too, would experience the mocking and rejection of people, even while afflicted and grieving.

So, we can see that both parts of the Bible depict Job to be a genuine, “flesh and bones” person. His is highly regarded over hundreds of years. I wanted to know more. The prophet Ezekiel (in 600 BC) admired Job. And James (who died around 62-69 AD), living over 600 years later, also admired Job.

JOB TAKES US ON A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

One of my desires is that Job’s life will explode the small boxes that we all have created about God and how he works—especially in people’s lives when they suffer. God works in ways that are not only confusing and incomprehensible, but he works in ways that we feel are disturbing. We may find ourselves angry with God or feeling distressed. “Why don’t you intervene more?” We may find ourselves feeling disturbed, “I’ve begged you for so long to act, and it seems that the evil is only growing, and the situation is getting worse.”

As we question God and wrestle with him, we are responding similarly to others of faith, even as Job. The book of Job is basically Job-centered and God-focused. God becomes the end the quest to try to understand the whys of how he works, especially in the midst of pain of suffering. In the book of Job we have one miserable man. We have accusing friends, a disloyal family, and an entire community all gong after that one man. We have a God who shows up in the end. He doesn’t try to make sense of all the arguments and assertions. He simply is.

And we will see that God is not pleased at all when we humans make him seem small by our self-assured assumptions. In fact his anger is fired up every time we claim that the God of the Universe, who dwells in inapproachable light, has a set system in which he always works narrowly within according to our perspective.

I became more and more grateful for the story of Job’s life. His walk with God in the midst of indescribable suffering relates to all of us and in no matter what era we live in.

Reading about Job has led me to write this portion of the book—a journey that has been quite challenging and restorative. Job was a remarkable man, yet quite human. I grew to care for this man because he never conveyed a false moment. I hope you will also discover many of the deep and radiant gems that Job’s life, Job’s story can bring.

I eventually called the many insights from my study of Job—“the gems of Job.” This collection of gems became gleaming treasures of light and life during a dark time.



Thought questions—

~How do you think Noah, Daniel, and Job were righteous?

A Quick reminder—

As we think about it, God declared Noah to be righteous, while at the “young age” of 500 years old. There had never been rain let alone a flood when Noah was commissioned to build an ark. Noah worked on the massive project by faith and in obedience to God, while living in an evil and violent world. He most likely endured ridicule throughout the illogical process. He continued to be righteous as he built the massive ark over a number of years in order to save a small remnant of people and God’s living creatures.

Remember the story of Daniel and the lion’s den? This righteous man openly prayed facing Jerusalem as he directly broke the governmental edit in Babylon. Thrown into a lion’s den as punishment, Daniel trusted God. Interestingly, the king, King Darius, also trusted that this servant of the Living God would be protected. Indeed, an angel of God shut the lions’ mouths and Daniel lived on, continuing to be a man devoted to God.

And the man Job, as we shall see, would also remain true to God as he always had, turning away from evil. He carried on with personal integrity in the midst of extreme losses and excruciating pain. As we look at Job’s life, he fought for justice and took care of the poor, the orphans, his workers, the travelers. He treated all with respect and lived a moral life. God was his only source of his life—not his possessions, and what he could see in nature, and not his work. Job is described by God as being the most righteous man on earth. Righteousness was demonstrated in three very different ways, in different places and time—all men were displaying their righteousness in very public ways.

~Who do you personally admire because of their righteousness? How did or do they demonstrate righteousness in different ways?

~Describe a time when you have demonstrated righteousness through your actions. What was your motivation?

Notes:

1. <http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=13&article=521> “Ezekiel spoke of all three of these men as being real, historical people, not legendary characters. If one recognizes Noah and Daniel as being real people of history, then there is no reason to think otherwise about Job.” “Finally, that Job was a real person is stated explicitly by God within the book of Job itself. In his second “speech” to Job, God declared that the mighty behemoth was “made along with you” (40:15, *emph. added*). If Job were just a fairy tale-like character, God certainly would not have spoken as having “made” him.”

Images:

1. Painting of Job and his friends. [cms/CW/28256-Jobandhisfriends-Job-friends-Bible-painting.1200w.tn.jpg https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Job_and_his_friends.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Job_and_his_friends.jpg) accessed 8/22/15
2. Photo of diary
3. image goat herders in middle east landscape. This image will be used for all of the thought question sections. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Goat_Herders_in_a_Middle_Eastern_Landscape_Frank_Dean.jpg, accessed 6/10/20.