

After our very long journey through the book of *Revelation*, and then addressing a few kick butt answers to listener questions, which we will continue to do from time to time, we are venturing into a new series entitled, “Yahweh according to Job – The Warning” Let’s jump in.

Preface

Job is a phenomenally difficult book for many reasons, as such, many have not even braved reading it in its entirety. Those that have dared such a feat often get lost traversing its pages and leave the journey unsure what they should have learned, not understanding who is right and who is wrong. But it is safe to say that everyone who does read Job in its entirety has a very unique emotional reaction because it forces us to face all our own presuppositions about God, about our relationship to God, about the spiritual realms, about good, bad, right, wrong, righteousness, sin, justice, punishment, and so on. It is a wild ride.

And even when you make it through the end of the story, it is difficult to grasp what the Spirit of God is communicating to us through Job’s experience and through the words He speaks to Job and through Job. It is far too easy to be compromised by our own presuppositions, by our own bias, by our own view of who we think God should be to us and for us.

Our goal is to get past our own distortions (most of which will be represented through the words, ideology, doctrines, and philosophies espoused by Job’s friends), such that we can be illumined by the Spirit of God to understand how the spiritual realm intersects with our physical realm in a very tangible way, and how **Yahweh** interacts with humanity in a very real and personal way.

To our surprise, this book employs a startling number of apocalyptic End Times related passages that are directly tied to other apocalyptic writings, primarily in the books of *Daniel*, *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Matthew*, *Luke*, *2 Thessalonians*, and of course, the book of *Revelation*. It even contains details about the Beast, the demonic spirit who possesses the man we call the Antichrist, as well as the Satan, the fire breathing dragon who gives the Beast his power and his throne.

As to its message, this book contains a huge **WARNING** regarding the dangers of standing on the platform of one’s own goodness or righteousness. As we learn in our study in the book of *Revelation*, there is a fundamental difference between those who stand only on the goodness of God and those who are trying so very hard to be good for God.

It is our own personal goodness, our own standard of righteousness, which causes us to separate from others in judgment, condemnation, and division; and it is our own personal goodness that causes us to live as if we could have done things right, we should do things right, and the next time we will get them right. It is our personal goodness that drives us to emulate the Satan declaring, like him, that with the “**work of our hands**” we will be like God.¹

Personal goodness is the subtle, and at times not so subtle, path that leads to apostasy—the falling away from Christ which occurs when we attempt to add or substitute any aspect of our goodness for His. Our goodness always results in our misrepresenting the name of **Yahweh**, and His name is something He vehemently guards.

As to this story’s difficulty, except for the first two chapters and the last ten verses, it utilizes a lot of poetic language to convey its story, which makes it very hard at times to determine what the specific

¹ See *Revelation 9:20; Isaiah 14:12-21*

spokesperson meant. The narrative also utilizes words derived from various ancient languages of the Middle East region, not just Hebrew. Certain words are derived from Arabic, Syriac, Ugaritic, and even the Egyptian language. This interjects a level of uncertainty into anyone claiming a “precise” understanding of the text. Confident assertions must be approached with great humility.

The story is long and at times cumbersome, for it is filled with complex arguments touching on all manner of religious exploration, and the quarrels between the participants seem to go on and on and on and on and on. It is hard to find a plumb line—a straight path—when journeying through this book.

There is also an uncomfortable intersection revealed between reality as it exists in the unseen world and reality as it exists in our physical, tangible world. The book of Job makes it clear that the unseen supernatural world is the driving force behind all that happens in our physical experience. Nothing is exempted from this dynamic. This truth tends to make people who believe they can control their own life and chart their own destiny very uncomfortable, to say the least. The Spirit presents us many truths from the heavenly realms which we will explore and hopefully adopt as our truth.

And as with most things (but particularly with this book), people tend to filter its meaning and understanding through their own presuppositions about God’s character and His nature. There will be those who walk away from reading this book feeling angry, bitter, afraid, resentful, a victim, confused, whereas others might feel joyful and be filled with awe, amazement, comfort and assurance, even more secure in their faith. It all depends on what a person truly believes about **Yahweh** or, better said, who you believe God should be to you and how He should treat you.

Unfortunately, most of us have a skewed or biased view of God, all of which is rooted in our practical, physical, and relational experiences and what we have been taught about who He is, which has formed in us who we expect Him to be to us and for us.

It would also not be a stretch to say that most of us tend to project on to God, in one-way-shape-or-form, the voice, the attitudes, and the reactions of those whom we have trusted, like our dad, relative, a coach, a teacher, or someone else who has played a very significant role in our lives, who has hurt us, disappointed us, or dealt with us unfairly. It is quite a common human phenomenon to project on to God when the events of our lives are not as we have hoped or expected, or when someone makes us feel as we once did when someone we loved and trusted did not treat us as we would have hoped or expected.

As we go through this study, you are encouraged to pray and ask **Yahweh** to cause you to be *willing* to let Him strip away from any-and-all presuppositions about Him that are just not right. Ask Him to unplug your ears, so you can hear what the Spirit is communicating. Ask Him to silence the voices of the “Me,” as well as the voices of the unseen forces that seem to always be whispering distortions in our ears.

As He reveals Himself in the book of **Job**, God so desperately desires us to understand Him, to see Him for who He is, and to accept Him for who He is, just like we all want others to see us, understand us, and to accept us for who we are.

Personally, the book of **Job** fundamentally and forever changed my view of God’s character and nature, but it took me through the paths of anger, bitterness, fear, resentment, confusion, and the victim mentality before I settled on joy, awe, amazement, comfort, and assurance, being strengthened in my faith. And if you decide to hang with me all the way through this study, it should be a wild ride and your life will likely never be the same, for your view of God will never be the same.

Introduction

The book of Job details a challenge made by God in the heavenly realms, a challenge which resulted in the Satan being given the right to torment, wreak havoc, and practically destroy Job's life. The only thing that the Satan could not do was take Job's life, which would include the life of his wife as they were deemed to be one in the eyes of God.²

Job had been a man greatly esteemed by all and wildly successful in all he did until the day he wasn't, and it was all wiped out faster than one could imagine. In a flash, in a moment of time, Job lost His family, possessions, wealth, and health. And though Job suffered unthinkable tragedies, he remained true to his faith looking only to **Yahweh** for help and answers.

Given the nature of the story, it should not surprise us to learn that Job's name derives from a Hebrew word for "hatred," and can be translated as one who is hated or persecuted. Job is a bummer of a name; what were his parents thinking?

We are going to learn about a man who had very strong views about **Yahweh**, a man whose opinions, thoughts, beliefs, and convictions were formed before he went through the dark time of tragedy in his life. In that regard, Job has a lot to teach us about God, about man, as well as about the heavenly realms. We are going to stare at his words, his declarations, his understandings, his rantings and his ravings, and his verbal and emotional "hand-to-hand" fight with both God and man.

Surprisingly, this book has many lessons to teach us about the heavenly realms, which will be attached as an **Appendix** at the end of the study, along with the key Lessons we learn from **Yahweh's** confrontation with Job.

Some of Job's rhetoric is directed towards three lousy friends who went all religious on him. They claimed that the reason bad things happen to so-called "good" people is because they deserve it, i.e., they have sin in their lives, blatant outright sin, unrepented sin, deep dark hidden sin. And in the case of the tsunami type damage that that rocked the universe of Job's life, he must have been guilty of egregious, deep, hidden, secret sin.

Job's friends poured all their energy into their fanciful arguments to convince this poor broken man, who laid there with pus and maggots oozing out of his open sores, that they were the learned experts on God, and he was obviously the one in error; after all, he was the one suffering, not them.

In their religious pretense and arrogance, in their desire to argue for-and-on behalf of God, and their desire to prove that Job obviously needed to repent, they did not even think of providing for his practical needs, giving him any sort of medical care, or even cleansing his wounds. They were just determined to get Job to admit that he was the problem, and God was doing this to him because of his sin.

Job's "friends" made many lofty religious arguments, based on their understanding of an if/then God, such that if we do it right then blessing will fill our lives, but if we do it wrong, hell will rain down upon us. Most of what they say can be boiled down to the "reap-what-you-sow" principle which most of us have been taught. However, it all gets convoluted because in their multiple discourses, they intermix lies and distortions of the truth with many aspects of truth. This dynamic makes it difficult to sort through their arguments into nice clean categories of what is true and what is false. It all can be very confusing. Often,

² **Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Ephesians 5:31-32**

they start with a truth and then attach to it so many religious artifices that the entirety of their argument must be dismissed.

They even prophecy some fascinating truths, but they end up interpreting or applying those truths through the lens of religious deception and distortion. And despite their knowledge of the truth, we know that a little leaven always, over time, leavens the whole loaf.³

What becomes clear is they worship an if/then God who blesses you when you are good and punishes you when you are bad. And if things are going wrong for a person, that amounts to tacit proof that their sin invoked God's ire that is meted out in judgment and wrath. If we were honest, most of us are very familiar with this if/then God, and we have feared and even worshiped him throughout our lives. But this is not the God whom Job worships, that is not **Yahweh**.

To the credit of Job's friends, they started off amazing. When they first came to see Job, they cried and wept, tore their robes and threw dust over their heads toward the sky. Then they simply sat with him for seven days and seven nights saying not a word because they knew his pain and misery were beyond anything they had ever encountered. However, once they realized what Job was suffering was not contagious and would not stick to them, they opened their mouths and graced Job with their astounding wisdom and knowledge – their religious nonsense that poured over Job like a crazy rushing river. Their words and arguments were a complete affront to the deeply imbedded understanding of the truth which circulated like blood all throughout Job's body.

Job knew and understood far too well their religious perspectives of God, human suffering, and blessing and curses, but his beliefs about **Yahweh** far transcended these common notions of an if/then God that always punishes you when you sin and always blesses you when you are good. Nevertheless, Job had his issues that God wanted to address, issues which derived from his deeply rooted sense of justice and his personal goodness.

A bulk of Job's discourse is tantamount to a conversation with **Yahweh**, even though much of it comes as a response to the arguments of his friends. We will examine a man who was open and honest with God and expressed his true unfiltered feelings about what God was doing to him. Yet, at the same time, Job knew what it meant to fear **Yahweh**. He was not just ranting and raving at God because of his incomprehensible suffering, though there is plenty of that sort of ranting and raving, it is just that he wanted to understand the "why" of it all; he wanted to understand how his incomprehensible suffering could be deemed to be just.

To understand the reason behind his tremendous suffering, Job sifts through all that he knows and believes to be true about God. Job concludes that it all must be one huge, colossal mistake. If only he had a face-to-face moment with God perhaps he could sort it all out.

As they say, one should be very careful when it comes to the things for which they ask. At the end of the story, God does just that. He comes to Job for a face-to-face meeting, and the encounter starts off not as Job would have wanted, with God speaking out from a whirlwind, "*Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct Me!*"

Still, for a man like Job, where truth and justice circulate through his veins, things need to make sense to his brain and to his heart. He needed to understand not just the "why" in a generic sense, but he wants

³ 1 Corinthians 5:6, Galatians 5:9

to understand the reason, i.e., how God thinks and operates. So much of his journey does not make sense to him, and up until **Job 38**, God does not communicate a single reason as to why he must suffer so terribly.

Throughout the narrative, Job wrestles and agonizes with the truth, all the while giving vent to his loathsome experience. With every word breathed from his mouth, Job was trying to break the impassable gulf between the earthly realm and the heavenly realm. He wanted so desperately to march up into the throne room of God just to understand what in the world was going on and to have a chance to explain to God why this level of suffering was beyond overkill and frankly unnecessary.

After all, in one day, literally within the same hour, God poured out tragedy after tragedy upon Job's life. He did not even prepare Job beforehand with some sort of prophetic word or dream. This whole thing washed over him like huge crashing waves, one after another. And despite his cries and his pleas, **Yahweh** did not speak to him or answer any of his questions. In fact, God did not directly engage Job until Job was exhausted from his fight, out of words, and he finally chose to quiet his spirit.

Through the entire travail, and through all the bombastic impious beatings of his three friends with their whips of religious nonsense, Job was a man who stood on truth, persisted in his belief, but did not realize how much more there was to know and believe about the amazing God he worshiped. But he would find out firsthand what it means to come into the presence of the Almighty God. In that regard, perhaps we should all brace ourselves and be ready, for we are going to learn some very deep truths about the heavenly realms, answers that many of us have been longing to discover.

We dare not miss out on what the Spirit wants to teach us. Far too many of us have distorted perspectives of God based on our life experiences, and the lies and distortions we have been told about Him. Yet, like all of us, He just wants to be known for who He is, and to not be smeared with presumptuous accusations because we don't like or understand what has happened in our lives. He promises that if we seek Him with our entire being, He will be found. He wants to be found. He will not withhold Himself from us.⁴ But we must be willing to lay down our emotional presuppositions and religious distortions, set aside all our distractions, and be still and simply let God be God.⁵

As for my teaching style, I am going to approach it differently than I did with the book of **Revelation**, for throughout this narrative I will, from time-to-time, interpose my own story to bring some depth and clarification to aspects of Job's experience. I have experienced great suffering throughout my life. Trauma and terrors have defined a big part of my life, and from my very early years it set me on a course of seeking truth and justice. My pain motivated me to seek truth, to make sense out of what happened to me; and I sought justice to hold to account, at some emotional and even practical level, those by whom I was afflicted—both God and man.

Growing up, I had been no stranger to suffering (so I thought). Then as an adult, God stepped in and took me through an unbelievable storm, where He literally became my enemy and tore apart everything in my life. Although, I need to say that, unlike Job, God mercifully spoke to me about what He had in mind before He tore me apart, so it was not a complete surprise, and I could always fall back on the understanding that this was all God and not some random series of tragedies.

⁴ **Deuteronomy 4:29; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 15:1-4, 15; Jeremiah 29:13; Isaiah 55:6; James 4:8**

⁵ **Psalm 46:10**

First, He told me His purpose. Second, He reinforced to me the truth that He died for my sin and therefore does not deal with me based upon my sin (which was something I needed to remember over-and-over again). Third, He warned me right before the destruction hit, so I would not be taken completely off guard. He was comparably gentle with me, as Job did not receive any such warning or preparation.

The **PURPOSE**. He told me *"I am going to show you how much I love you."* Honestly, when He first communicated those words to me, I was so excited, and I thought I was in for the time of my life: blessing upon blessing. Oh, silly me, little did I know! I found out quite emphatically that *"I am going to show you how much I love you,"* did not mean what I thought it meant.

The **ABSOLUTION**. He took me to **Psalm 103** and affirmed that 1) He pardons all my iniquities, 2) He does not deal with me according to my sins, and 3) as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed my transgression from me. Honestly, even though I was an ardent confessor of the cross, I did not realize then how much I believed something different. Thankfully, God equipped me with this truth in preparation for my storm.

It should be noted that when God presses in, fixated on a person and a purpose, a whole lot of bad comes to the surface. It is a necessary part of the process. It is how He strips away our delusion and helps us see what it is that we truly believe deep in our soul, and how those beliefs drive what we think and what we do. It is how we get the opportunity to choose Him instead of the "Me." It is how, if we are *willing*, that He makes us more like Him.

Sadly, most people tend to negatively react when they see "bad," when they see sin, and rarely do they stop and thank God that He is doing an amazing work of release, giving a person the opportunity to find freedom in Him. We have all been so "sin-beaten" in our various religious schoolings, that we fail to see that sin is necessary if there is ever going to be true freedom where we learn to stand only on the goodness of God and stop foolishly trying to be good for God.

The **WARNING**. Right before all hell broke loose, He took me to **Psalm 107:23-32** and He warned me about what He was soon going to do to me. He was going to throw my life into a hurricane like storm, toss me to-and-fro, and beat me with wave after wave until I was at my wits end. He said my soul would melt away in misery and that I would reel and stagger around like a drunken man. Believe you me, this was not what I was expecting to hear; I thought He was going to show me how much He loved me. That kind of torment was not love, was it?

When this "storm" hit, I was broken by God in more ways than you can imagine, and every single area of my life was upset, disrupted, torn apart, and damaged in one-way-shape-or-form. Like baggage, or ballast, that is thrown overboard to reduce the weight as a boat tries to ride out a storm, God ejected, people, possessions, jobs, and anything and everything that He felt was weighing me down.

It took me a very long time to realize that this level of damage was fundamentally necessary. Yes, the storm was necessary, to reveal to me the layers and layers of wrong belief and unbelief I had in my relationship with God. It was also necessary to reveal to me how broken I was in every layer of my soul, and quite specifically, how I used "religion" as a primary coping mechanism to fuel my desire for truth and justice so that I could make sense of a God that I only kind of knew, for I never truly saw Him for who He is, much less accepted Him for who He is.

All of this indicated how needy I was for Him in all things all the time. Yes, the storm was necessary. It made me realize that I need Him, and only Him, to meet me and to minister His healing all throughout my

being: physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. It was all just as Elihu said in **Job 36:15**, “*He delivers the afflicted in their affliction and opens their ears in oppression.*” Or said more elegantly, “*But by means of their suffering, he rescues those who suffer. For he gets their attention through adversity.*”

Lesson of the Heavenly Realms 1

By means of suffering Yahweh rescues those who suffer. For He gets their attention through adversity.

For example, as recorded in **2 Chronicles 12:8**, **Yahweh** decided to hand over the nation of Israel to Shishak, the ruler of Egypt. He said, “*But they will become his slaves so that they may learn the difference between My service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries.*” It may sound like God was being mean and vindictive, but perhaps we should consider a different perspective. What if God was choosing mercy. What if God was providing a pathway through which He might save their lives and the generations after them, to preserve their future both as a people and as a nation. He knew that if they continued in their course of blatant idolatry and all manner of religious pretense, His justice and His righteousness would have required Him to judge and destroy His own people.

Let’s take this first lesson and apply it to our lives. God will allow us to endure great suffering at the hands of the enemy, to give us the opportunity to learn, if we *choose*, if we are *willing*, how living for the Kingdom of God is a far better decision than living for the “Me,” or for the Kingdom of this World with all its religious pretense. He uses times of suffering to teach us who He is and who we truly are to Him. Or said another way, He uses times of suffering to teach us **WHY** we should choose to trust in Him and **HOW** to trust in Him. It is an ironic inversion, but suffering has the amazing ability to draw us to Him and secure us in Him.⁶

It seems that in difficult and dark times, God shatters our delusions of who He is, who we are, and all that we think our lives should be. In those terrible times, He gives us the opportunity, if we *choose* to be *willing*, to have the Spirit open our ears to His words and instructions.

Lets’ stop here and in our next podcast we will continue in the introduction to Yahweh according to Job, The Warning. I am glad you tuned in and have been ready to listen.

⁶ **Romans 5:3-5; Philipians 1:29; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7, 4:12-13, 5:10; Hebrews 12:11**