

January 27, 2019

Sermon Manuscript

Job 1:1-2:11

^{1:1} There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Jōb, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. ² There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. ³ He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. ⁴ His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵ And when the days of the feast had run their course, Jōb would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Jōb said, "It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Jōb did continually.

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." ⁸ And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Jōb, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" ⁹ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Jōb fear God for no reason? ¹⁰ Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." ¹² And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

¹³ Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁴ and there came a messenger to Jōb and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." ¹⁶ While he was yet speaking, there came another

and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." ¹⁷ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." ¹⁸ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

²⁰ Then Jōb arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹ And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

²² In all this Jōb did not sin or charge God with wrong.

^{2:1} Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. ² And the LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." ³ And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Jōb, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason." ⁴ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. ⁵ But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face." ⁶ And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life."

⁷ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Jōb with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. ⁸ And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes.

⁹ Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." ¹⁰ But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would

speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Jōb did not sin with his lips.

¹¹ Now when Jōb's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him.

Luke 11:5-13

⁵ And Jesus said to (his disciples), "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves,' ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷ and he will answer from within, 'Do

not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Job, Part 1: Motive(s) for Righteousness

A few months ago I stumbled across a book on How to Read Job, collaborative work by two Old Testament scholars I have a lot of respect for, John Walton and Tremper Longman.^a And since then I've been looking for an opportunity to share some of that with you. So today I'll begin that today with a two-week sermon mini-series on Job.

Now, some of what interests me about this subject is that the book of Job has led to so much confusion for so many about the character of God, not to mention dumbfounded about what on earth we're supposed to learn from this book. But I believe the root of most of the confusion – and even consternation – about the story of Job stems from readers misunderstanding precisely what sort of Biblical book this is.

You see, "The Bible is a book of many books"; there are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New. And what all of these books share in *common* is that God has chosen to reveal Himself to the world *through them*. However, the genres of these different books God has chosen to reveal himself through can vary greatly!^b Now Job is found in the Old Testament, or Hebrew Scriptures, which generally speaking contains books of three different genres: books of ancient historiography, books of wisdom literature, and books of prophecy.^c And even those three categories of genres can be divided into sub-genres.^d

^a John H. Walton & Tremper Longman, How To Read Job, IVP: 2015.

^b And sometimes the genre even varies *within* a book of the Bible.

^c Meanwhile, the New Testament includes Gospels (which is its own unique genre), historiography (in the book of Acts), a whole bunch of letters, and apocalyptic (with the Book of Revelation).

^d Grasping the genre of a text is significant because it tells us how to read it. If we fail to understand the genre of what we're reading, we are at high risk of misunderstanding what the author is intending to communicate. For example, think about reading a newspaper. Well, Walton point out that "we intuitively tune into genre distinctions every time we read a newspaper" as we flip from section to section, "from current events, to editorials, to comics... to advertisements and sale notices." But just imagine you paid no mind to distinguishing between the genres of those different sections, or misunderstood the genre of a given section – so, imagine if you read the comics like the current events section or the obituaries like they were advertisements – we would run a major risk of misinterpreting what was being communicated!! (John Walton, The Lost World of Scripture: Ancient Literary Culture & Biblical Authority, IVP: 2013.)

But when it comes to the Book of Job, scholars are fairly unanimous that it is *not* historiography, but of the genre of wisdom literature.^e And this is really significant for readers to understand, because it means that the primary purpose of the book of Job is not to teach history, but to teach theology; to teach us about God. In fact, the best analogy for the book of Job from elsewhere in the Bible, would probably be some of the Parables of Jesus in the New Testament.^f If we think about parables most of us are familiar with, such as the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37) or the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32), it's quite obvious that Jesus' purpose is to use these stories and characters to teach some particular truth about God. For example, in the parable of the Prodigal son, Jesus uses the actions of the prodigal son's father – who is willing to receive back his repentant son no matter what he has done – to represent the grace and mercy of God. And we should understand the book of Job similarly. Now, this doesn't mean there wasn't a historical person named Job.^g *Perhaps* there was; perhaps Jesus' prodigal son was even based on a real person, too. But what I'm saying is that it doesn't matter, because the writer of Job's concern is not to provide the reader with history, but rather to utilize Job as a literary character to explore some particular theological questions about God. And to do that, he presents us with a story where God and Satan are characters, too, along with Job's wife and friends.

But recognizing that the book of Job is wisdom literature, and perhaps something like a parable, is also critical for preventing us from drawing some of the *incorrect* conclusions about God that readers of the book of Job have been prone to take over the years. Turning back to the parables for a moment, where Jesus is using stories to make theological points, sometimes this requires Jesus to caricature some things about God that are *beside the point* in order to make the

^e Walton & Longman: "This book is manifestly and unarguably in the genre category of wisdom literature rather than historical literature" (35). In particular, it is a wisdom book featuring a pious sufferer, which was actually a fairly common genre among the various cultures surrounding Israel in ancient times. This genre "is a relatively common one in the ancient Near East (wisdom book featuring a pious sufferer), but the answers that the book eventually offers transcend anything that was proposed in the ancient Near East and would have been truly inconceivable without the revolutionary concept of God that developed in Israel." (25).

^f Maimonides (12th Century) is one example of rabbinic interpreters who considered the book of Job to be a parable. Tremper Longman III, *Job*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), p. 43.

^g Walton & Longman: "At the same time, we might ask whether the book still expects its readers to believe that a man named Job actually existed—a man who was unbelievably wealthy, successful in every way, godly above any other person alive, who suffered loss of all but his life and who then had it all restored. In wisdom literature that has evidence of literary construction at some points, we cannot simply assume as a default position that this is a real story of a real person. Nevertheless, some evidence exists that the author would like us to think so. Real places are mentioned (Uz, Buz, Teman) as are real people groups (Sabeans, Chaldeans). But these are remote, faraway places to the audience, and therefore could be used literarily. Remember that in the parable of the good Samaritan, real types of people and real places are used for the setting." (36)

Also notable: "Job is not an Israelite. He is from the land of Uz, which is likely located in the land known as Edom in the Bible. However, in many ways Job thinks like an Israelite and believes what Israelites were supposed to believe.¹ The book is distinctly Israelite (and almost certainly written by an Israelite), as it stands in sharp contrast to many of the common beliefs elsewhere in the ancient Near East." (25)

story work. But must be careful not to take these caricature elements to be truths Jesus is revealing about God, while missing the point Jesus is intending to make.

Just take a moment to consider Jesus' parable in our gospel passage today from Luke 11. While attempting to teach his disciples about prayer, Jesus tells the disciples a parable where he tells them to imagine going to a friend at midnight and asking them for bread. So the friend in this parable represents God, and yet the friend's initial response to the request is "Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything." Yikes! So if a reader mistakes this as the point of the parable, they might conclude Jesus is suggesting that God "is reluctant to help us or that God needs to be badgered in order to help us". But in reality, Jesus is portraying God in this extreme way – in a caricature, if you will – in order for the story to work and to be able to make the theological point he is intending, which is about the value of persistence in prayer.

So the rule of thumb, especially with parables, is that the only authoritative – or God-inspired – message in them is the particular message Jesus was intending to convey.^h And anything that is beside the main point must be treated not as divine truths, but instead as literary window-dressing.

Well, the book of Job is much the same. In the set-up of the story we have the writer portraying God as a king who receives reports from Satan, and Satan seems to be playing a role akin to something like a CIA spy. But notice this set-up also includes God seeming to have no knowledge of what Satan is doing (1:7, 2:2), God making a wager with Satan (1:8, 2:3), and God seeming all-too-willing to hang a righteous Job out to dry (1:12, 2:6) in order to win that wager!! And these are the very elements of God's character in the story that leave many readers aghast and wondering "*How* can God be like this?" and "Does God *really* operate like this?" But the answers to those questions are "he's not actually like this" and "no, he doesn't operate like this"; it's a story." The book of Job is a sort of thought-experiment aimed at exploring some very particular theological questions about God, and those are the only matters for which the book should be taken as authoritative, or as actually revealing the character of God;ⁱ everything else is literary window-dressing necessary to construct a story. #

But, of course this then begs the question, what *is* the theological point of Job? What question or questions is its writer seeking to explore? And that is precisely what I intend to tackle with this two-part series. And what I'll be suggesting is that the book of Job is meant to serve as a sort of thought-experiment for [1] examining our motives for righteousness, which we'll consider

^h Walton & Longman provide some other examples of this from Jesus parables, including...

"From the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Mt 20), we could not infer that God (portrayed as the landowner) actually works this way. The payment of wages does not have direct correlation to how people are treated in heaven. The same wage offered to those who worked only the last hour is an intentional exaggeration to highlight the point the parable is making.

"In the parable of the shrewd manager (Lk 16), the master's response to his manager's currying favor should not suggest how God wants us to act. God's character is not being revealed as a shrewd operator.

"In the parable of the unmerciful servant (Mt 18:21-35), the parable actually ends with, "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you." Yet we cannot help but notice that the master hands the servant over for torture until he can repay (Mt 18:34). Here readers perceive a subtle difference between the message of the parable and the nature of God. (46-47)

ⁱ The same goes for Satan, by the way. The Hebrew is actually "a satan", as the concept of Satan as we know him had not yet developed. Instead, there were thought to be many "satans", or challengers, among the Sons of God. For more on the "sons of God", see the sermon on spiritual warfare from 9/2/18 titled "We're Not Wrestling With Flesh & Blood".

today, and for [2] nuancing the way we think about the human suffering that touches all of our lives, which we'll look at next week. # # #

So the first half of the book is essentially concerned with exploring of our motives for righteousness. Now, from the outset it is clear that God had blessed Job in many ways. Verse 2 says Job had a large family of seven sons and three daughters, while verse 3 makes clear that Job enjoyed prosperity that was unrivaled, as he “possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants,” which made him [quote] “the greatest (or wealthiest) of all the people of the east.” But even before this, the book establishes that Job is a righteous man. The very first verse introduces Job as a man who “was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.”^j And when it cuts to the scene of Satan coming before the Lord in the second paragraph, God seems to almost be *bragging* on the righteousness of Job, as he says in verse 8, “And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Jōb, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” So the reader is being told that whatever suffering is about to befall Job in this thought-experiment, the cause *cannot* be assumed to be his sin; that's off the table.

However, Satan suspects that Job's motives for righteousness are *not* so pure. Verse 9: “Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.” So what Satan is taking issue with is God's policy of blessing the righteous, Satan's contention is if God maintains a policy of bringing prosperity as a reward for righteousness, then people will act righteously in order to gain benefits, which isn't true righteousness. So Satan is not debating whether Job is really righteous, instead he's suggesting that Job's motive for righteousness is to receive the benefits from God rather than simply loving God for who He is.^k

So Satan proposes a wager. He says, “(God,) you have blessed the work of (Job's) hands, and his possessions have increased in the land,” verse 11, “But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.” And so the Lord agrees. He tells Satan, “Behold, all that (Job) has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand” (1:12a).

“So Satan (goes) out from the presence of the LORD,” and we cut to a scene where one day Job's life is turned upside down. In that third paragraph beginning at verse 13, Job learns that the Sabeans had stolen all of his 500 yoke of oxen and killed the servants minding them (1:14-15). Then he learns that fire had fallen from heaven and burned up his 7,000 sheep and

^j Walton notes “The text makes it clear throughout that Job is considered righteous. That does not mean that he is perfect, but he is above reproach in his conduct” (163). Walton explains the text makes this clear to take sinfulness (which is a characteristic of all humans) off the table as a possible explanation for Job's suffering, citing: “God affirms that he has ruined Job without cause (2:3)”.

^k Walton & Longman: “Even before Job's disasters, he showed signs of thinking God was petty. Why else would he offer sacrifices for his children “just in case” (1:5)? ... His ritual routine therefore suggests that he considers God petty. If this is the case, this part of Job's profile is not complimentary... If Job harbors a suspicion that God is inclined to be petty, so much so that he engages in these fastidious rituals based on such meager possibilities, one might infer that Job is motivated (not only in his piety, but in his righteousness) by fear of being the target of attack by an unreasonable and capricious deity. If that inference is sustainable, then one might also wonder whether Job also secretly believes that such a god can be, or even needs to be, bought. If Job is motivated to piety because he believes God to be petty, is it not also possible that Job is motivated to righteousness because he believes God's favors are on auction?... The challenger (Satan) would have every reason to observe this behavior and conclude that Job is overcompensating in ritual due to an unhealthy belief that God is petty.” (139, 62, 181)

the servants minding them (1:16). And then Job learns that the Chaldeans have taken his 3,000 camels and killed the servants minding them (1:17). And then, finally, Job learns that a great wind had blown across the wilderness and destroyed the home where his ten children were feasting, killing them all (1:18-19).

Now, Walton & Longman make clear that the purpose of God allowing Job to lose all of these blessing is to determine whether Job “will retain his integrity.” And since he has lost all of these blessings, **his integrity will now be “defined by whether he will keep his focus on his righteousness or pursue a strategy to recover the benefits of a righteous life.** {repeat} If his focus is his benefits,” Satan’s suspicion will be proven right: that Job does not “serve God for nothing” (1:9), but that he serves God for the benefits.

But look at how Job responds. Verse 20 says Job tears his robe and shaves his head in grief... and then he worshipped?!? This is followed in verse 21, amidst all of this tragedy and loss, by Job famously stating, “The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” #

So Job has met the first challenge, and yet Satan is not done yet. Moving into chapter two, Satan presents himself before the Lord again. And in verse 3 God again brags to him, “Have you considered my servant Jōb...?” Notice God says of Job “still holds fast his **integrity**, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason.”

But Satan says, “We’ll see about that.” He says, “All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.” So the Lord again agrees: “Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life” (2:6).

So this time Satan goes “out from the presence of the LORD” and strikes “Jōb with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (2:7). But the test actually comes to Job through his wife, who says, “Do you still hold fast your **integrity**? Curse God and die.” And, you see, if Job cared about his benefits more than righteousness, he would have. But instead Job maintains integrity, telling her, “You speak as one of the foolish women would speak...” (2:10)

However, one test of Job’s integrity remains. You’ll notice that the end of our passage introduces three of Job’s friends – Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar – who make “an appointment together to come to show (Job) sympathy and comfort him.” But, from chapters 4 to 27, these friends will make speeches pressuring Job to undertake strategies that will lead to the restoration of his property.¹ And yet, as we see recalled in the final verse of today’s passage from James,

¹ Cycle One: chapters 4–14 Eliphaz 4–5 Job 6–7 Bildad 8 Job 9–10 Zophar 11 Job 12–14

Cycle Two: chapters 15–21 Eliphaz 15 Job 16–17 Bildad 18 Job 19 Zophar 20 Job 21

Cycle Three: chapters 22–27 Eliphaz 22 Job 23–24 Bildad 25 Job 26–27

Walton & Longman: “The three friends represent different perspectives, though they all agree on the conclusion that Job is suffering because he is a sinner... The friends together play the role of representing, at least in part, the thinking of the ancient Near East,... (but) missing one major element of ancient Near Eastern thinking: they neither consider Job’s offenses to be in the realm of ritual negligence nor do they advise ritual strategies for restoration... The friends collectively play the role of the challenger’s (Satan’s) philosophical representatives. That is, through their arguments they are urging Job to a course of action that, should he adopt it, would indicate the challenger (Satan) was correct about Job’s motives for righteous behavior.

Job remains steadfast.^m He finally says to his friends in chapter 27, “Far be it from me to say that you are right; I will maintain my integrity until I die” (5).ⁿ

So, if Job had succumbed to either the temptation from his wife by cursing God^o or followed the counsel of his friends by seeking to get the Lord to restore his prosperity, choosing either one of these would have forfeited his integrity and proven his worship and obedience to God was really just motivated by a desire for the good life. ##

Well, the questions this all raises for us, of course, is what is our motive when it comes to our faith, to loving God and seeking righteousness? You see, the truth is there are a variety of reasons that can motivate us.

- We can love God for the rewards we believe he’ll provide, like prosperity or protection or other blessings.
- Or, our worship and obedience could be motivated by the desire to feel self-righteous or be recognized by others.
- Or perhaps we’re motivated by fear, and love Him in order to avoid punishment, in this life or in the hereafter.
- In fact, this leads me to another form of loving God for His reward, which is loving God in order to go to heaven and survive judgment...

You know, I don’t wanna get off into this too far, but it’s interesting to note that the Ancient Israelites really didn’t have any concept of an afterlife, at least not one based on reward and punishment. Instead, they believed all people, when they died, were destined for a place they called “Sheol”. Verse two of our Psalm today, Psalm 88, has a reference to this Sheol in verse 2. But no one looked forward to Sheol because life in Sheol was thought of as “a shadowy, gloomy existence cut off from the world of the living and from God.”^p And it wasn’t until after every book of the Old Testament was written that *some* Jews’ views of the afterlife began to be modified and the ideas of resurrection and Heaven & Hell began to emerge and be affirming by Christ.

So, if the Ancient Israelites didn’t even have a notion of heaven, and yet sought the Lord, doesn’t this call into question whether heaven should be a Christian’s primary motivation in

^m James 5:10-11: “As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Jōb, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.”

ⁿ ESV: “Far be it from me to say that you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me” (Job 27:5).

^o “(Job’s wife) serves as an instrument of (Satan’s) expectations just as the friends do. Once again the challenger is proven correct if Job follows his wife’s advice. The challenger said that Job would curse God to his face, and that is precisely what Job’s wife advises him to do. If Job does so, his motives will be shown to be flawed—he is only committed to being righteous if he is receiving benefits for doing so.”

^p More from Walton & Longman on Sheol: “Isaiah 14:9-11 offers the clearest evidence that Sheol is a place where the spirits of the dead dwell... No hint of reward or punishment is evident in the texts (with the possible exception of Dan 12:1-3)... the afterlife is the least theological aspect of (Jewish) belief, which focused on life in the covenant... God had not yet provided an instrument to wipe away their sins and provide for their eternal presence with him. Furthermore he had not given any indication by which they understood that it was his intention to do so. For them the afterlife represented an existence where they were cut off from God... While Sheol is never identified as the place where all go (though Eccles 6:6 says that “all go to the same place”), the burden of proof rests on those who suggest that there is an alternative.”

seeking the Lord? If heaven wasn't even part of the Israelites framework for faith, might this point to a problem of many Christians today seeming to make heaven what the faith is *all* about?^q ###

Well, enough about that. So Walton and Longman suggest this first half of Job is asking the question, "What if we had none of the benefits (prosperity, protection, eternity, etc.)? Would we serve God anyway?"^r "Do we love and obey Jesus for the benefits, or do we keep our focus on Jesus regardless of whether we live happy and enjoyable or difficult and painful lives?"^s

You see, one problem with seeking God for the rewards is that it makes us particularly ill-prepared to deal with suffering. Because what happens when we fail to receive what we're expecting from God in this life is we've *set ourselves up* for disappointment and to resent Him.

But the story of Job is revealing that this is what truly pleases and delights the Lord: when His people love Him *simply* because of who He is, and not for what we might gain from Him. Yet if we're being honest, can **any of us** really say that we love God with totally pure motives? I certainly can't. And mark me down as skeptical that anyone can.

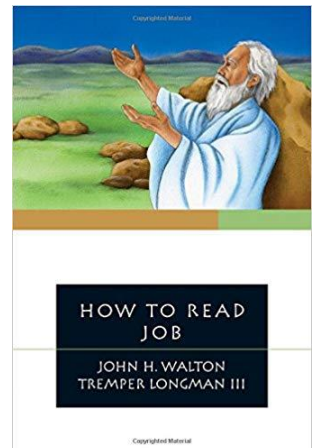
But here's the **good news**... The good news is that this story of Job is given not *only* to reveal how we fall short. Instead, the story of this innocent sufferer who sought God with perfect integrity was given – and is included in the Old Testament – to point forward toward another innocent sufferer who *would* love God with perfect integrity. This literary character of Job points forward to **Jesus**.

You know, we often talk about the righteousness of Jesus – that he kept God's law perfectly, that he never sinned – but it often gets overlooked how Jesus also loved God with integrity. And this integrity is what allowed Him to freely choose to submit to the Father's will to sacrifice of Himself – to say "not my will, but your will" and to suffer – for the sake of others; for us.

In Jesus Christ the Lord offers us grace for our mixed motives and all of the doubleminded reasons we seek the Lord (whether we recognize them or not). It is through faith in Him that we become clothed in *his* perfect integrity and are made pleasing to God. #

But despite winning forgiveness for us, rest assured that the Lord still intends to makeover our hearts and progressively purify our motives for loving Him. Would you ask him to do that this morning? As Christ continues His good work in us, to change our hearts more and more to love God for who He is rather than what He gives us, this will make us more capable of remaining faithful in suffering and of living sacrificially for others as Jesus did, which is to say, it will allow us to love Him all the more.

Amen.



^q It can be argued that the over-emphasis of the afterlife in modern Evangelicalism has not borne good fruit in this, as it has led to the prevalence of what Dallas Willard calls "barcode Christianity" (when one believes a few certain events occurred in history or prays some specific words or associates with a certain church and then by that action an appropriate amount of righteousness is shifted from Christ's account to my account and I am "saved"), which has de-emphasized discipleship and sanctification and led to an American Church whose faith is a mile-wide and an inch deep.

^r 118

^s 152