



Job - Chapter One

Summary of Chapter One

Job is introduced as a well respected, honest and wealthy man in his community. He has been blessed with a healthy family, a vast quantity of land and livestock and many servants to care for his property. He is also clearly a man who worships God and makes regular offerings to him, particularly on behalf of his family.

Satan presents himself before the Lord and God says to him that Job is a blameless and upright man. Satan counters by saying that it is only because of his wealth that he is blameless; without it he would curse God. So God gives Satan permission to strike against Job's wealth and family. Satan achieved this by having all the livestock either taken or destroyed and all Job's children killed as a violent storm destroyed their house. Job went into mourning at this news but did not waiver in his belief in God.

I Job 1:1-2:13 - Prologue: Job's Character and the Circumstances of His Test

The prologue opens by introducing Job as a man who was blameless and upright in character, blessed in family and possessions, and whose life embodied the fear of God both for himself and on behalf of his family (1:1-5). The second section details the heavenly conversations and earthly actions related to Satan's two-stage request to test Job's character by afflicting him (1:6-2:10). The final section describes how Job's three friends hear of his suffering and come to offer sympathy and comfort, which creates the context for the rest of the book (2:11-13).

The narration of the prologue is integrally important for the interpretation of the book as a whole because it describes for the reader something that the three friends will continually address: To what extent do the circumstances of Job's life on earth reveal what is true about him before God? The three

friends, as well as the young Elihu in his own way, assume that Job's circumstances reveal some hidden sin or wayward path in Job's character that has provoked God's displeasure, correction, or judgement. Job's friends will continually argue that his circumstances necessarily represent a choice that he has to make: either repent and agree with God, or continue as he is and receive the full punishment signified in his current suffering. In responding to his friends, Job insists both that he is right before God and that it is ultimately God who has brought about his circumstances. Throughout the dialogue, Job tries to maintain that he is in the right while also arguing God's character back to him in lament about why his righteousness and justice do not appear to be borne out in events on earth. In the end, God will reprove Job for the extent of his conclusions about what circumstances on earth might mean for God's governance and justice (38:1-41:34). However, God will also vindicate Job before his friends, judge them with respect to their words, and call Job to intercede on their behalf (42:7-17).

I.a Job 1:1-5 - Job and His Family

The prologue opens with a brief description of Job's character and circumstances, which become the context for the subsequent tests.

¹ There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

Job 1:1

There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. The Book of Job begins by introducing its central character and the man who perhaps wrote the book by recording his own experiences.

The Book of Job is rightly understood to be a masterpiece of Hebrew poetry and Western literature. As the first poetic book of the English Bible, Job introduces the reader to the idea of Hebrew poetry, which involves the repetition and combination of ideas more than sounds.

The author, date, and place of the Book of Job are all uncertain. It may be that Job himself recorded his experiences in the book, or there may well have been another anonymous author. Judging by the style of the Hebrew it uses, some scholars judge Job to be the oldest book of the OT. There is also the possibility that the book is an allegory and that Job was not a real person at all. This concept helps to explain the double compensation of family as well as wealth at the end of the book

The Book of Job is not primarily about one man's suffering and pain; Job's problem is not so much financial or social or medical; his central problem is theological. Job must deal with the fact that in his life, God does not act the

way he always thought God would and should act. In this drama, the Book of Job is not so much a record of solutions and explanations to this problem; it is more a revelation of Job's experience and the answers carried within his experience.

The land of Uz. The location of this land to the east is unknown, but it may be related to Aram in the north: <<*The descendants of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash*>> (Genesis 10:23), where Abraham's nephew and family lived: <<*Uz the firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram*>> (Genesis 22:21), or to a descendant of Seir who lived alongside the sons of Esau in the land also referred to as Edom: <<*These are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran*>> (Genesis 36:28).

The faithfulness of Job is stated at the outset and affirmed again in v.8 and Job 2:3. He is blameless and upright, a phrase also used in reference to Noah in Genesis 6:9 and to Abraham in Genesis 17:1, and one who feared God and turned away from evil, which echoes the characteristics of one who is 'wise' in Proverbs; refer to Proverbs 3:7, 14:16 and 16:6. Christians are instructed to: <<*abstain from every form of evil*>> (1 Thessalonians 5:22). This description represents a gap between what the reader has been told and what the three friends come to assume about Job in later chapters.

The first look at Job shows him to be an exceedingly righteous man. The author gives an impressive description of a man who is not perfect, but certainly complete in his devotion, respect, and obedience to God. King David, despite committing some dreadful sins, was also considered in similar light by God.

Job's connection with God seems to be independent of any other OT character. The account definitely seems to be set in a time before the time of Moses and the people of Israel; perhaps even before Abraham. Some believe that the Jobab mentioned in Genesis 10:29 is Job, which would put him in the era between Noah and Abraham. If that was the era of Job, then it can be considered that Job's deep and true relationship with God was no doubt passed on to him from his ancestors dating back to the time of Noah and his son. In this respect, he was somewhat like Melchizedek, as in Genesis 14:18-24, who simply appeared on the scene as someone who was a worshipper and a follower of the true God. Others point to several reasons for dating Job later, perhaps in the generations after Jacob and Esau:

- Huz (Uz?) was Abraham's nephew, the son of his brother in Genesis 22:21. The land of Uz may be named after him.
- Eliphaz introduced in Job 2:11 was the son of Esau (Genesis 34:10-11); this son of Esau had a son named Teman (Genesis 36:10-11), and the descendants of Teman were known for their wisdom: <<*Concerning Edom. Thus says the Lord of hosts: Is there no longer wisdom in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom vanished?*>> (Jeremiah 49:7).

- Bildad is called a Shuhite in Job 2:11, and Shuah was a son of Abraham through Keturah; refer to Genesis 35:2.

² There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. ³ He had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred 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 feasts in one another's houses in turn; and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

Job 1:2-4

There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. The large numbers of children, livestock and servants, together with the feasting, suggest the enormous prosperity of Job's life at this point. In a culture where status and wealth might be measured by the size of one's family: <<*Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward*>> (Psalm 127:3), Job was a man of impressive wealth and status.

In the story of Ruth Naomi lost her two sons but was later told that the birth of her grandson was better than having seven sons: <<*He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him*>> (Ruth 4:15).

He had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred donkeys, and very many servants. By any measure, Job was a prominent and affluent man. His godliness, wealth, and status made it true that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east.

His sons used to go and hold feasts in one another's houses in turn. The idea of this description seems to be that Job's family had a happy and close relationship. This reinforces the idea that Job and his family were greatly blessed and does not seem to indicate that they were unduly given over to festivity and pleasure-seeking. In turn is also translated as **each on his appointed day**. They happily celebrated special days, perhaps referring to their birthdays.

Charles Spurgeon commented on Job's attitude to his children's celebrations, "If he had condemned it he would never have offered sacrifice to God, lest they should have sinned, but he would have told them at once it was a sinful thing, and that he could give no countenance to it." Spurgeon saw in vv.4-5 a permission for feasting and celebration among believers; he preached a Christmas sermon upon this very text and used it as proof that God allows and enjoys such celebrations among his people.

⁵ And when the feast days had run their course, Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt-offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, ‘It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.’ This is what Job always did.

Job 1:5

Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt-offerings. Again, the idea seems to be much more that Job was a scrupulously godly man who served as a priest to his family, more than that his children were wicked people who needed constant atonement.

According to the number of them all. Job had ten children and so he offered ten animals at each sacrifice, one on behalf of each of his children.

Cursed God in their hearts. The Hebrew reads literally ‘blessed God in their hearts’, but the context indicates that it is used euphemistically and the opposite sense ‘to curse’ is intended; the same verb is also used with this inferred sense in v.11, Job 2:5 and 2:9, and in 1 Kings 21:10 and 21:13.

This construction is undoubtedly a euphemism, i.e. using inference rather than explicit vocabulary to refer to someone ‘cursing God’. This play on the word ‘bless’ in the description and dialogues of the prologue creates irony with the conclusion of the epilogue in Job 42:7-17, where Job’s three friends are instructed that they are the ones in need of Job’s intercessory prayer because they had spoken foolishly about God.

One would not know it from the first few verses but the Book of Job is about an epic war. Yet no city is attacked or besieged or conquered; no battles are won or lost; no oceans are sailed or nations founded or adventures recorded. The whole conflict happens on an ash heap outside a village. It is an epic war but one of the inner life; a struggle to make sense of some of the deepest questions of life.

I.b Job 1:6-22 - The First Test

This section presents the occasion, dialogue and events of Job’s first test.

I.b.i Job 1:6-12 - Attack on Job’s Character

With Job now introduced, the scene switches to the heavenly court. The Lord draws Satan’s attention to Job thus initiating the chain of events that occupy the rest of the book. The earthly protagonists remain oblivious to these heavenly deliberations.

⁶ One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

Job 1:6

One day. This reveals the scene in heaven; unseen to Job and others on earth but absolutely real nonetheless. The story of Job can really only be properly understood by taking into account what happened in heaven and by having more than an earthly perspective.

The heavenly beings, also translated as **Sons of God**, were angels gathered before God like a council before a king; refer to Job 15:8, Psalm 29:1 and Isaiah 6:1-8. The Hebrew idiom ‘sons of’ can be used of a group that is led by a figure referred to as their ‘father’ (e.g. the ‘father’ of a band of prophets in 1 Samuel 10:12).

Satan. The Hebrew noun *satan* is commonly used to refer to someone generally as an adversary, e.g. 1 Samuel 29:4 and 1 Kings 11:14, but here refers to a specific individual, i.e. ‘the Accuser’ or ‘the Adversary,’ who does not appear to be one of the company but who also came among them. The dialogue that follows reveals the character of this figure to be consistent with that of the serpent in Genesis Chapter 3, a character who is also referred to by the use of this noun as the proper name Satan, for example: <<***Satan stood up against Israel, and incited David to count the people of Israel***>> (1 Chronicles 21:1).

The fact that Satan came among them shows that he is only an angelic being and in no way equal to God. People often - to Satan’s great delight - inflate his status and importance, thinking of him as the opposite of God, as if God were light and Satan were darkness; as if God were hot and Satan were cold. Satan wishes he was the opposite of God but God wants his people to know that Satan is a mere creature and is in no way the opposite of God. If Satan has an opposite, it is not God the Father or God the Son; it would be a high-ranking angelic being such as Michael: <<***But when the archangel Michael contended with the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander against him, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’***>> (Jude 9).

The fact that they came to present themselves before the Lord shows that angelic beings - indeed, fallen angelic beings - have access to the presence of God: <<***And the Lord said, “Who will entice Ahab, so that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?” Then one said one thing, and another said another, until a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, “I will entice him”***>> (1 Kings 22:20-21), and: <<***Then he showed me the high priest Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him***>> (Zechariah 3:1), but one day they will be restricted to the earth: <<***The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world – he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him***>> (Revelation 12:9). The NT

reveals that many of them are in fact imprisoned until final judgement: <<**And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgement of the great day**>> (Jude 6).

⁷ The Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the Lord, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.'⁸ The Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil.'⁹ Then Satan answered the Lord, 'Does Job fear God for nothing?¹⁰ Have you not put a fence 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 now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.'

Job 1:7-11

Where have you come from? God allowed and continues to allow Satan and fallen angelic beings into his presence but only for his own purposes. Therefore, he demanded to know what Satan's business was. This statement in no way implies that God does not know what Satan is up to or where he has been, or indeed is going. He is commanding an answer from Satan.

From going to and fro on the earth. Although Satan has access to heaven, he also has free access to the earth, and roams about the earth as a roaring lion: <<**Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour**>> (1 Peter 5:8). It can be said that Satan has an active interest in what happens on the earth.

Have you considered my servant Job? It was God who brought up Job as a subject for discussion, and God brought up Job in the sense of bragging about Job's godliness and character. God was so impressed with Job that he affirmed the description of Job first recorded in Job 1:1.

Of course Satan does consider the saints of God; yet what does the devil see when he considers the saints?

- He sees them and is amazed at the difference between himself and God's people; he sees them and knows that although he has fallen, these earthly creatures stand.
- He sees them and is amazed at their joy; he knows too well the misery of his own soul, but he admires and hates the peace in the soul of the believer.

- He sees them and looks for some fault, so that he may find some small comfort to his own black soul and hypocrisy.
- He sees them - especially great hearts among the saints - and sees those who block and hinder his foul work.
- He sees them and looks for opportunities to do them harm.

Does Job fear God for nothing? Here Satan fulfilled the role described in: <<*Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God'*>> (Revelation 12:10); the accuser of the faithful. Satan accused Job before God, insisting that Job's godliness was essentially false and that Job only served God for what he could get from him. Satan's reply to God first reveals his essential cynicism; he doubts every supposed good as being dishonest and hollow. Satan suggests that the elements of prosperity in Job's life cast doubt on the sincerity of his fear of God; he contends that if God will only remove the protection of these things, Job will curse him outright, that is, literally 'bless him' in line with the comments made on v.5.

Satan's accusation gave testimony to the fact that God had protected Job, i.e. put a fence around him, and had also blessed him. Jesus indicated that Satan wanted to do much worse against Peter than God allowed him to do because of a similar fence of protection: <<*Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers'*>> (Luke 22:31-32).

Confident in his accusation against Job, Satan insisted to God that Job would surely curse you to your face if this protection and blessing was withdrawn. Satan believed that adversity could make Job move from his standing in faith; that Job would be unable to stand against the wiles and the deceptions of the devil as is given to the believer: <<*Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm'*>> (Ephesians 6:13).

¹² The Lord said to Satan, 'Very well, all that he has is in your power; only do not stretch out your hand against him!' So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Job 1:12

The Lord said to Satan, 'Very well, all that he has is in your power.' The fact that Satan has to ask permission to test Job and does so again in Job 2:6 indicates that the extent of his authority falls ultimately under the sovereign governance of God – something that Job also refers to, but without knowledge of or reference to the heavenly dialogue and its relation to his troubles; refer to v.21 and Job 2:10.

Only do not stretch out your hand against him! In response to Satan's accusation, God gave him significant although limited permission to attack Job. God would let down the fence without completely removing it. Satan had the power and the desire to afflict Job all along; what he lacked was the permission from God to do so. When God allowed it, Satan was more than happy to attack Job up to the permissible limit. Although Satan was now able to attack Job in a much greater way than before, his power was not unlimited. God only allowed Satan to do what he wanted to do to ultimately serve God's purpose.

Some people may be shocked that God should allow Satan to attack anyone, especially those faithful to God. However, it should always be remembered that the Lord does not provoke evil, he has just and righteous reasons for everything he allows and, above all, the person being tested should remember: *<<No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it>>* (1 Corinthians 10:13), and: *<<My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing>>* (James 1:2-4).

So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. As he did, he continued a sequence of events in the spiritual realm that were real but not immediately apparent to Job as having their origin in a spiritual battle. The apostle Paul was only too aware of this though: *<<For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places>>* (Ephesians 6:12).

The revelation of the heavenly scene behind the earthly scene helps the reader to understand the later comment of James on Job: *<<Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful>>* (James 5:11). The two great themes of the Book of Job, as explained by James, are the perseverance of Job and the end intended by the Lord, and it is important that Christians learn both themes. The end intended by the Lord in James 5:11 connects with God's eternal purpose as revealed by Paul: *<<so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord>>* (Ephesians 3:10-11). God used Job to teach angelic beings, especially to teach them about his own spectacular wisdom. Therefore, the Book of Job teaches that there is an aspect of human misery that is not the penalty for sin, not correction in righteousness, not redemptive in itself, and not the noble bearing of persecution for righteousness' sake. Job's suffering was of this aspect; it might be said that the reason for his suffering was as a

tool to teach angelic beings; Job made known the manifold wisdom of God to the principalities and powers in heavenly places.

It can also be considered that all the other reasons for suffering can also be used of God to reveal his wisdom to angelic beings; the man who suffers as the penalty for sin can, by the way he receives the suffering, be an important lesson of God's wisdom. Yet Job's case was unique; his suffering seems to be mainly or only concerned with this purpose of instructing angelic beings.

As good as Job was at the beginning of the book, he will be a better man at the end of it. He was better in character, humbler, and more blessed than before. Spurgeon commented, "Foolish devil! He is piling up a pedestal on which God will set his servant Job, that he may be looked upon with wonder by all ages. Oh! How many saints have been comforted in their distress by this history of patience! How many have been saved out of the jaw of the lion, and from the paw of the bear by the dark experiences of the patriarch of Uz. O arch fiend, how art thou taken in thine own net! Thou hast thrown a stone which has fallen on thine own head. Thou madest a pit for Job, and hast fallen into it thyself; thou art taken in thine own craftiness."

I.b.ii Job 1:13-19 - Job Loses Property and Children

Job's troubles are described as coming from multiple directions. The Sabæans come from the south (v.15), the fire from heaven (v.16), the Chaldeans from the north (v.17), and the sirocco wind from the east (v.19). The narrative presents each of the tragedies in rapid succession, giving the reader a feeling described well by Job's later words: <<**he will not let me get my breath**>> (Job 9:18a).

¹³ One day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the eldest brother's house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and said, 'The oxen were ploughing and the donkeys were feeding beside them, ¹⁵ and the Sabæans fell on them and carried them off, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you.' ¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another came and said, 'The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; I alone have escaped to tell you.' ¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another came and said, 'The Chaldeans formed three columns, made a raid on the camels and carried them off, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you.' ¹⁸ While he was still speaking, another came and said, 'Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, ¹⁹ and suddenly a great wind came across the desert, struck the

four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; I alone have escaped to tell you.’

Job 1:13-19

One day. Given greater allowance to afflict Job, Satan maximised his work against the man of God by bringing the catastrophe to Job in the span of a few hours. In that limited time Job lost his oxen, his donkeys, many of his servants, his sheep, his camels, and his sons and daughters. This shows that Satan was focused on maximising his advantage. If he were allowed to attack Job, he would do it in the most effective way possible all the way up to what God would allow. Therefore, any foothold given to Satan is dangerous. People should expect that he will maximise any advantage given to him.

Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house shows the great cruelty of Satan. He is here revealed in startling light: <<*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy*>> (John 10:10a). His malice is seen in the choice of time. He strikes in the midst of festivity.

The catastrophe came upon Job’s sons and daughters as they were feasting in their oldest brother’s house. It is known from vv.4-5 that Job would specifically sacrifice for his sons and daughters on these days; yet these prayers-in-action of Job on behalf of his children did not prevent the catastrophe. This made the crisis all the more mysterious and problematic for Job.

The tragedies came to Job from many different causes; yet the reader knows that the prior cause was the instigation of Satan. In this something of how Satan works can be learned. He did not force godly Sabæans and Chaldeans to do things against Job that they did not want to do. He accomplished his evil purpose by working through the evil character of fallen men. It would also appear that in some way Satan had some influence over the weather, i.e. a great wind, and could imitate a phenomenon usually associated with God, for it was said that the fire of God fell from heaven. The servants of Job thought that God sent this fire but that was only true in a very indirect sense, in the sense that God had allowed it by removing a prior restriction. This shows that at least at some times Satan wants to work in such a way that what he does will be blamed on God.

This should come as no surprise as it is known that angelic beings have supernatural powers that were given to them presumably when God created them. Clearly, he has not removed this power from Satan even though he has been cast out by God. He is a powerful adversary but he is also defeated because he faced a much stronger opponent in Jesus and lost.

The Chaldeans would later become known as the Babylonians and would be used by the Lord to punish Judah for their disobedience by taking them into captivity for seventy years: <<*Look at the nations, and see! Be astonished! Be astounded! For a work is being done in your days that you would not believe if you were told. For I am rousing the Chaldeans, that fierce and impetuous*

nation, who march through the breadth of the earth to seize dwellings not their own>> (Habakkuk 1:5-6).

Although it is known that this attack was clearly focused against Job; yet others suffered because Satan attacked Job and God allowed him to be attacked. Job's animals, servants, and children all perished because Job was the target. This can only be justified if one understands that:

- In allowing their lives to be ended, God did not allow these people to pass from an immortal state to a mortal state. Each of these unfortunates was born mortal and subject to death; the only surprise in their death was that they died sooner than they may have expected to, not that they died at all.
- The rightness or wrongness of what God either allows or actively does can only be finally judged by the measure of eternity, not the measure of this life. One can only say that God either did right or wrong by these unfortunates by the eternal picture. Until then believers trust what Abraham knew of God: <<*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?*>> (Genesis 18:25b).

I.b.iii Job 1:20-22 - Job's Confession and Confidence

Distraught with grief at the calamities that have crushed the household, Job turns to God in lament-laden worship.

²⁰ Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshipped.

Job 1:20

In the wake of his loss, Job embodies both grief, i.e. Job tore his robe and shaved his head, and trust in the Lord, that is, he fell on the ground and worshipped God. Quite appropriately, Job mourned his tremendous losses. He had lost his sons and daughters, his servants and a great amount of material wealth. It was a time for mourning. Job mourned, but he did not mourn as the heathens or the pagans mourned. He did not cut or gash or tattoo himself for the dead as was the common practice among those ancient peoples, thus obeying a law that may not even have been given at the time of this account: <<*You shall not make any gashes in your flesh for the dead or tattoo any marks upon you: I am the Lord*>> (Leviticus 19:28). As Paul explains: <<*When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves*>> (Romans 2:14).

In the midst of his mourning, Job also decided to worship God despite his circumstances and feelings. This was indeed pure worship and greatly glorifying to God. Again Spurgeon comments, "Surely it has not come to this among God's people, that he must do as we like, or else we will not praise him. If he does

not please us every day, and give way to our whims, and gratify our tastes, then we will not praise him.”

²¹ He said, ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’

Job 1:21

Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. Job had a realistic understanding of life. It does not matter how much a person may acquire in life or what status they may have held, once they are dead they have no claim to it: <<*Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun?*>> (Ecclesiastes 1:2-3), <<“*And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.*” But God said to him, “*You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?*” So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God>> (Luke 12:19-21).

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Job analysed his situation in a godly and wise way. Job understood that:

- He came into this world with nothing, so everything he had was indeed a blessing from the bounty of God. If he now had less, it was still more than he came into this world with and more than he would take with him to the world beyond.
- His prior prosperity was not due to luck or mere human ingenuity; it was because of the great and powerful blessing of God upon his life. Spurgeon once more, “I am so pleased to think that Job recognised the hand of God everywhere giving. He said, ‘The Lord gave.’ He did not say, ‘I earned it all.’ He did not say, ‘There are all my hard-earned savings gone.’”
- God was in control of his life, and no matter what the immediate source of adversity or tragedy was, it had to pass through the loving and wise hands of God before it could touch him.
- God was worthy to be blessed and praised in any and all circumstances of life.

In contrast to what Satan suggests will happen (vv.9-11), Job cries out from a posture of grief and worship, blessed be the name of the Lord. This was the expression of worship mentioned in the previous verse. Job was able to bless the name of God even when he was specifically and severely tempted to curse the name of God.

²² In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing.

Job 1:22

In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing. This demonstrates that Job did not sin or wrongly blame God when he said: <<*the Lord has taken away*>> (v.21). He was right to understand that God was ultimately behind all things, even if the immediate responsibility for an event was not God's.

The reader should be impressed with Job's perspective on material possessions. He truly understood what Jesus said: <<*one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions*>> (Luke 12:15b). There are few in the world today who would endure the loss of such a fortune with such godliness and patient endurance.

Job's unshaken commitment to God and his enduring love for God are also impressive. Satan's accusation - that if blessings were taken from Job, he would curse God - was proved to be a lie, and it seems likely that God was justifiably proud of his servant Job, even if he knew the outcome from the start.

In this first round of spiritual warfare Satan was singularly unsuccessful in shaking Job from his standing in faith. Job successfully battled against spiritual attack and fulfilled the exhortation that would come many hundreds of years later from the apostle Paul: <<*so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm*>> (Ephesians 6:13b).

- Job made his stand against fear and did not give into panic.
- Job made his stand against make-believe pretending and appropriately mourned.
- Job made his stand against pride and humbled himself before God.
- Job made his stand against self and decided to worship God.
- Job made his stand against a time-bound mindset and chose to think in terms of eternity.
- Job made his stand against unbelief and did not give into vain questionings of God.
- Job made his stand against despair and saw the hand of God even in catastrophe.
- Job made his stand against anger and did not blame God.

This wonderful triumph of faith did not come from Job acting alone, but only as Job reacted to these disasters filled with and connected to God. It is not recorded that the Spirit of God filled Job to react this way and say these things, but Christians instinctively know it to be true. Satan was acting; but so was God in heaven. He always does!