

Lessons From the Book of Job

One of the basic tools used in understanding the Bible is “The Law of First Mention” which recommends that one go to the first occurrence of a doctrine when considering that particular topic. If we were to follow that principle then it would be well to consider the primary lesson found in the book of Job.

While the book of Job is found almost in the middle of the Bible, it was actually an oral tradition dating back from back in the days of Abraham and which was eventually written down. The most central and essential message of Job relates to the need of discovering what God is doing in any particular life or moment of time. While good theology about God is important, knowing God Himself is absolutely essential.

You may recall that much of the book of Job is made up of long-winded pontifications of men who thought they knew what Job needed to hear concerning his situation. Their theology was right in many ways but their counsel was wrong. They understood that there was a God of creation and One who ruled in the affairs of men. They saw Him as merciful and just and faithful. They knew that He rewarded the righteous and that He would judge the wicked. Thinking that they knew all that they needed to know, they plunged into counseling Job without a clue that they were completely missing the truth and were wrongly judging both Job and his God.

Job was also quite correct in His theology and was declared to be righteous in the eyes of God at the beginning of the book, but he stumbled into self-justification and then began to challenge God concerning what was happening.

The essential lesson of the book of Job was that none of them knew what God was doing, and made foolhardy and ignorant assertions concerning God and Job and the general nature of things. When God finally spoke to Job and challenged his statements, Job instantly repented for his challenges to God.

Then the LORD said to Job, “Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God’s critic, but do you have the answers?”

Then Job replied to the LORD, “I am nothing—how could I ever find the answers? I will cover my mouth with my hand. I have said too much already. I have nothing more to say.”

God accepted his repentance and issued a double blessing to him in his latter days, but that was not the case for Job’s three friends. *After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has.”*

Their difficulty stemmed from a few forgotten things.

- 1. They had forgotten that they really did not know much of anything when comparing their knowledge to God’s understanding.*
- 2. They had forgotten that God was the Judge and that His judgments were perfect altogether.*
- 3. They had forgotten that God was a living and sovereign God; He chooses His own paths and no one can counsel or refuse Him.*

4. *They had forgotten that they NEEDED a personal update from God on an ongoing basis lest they think, speak, and act foolishly because their minds were lacking both experience and information.*

5. *They had forgotten that God is both willing and desiring to share His heart and life with them which is essential for a personal relationship, righteous living, and Godly counsel.*

‘The Law of First Mention’ would call us to understand and remember the things which these men had forgotten [or never knew]. It would call us particularly to item number five: God is both willing and desiring to share His heart and life with us. It is wisdom to wait to be instructed by Him.

This law would also remind us of the very serious consequences for those who forget these things. The story of Job introduced us to very significant truths which we ignore only at great personal risk. The Old Testament is replete with accounts of the blessings men received while walking with God. It also details consequences of walking away from God. Two thousand years ago many of the Scribes and Pharisees filled with religious creeds and limited understanding of God’s will and way, rejected and crucified their Messiah. The people of Jerusalem who followed them paid a horrendous price. Throughout the centuries countless thousands of others also trusted their intellect and religious creeds to save them, but missed the heart of their Messiah and His Father, and stumbled into often tragic difficulties. Now we who live in the last of the last days have an opportunity to discover and know Him in ways which they only talked about.

Consider these verses from Ephesians 1 from the Message –

“It’s in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ, God had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

PAUL’S PRAYER:

I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers, oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—endless energy, boundless strength.....

May God answer this prayer
and fulfill it in each of our lives.....Amen.

THE BASICS FROM CLF