

JOB 1:13-22

Toby Sumpter

Trinity Reformed Church - Moscow, ID

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Introduction

We noted last week that Job is the greatest of the “sons of the East,” but he is not among the “sons of God,” while The Accuser is allowed into the presence of God. Job is an Adam, but even perfect Adam was not finished and glorified. And the hint of coming glory is in the creation of Eve.

The Disasters

Notice that vv. 13-19 forms a literary unit bound by the description of Job’s sons and daughters feasting in the older brother’s house. This indicates the feast of Job’s children is the context of all the destruction, but it also creates a simultaneous feeling of events. While the children are feasting, these disasters are falling. The disasters are described in a chiasmic order as well. With the children as bookends (vv. 13, 18-19), oxen and donkeys are stolen and servants slain (vv. 14-15) is parallel to the camels stolen and servants slain (v. 17). This makes verse 16 the center where the “fire of God” falls and burns up the sheep and the servants and “consumes” them. This suggests that verse 16 is an important part of interpreting the rest of the events in this section. We noted last week that Job’s care for his sons should be seen as parallel to Yahweh: as Job offers his sons up in the fire of the sacrifice (1:5), so Yahweh offers Job as a son to be tested by The Accuser (1:8). This parallel seems confirmed by the disasters and the “fire of God” in particular. This is the same sort of fire of God’s presence that burned on Mt. Sinai (Dt. 4:11, 9:15). And the imagery is sacrificial (cf. Lev. 6:12, Neh. 10:35). The final calamity is also parallel to the center of this section in that it is another “natural disaster.” We should notice that the “great wind” strikes the “four corners” of the house, and the house fell on the sons and daughters and killed them (1:19).

Returning to the Womb

Job tears his clothing and shaves his head and falls to the ground in a ritual enactment of what he says in the following verse (1:20). He is naked, bald, and returning to the ground out of which he was made (ie. his mother’s womb). The particular emphasis on being naked is another parallel to Adam as is the figurative “returning to the ground” (1:21). Job says he wants to return to his mother’s womb which seems strange, but ironically it also implies a kind of rebirth. If Job is an Adam, a “son of the East,” the picture is of Adam being “killed,” put into a deep sleep in order to be cut in order to be glorified. It’s the wind that hovers over the chaos at the beginning of the universe, and it’s the wind-Spirit that strikes the house of Job to begin remaking him. And in all of this Job is still blameless and upright; he did not sin (1:22). Job is a blameless Adam cut open and torn, but his suffering is a womb of new creation.

Conclusions & Applications

Justification means becoming a living sacrifice. The fact that God is a consuming fire is not merely a warning; it’s a promise.

As we look forward to Pentecost Sunday, it is worth pointing out what the Spirit does. The Spirit creates, but the Spirit also burns, divides, and destroys in order to create and re-create. Proof of the Spirit’s presence in us and His Church is this constant work of creation and re-creation.



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