

Sixth Sunday in Easter

Job 1:1-12

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Introduction

Job is the introduction to the wisdom literature in our English Bibles, and was perhaps written or compiled by Solomon himself. The book of Job shares many characteristics with the rest of the wisdom literature, and challenges us to learn the wisdom of the resurrection.

Perfect and Great

The author describes Job as blameless or perfect, one who is upright, fears God, and shuns evil (1:1). Job is a new Adam who was created upright and blameless. Job's children and animals picture for us an Adam who has been fruitful and multiplied and rules over creation. Job's children and possessions also remind us of the patriarchs who had many sheep, camels, and oxen (e.g. Gen. 13:2, 26:12-14, Gen. 30-31). The numbers also indicate perfection, threes and sevens, adding up to tens (1:2-3). Job was clearly a great king in the East (1:3). Job may have been an Edomite, of the family of Esau, and the Septuagint goes so far as to say that Job is the same as Jobab of Gen. 36:33-34. Job's perfection is also illustrated in his offerings for his children (1:5). Job is a priest-king.

Sons of God

In order to approach this story thoughtfully, we need to understand the title "son of God." Adam was the first "son of God" (Gen. 1:26-27, Lk. 3:38). Seth was the second "son of God" (Gen. 5:1-3). This means that the image of God and access to God are central to the calling of "sons of God," but after the Fall, some of that calling is granted to angels (Gen. 3:24). Sons of God have access to the Father and are called to carry on His mission in the world. The "seed" theme in Genesis follows the line of "sons of God" (Gen. 5, 10ff), and takes on a broader corporate meaning in Israel (Ex. 4:22-23). When we come to Job, the "sons of God" should be understood as those men and/or angels who have access to the presence of God. It should also be noted that the sons of God "present themselves" before Yahweh (1:6). This is a court setting where servants stand in the presence of a king (e.g. Ex. 8:16, 19:17, Num. 11:16, Jdg. 20:2).

The Satan

The title of Satan is "The Satan" here and throughout the book of Job (1:6). "Satan" means accuser or adversary. Recalling the courtroom setting, this places the Satan in the role of prosecuting attorney. God highlights the blamelessness of Job to Satan, and the title "my servant" is almost disturbing (1:8). Does God treat all His servants like this? Satan questions God's protection of Job, and insists that Job's blamelessness is based merely upon God's blessing and protection (1:10). Notice that God's "hand" limits the "hand" of Satan (1:11-12).

Conclusions & Applications

To be perfect or blameless is risky business, but that is what justification is all about (Rom. 5:1-2, 12:1). Job is a book about maturity, about growing up into a son of God, and God disciplines the sons that He loves (Heb. 12). There are lessons here for enduring the chastening of the Lord, but there are also lessons for parenting. Love chastens, but love also gives up sons, trusting God to raise them up.



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