

JOB 42

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Introduction

We finish our series in Job this morning considering the conclusion to the book. We know what happens, but it's important to see how 'what happens' actually fits the narrative.

Job is Comforted

Job's answer to Yahweh should first of all be recognized as an answer – meaning that Job is having a conversation with the Lord of the universe. Second, Job's response is really the only appropriate response to the glory of the Lord, and it's the response that he vaguely knew he would give in this setting (9:2-21). While this short speech is primarily expressing awe, wonder, and appreciation for the ways of God which are past finding out, the conclusion is perhaps the most important point. Job says that he had "heard" of Yahweh by the hearing of his ear, but now he has seen Him with his eyes (42:5). This is a recognition that what Job longed for has been granted (19:26, 31:37) and reminds us again of Jacob who also saw God and lived (Gen. 32:28-30). Furthermore, Job's final line needs careful consideration. He is commonly translated to say that he abhors himself and repents in dust and ashes, but this seems antagonistic to the positive evaluation that God gives in 42:7-9. While humility and awe and thankfulness seem fully in order, why would Job "despise" himself and repent? A better way of reading Job's concluding statement is to see Job saying that he still despises his physical circumstances, but he is "comforted" in his dust and ashes (cf. comfort: 2:11, 7:13, 16:2, 42:11; despise: 7:16, 9:21).

Sacrifice and Prayer

Yahweh's wrath is aroused against Eliphaz and his two friends for not speaking what is right concerning Him (42:7). He orders them to offer seven bulls and seven rams (which is quite a sacrifice) as an Ascension Offering, and he says that Job will pray for them and Yahweh will accept him (42:8). Literally, Eliphaz and Co have not spoken what has been established/prepared/created by God. Perhaps the idea is not so much error in facts, but a refusal to align themselves with the creative and providential purposes of God. Literally, it is Job's face that lifts Yahweh from treating the three friends as their folly merits. The three friends did as Yahweh said, and Yahweh "lifted the face of Job" (42:9).

The Restoration

Yahweh "returns the captivity" of Job in his prayers for his friends (42:10), and this means that Yahweh gives Job double what he had previously (cf. Zech. 9:11-12). Eleven thousand sheep, camels, oxen, and donkeys means twenty-two thousand of the same. This restoration from exile is a resurrection scene, and this is confirmed by the return of Job's seven sons and three daughters (42:13). The doubling effect suggests two other themes as well: first, a double return is the amount of restitution required in the law for theft. This includes intentional burglary, but it can also touch on "any kind of lost thing" for which a cause comes before the judges (Ex. 22:9). While there is no "guilt" on Yahweh's part (Ex. 22:1), He is nevertheless restoring Job's livelihood in a manner that is above reproach. Another connection is the fact that the double portion is an inheritance, the inheritance due the firstborn son (e.g. Dt. 21:17). And resurrection is not merely restoration, not merely double restoration: resurrection is glorification. It is life back from the death, twice the life back from the dead, and beauty that overwhelms (42:14-15).

Conclusion and Applications

Of course Job's restoration-resurrection is only a faint glimmer of what we are witnesses to in Jesus Christ. And this glimmer is held in perspective by the last verse of the book. Job died under the great blessing of God, but he died. So too, even this side of the resurrection of Jesus, we still look for the glory of the final restoration, the inheritance of the sons of God (Rom. 8:14-28). This means walking in hope (Rom. 8:24-25), walking in hope with perseverance like Job (Js. 5:11). This hope is not numb to pain and hardship, but this hope most certainly rests in the comfort of the Storm.



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