

# project 4:4

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one year one bible one church one lord

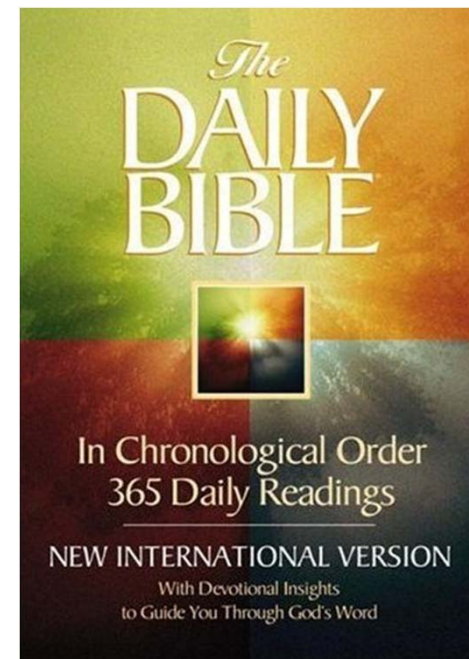
## Why the Righteous Suffer Lesson 37

September 12, 2010

# This Week

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- ▶ We'll cover readings for September 5-11
- ▶ Ezekiel 40-48, Job 1-12
  - ▶ Ezekiel's Great Temple Vision (Ezekiel 40-48)
    - ▶ Ezekiel prophesies a new temple to be built in Israel.
  - ▶ Job is Tested and Met by His Friends
    - ▶ Eliphaz
    - ▶ Bildad
    - ▶ Zophar
    - ▶ Elihu



# The Book of Job

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- ▶ What do you think of when you think of the Book of Job?
- ▶ What sort of book is it?
  - ▶ Steeped in Hebrew poetry
  - ▶ Somewhat alien and repetitious to the Western mind
- ▶ How is the issue presented?
  - ▶ Some see it as a lawsuit
  - ▶ Some see it as a lament
  - ▶ Some see it as both ... and more



# Origin

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- ▶ Scholars believe that it is the retelling of an ancient story about a real man, Job the Patient
  - ▶ Retold in a dramatic and poetic form to emphasize the problem of suffering
- ▶ Probably written in 7<sup>th</sup> Century BC
  - ▶ Job is referenced in Ezekiel 14:14
  - ▶ Style of writing is fairly consistent with other writings of the period
- ▶ However, the story itself is much older
  - ▶ Possibly from the Patriarchal Age



# Interesting Characteristics

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- ▶ One of the most difficult Hebrew texts to understand
  - ▶ Dialect very different from “Jerusalem” Hebrew
- ▶ More words occur only once in Job than in any other book in the Bible
  - ▶ Many “rare” Hebrew words
  - ▶ Some whose meaning has been lost over the years
- ▶ Author is well-versed in the language
  - ▶ Five different Hebrew words for lion
  - ▶ Thirteen different words for precious gems
  - ▶ Five different word for gold
  - ▶ Six words for traps and snares



# Hebrew Poetry

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- ▶ Many forms of poetic construct in Job
  - ▶ Two are easy to spot
- ▶ #1: Two supporting and similar statements
  - ▶ Approximately equal length
  - ▶ Balanced semantically and/or syntactically
  - ▶ Similar meanings
- ▶ Job 4:9
  - ▶ “At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger they perish.”



# Hebrew Poetry (cont.)

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- ▶ #2: BOLD STATEMENT

- ▶ Emphasizing Statement #1
- ▶ Emphasizing Statement #2

- ▶ Job 3:6

- ▶ “Black take that night!

May it not count in the days of the year,  
may it not come in the round of the months”

- ▶ These poetic forms can make for tedious reading, but they give the book a beautiful and expansive character



# Class, Meet Job

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## ▶ Job 1:1-3

- ▶ <sup>1</sup>In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. <sup>2</sup>He had seven sons and three daughters, <sup>3</sup>and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. **He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.**



# Opening Thoughts

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- ▶ Though we have no exact date for when these events took place, it seems as though he lived during the Patriarchal Age
  - ▶ Does not seem to be under the Mosaical system
- ▶ Job is a very wealthy man
  - ▶ Large family
  - ▶ Large herds and possessions
  - ▶ Many servants
- ▶ Blameless and upright
  - ▶ God-fearing
  - ▶ Well-respected – “Greatest man in the East”

# Job's Concern for His Family

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## ▶ Job 1:4-5

- ▶ <sup>4</sup>His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. <sup>5</sup>When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, “Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” This was Job’s regular custom.



# For Discussion

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- ▶ Job is committed to following God and living a holy and righteous life
  - ▶ We'll see that he is greatly respected in his community
  - ▶ He provides assistance to those in need and comforts many
- ▶ He is concerned that his family lives the same way – to the extent that he does what he can to cover their sin
  - ▶ Sends to have them purified after their feasting
  - ▶ Offers sacrifices for them “just in case”



# Class, Meet Satan

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## ▶ Job 1:6-8

- ▶ <sup>6</sup>One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. <sup>7</sup>The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.”
- ▶ <sup>8</sup>Then the LORD said to Satan, “**Have you considered my servant Job?** There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”



# A Shift in Focus

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- ▶ Suddenly, we are presented with a completely different angle on the story
  - ▶ We began with a historical account of a righteous man named Job
  - ▶ Now we are privy to a conversation between God and Satan
  - ▶ There are now two separate stories in play
- ▶ We've switched from a historical account to a screenplay
  - ▶ We see that Job is actually a man on a stage, while God and Satan are having a discussion in the wings



# Satan's Charge Against God

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## ▶ Job 1:9-12

- ▶ <sup>9</sup>“Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied.  
<sup>10</sup>“Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. <sup>11</sup>But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”
- ▶ <sup>12</sup>The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.



# Wait a Minute ...

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- ▶ What just took place here?
- ▶ Did God and Satan just make a wager on Job?
  - ▶ Satan says: “Take away his stuff and he’ll curse you.”
  - ▶ God says: “No, he wont.”
  - ▶ Satan says: “Betcha ...”
- ▶ Why would the Creator of the Universe make a wager with Satan?
  - ▶ And why would he put all of his money on a frail human being like us?
- ▶ What would He have to gain?



# What's At Stake?

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- ▶ What if Job does curse God?
  - ▶ Where would that leave Job?
  - ▶ Where would that leave God?
  - ▶ Where would that leave us?
- ▶ There's a great cosmic drama being played out here
  - ▶ The entire universe, as well as the character of God, hangs in the balance
- ▶ All Creation should literally wait breathless to see what happens



# The Drama Begins ...

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## ▶ Job 1:13-16

- ▶ <sup>13</sup>One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, <sup>14a</sup>a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, <sup>15</sup>and the Sabeans attacked and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"
- ▶ <sup>16</sup>While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"



# And It Gets Worse ...

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## ▶ Job 1:17

- ▶ <sup>17</sup>While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”
- ▶ In a matter of minutes, Job has lost his herds and his servants
- ▶ And the story is not finished ...



# All Is Lost

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## ▶ Job 1:18-19

▶ <sup>18</sup>While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, <sup>19</sup>when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

## ▶ And now he has lost his family

▶ His well-ordered world has collapsed

▶ The “righteous life” = “blessed life” equation just broke down



# Job's Response

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## ▶ Job 1:20-22

- ▶ <sup>20</sup>At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship <sup>21</sup>and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” <sup>22</sup>In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

## ▶ Excuse me? ... In WORSHIP?

- ▶ How could Job worship at a time like this?
- ▶ What did Job have that allowed him to respond in this manner?



# Satan Returns

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## ▶ Job 2:1-3

- ▶ <sup>1</sup>On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. <sup>2</sup>And the LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.” <sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said to Satan, “**Have you considered my servant Job?** There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.”



# Another Wager

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## ▶ Job 2:4-6

- ▶ <sup>4</sup>“Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. <sup>5</sup>But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.”
  - ▶ <sup>6</sup>The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”
- ▶ Here we go again ...
- ▶ Job survived the first test, only to have the heat turned up



# Job is Afflicted

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## ▶ Job 2:7-10

- ▶ <sup>7</sup>So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. <sup>8</sup>Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.
- ▶ <sup>9</sup>His wife said to him, “Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!” <sup>10</sup>He replied, “You are talking like a foolish woman. **Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?**” In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.



# Consider This ...

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- ▶ God knew Job by name
  - ▶ He even bragged on him by name to Satan
- ▶ Does he know us by name?
  - ▶ Does he brag on us to his angels?
  - ▶ Has God ever said to Satan: “Have you considered my servant *your name here?*”
- ▶ Job suffered **because** he was righteous
  - ▶ It was his righteousness that brought him onto the stage in the first place
  - ▶ It was Job’s righteousness the allowed God to make His “wager”



# Consider This ...

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- ▶ It was Satan who ruined Job, not God
  - ▶ Satan was the accuser
  - ▶ Satan took away Job's wealth and his health
  - ▶ It was God who restored him and blessed him further
- ▶ True, God permitted Satan to act
  - ▶ But God did not inflict the ruin
- ▶ James 1:13
  - ▶ <sup>13</sup>When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;



# The Blessing of Suffering

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## ▶ James 1:2

▶ <sup>2</sup>Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. <sup>4</sup>Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

## ▶ Suffering is a natural part of this temporary world

- ▶ For the righteous, it is a sign of God's **confidence** in us
- ▶ God was confident enough in Job to bet everything on his faithfulness



## Your Turn ...

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- ▶ What insights have you gained from this week's study?
- ▶ What did you find in these passages that you have never seen before?
- ▶ How did the Lord speak to your heart through the Word this week?
- ▶ How will your walk with Him be different as a result?



# Next Week

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- ▶ Readings for September 12-18
  - ▶ A Conversation About Suffering

# Questions?

