

## Adam Clarke:

## Introduction

Character of Job, Job 1:1. His family, Job 1:2. His substance, Job 1:3. Care of his family, Job 1:4, Job 1:5. Satan accuses him to God as a selfish person, who served God only for the hope of secular rewards, Job 1:6-11. Satan is permitted to strip him of all his children and property, Job 1:12-19. Job's remarkable resignation and patience, Job 1:20-22.

## Verse 1

In the land of Uz - This country was situated in Idumea, or the land of Edom, in Arabia Petraea, of which it comprised a very large district. See the preface.

Whose name was Job - The original is **יֹב** (Aiyob); and this orthography is followed by the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic. From the Vulgate we borrow Job, not very dissimilar from the **Ἰὸβ** (Iob) of the Septuagint. The name signifies sorrowful, or he that weeps. He is supposed to have been called Jobab. See more in the preface.

Perfect and upright - **תָּמִים וְיָשָׁר׃** (tam veyashar); Complete as to his mind and heart, and Straight or Correct as to his moral deportment.

Feared God - Had him in continual reverence as the fountain of justice, truth, and goodness.

Eschewed evil - **שָׂרַמְתָּ** (sar mera), departing from, or avoiding evil. We have the word eschew from the old French *eschever*, which signifies to avoid. All within was holy, all without was righteous; and his whole life was employed in departing from evil, and drawing nigh to God. Coverdale translates an innocent and virtuous man, such one as feared God, an eschued evell. From this translation we retain the word eschew.

## Verse 3

His substance also was seven thousand sheep - A thousand, says the Chaldee, for each of his sons. Three thousand camels: a thousand for each of his daughters. Five hundred yoke of oxen for himself. And five hundred she-asses for his wife. Thus the Targum divides the substance of this eminent man.

A very great household - **בֵּיתוֹ מְאֹד׃** (abuddah rabbah meod), a very great estate. The word **בֵּיתוֹ** (abuddah) refers chiefly to husbandry, including all manner of labor in the field, with cattle, and every description of servants.

The greatest of all the men of the East - He was more eminent than any other person in that region in wisdom, wealth, and piety. He was the chief emir of that district.

## Verse 4

Feasted in their houses, every one his day - It is likely that a birthday festival is here intended. When the birthday of one arrived, he invited his brothers and sisters to feast with him; and each observed the same custom.

## Verse 5

When the days of their feasting were gone about - At the conclusion of the year, when the birthday of each had been celebrated, the pious father appears to have gathered them all together, that the whole family might hold a feast to the Lord, offering burnt-offerings in order to make an atonement for sins of all kinds, whether presumptuous or committed through ignorance. This we may consider as a general custom among the godly in those ancient times.

And cursed God in their hearts - **וְכָל־בָּנָיו׃** (uberechu Elohim). In this book, according to most interpreters, the verb **בָּרַךְ** (barach) signifies both to bless and to curse; and the noun **אֱלֹהִים** (Elohim) signifies the true God, false gods, and great or mighty. The reason why Job offered the burnt-offerings appears to have been this: in a country where idolatry flourished, he thought it possible that his children might, in their festivity, have given way to idolatrous thoughts, or done something prescribed by idolatrous rites; and therefore the words may be rendered thus: It may be that my children have blessed the gods in their hearts. Others think that the word **בָּרַךְ** (barach) should be understood as implying farewell, bidding adieu - lest my children have bidden adieu to God, that is, renounced him, and cast off his fear. To me this is very unlikely. Mr. Mason Good contends that the word should be understood in its regular and general sense, to bless; and that





There was a day - The first day of the week, says the Targum. It no doubt refers to one of those birthday festivals mentioned before.

#### Verse 14

The asses feeding beside them - אֲתוֹנוֹת (athonoth), the she-asses, which appear to have been more domesticated, as of more worth and use than the others, both for their milk and their work.

#### Verse 15

And the Sabeans fell - The Vulgate alone understands this of a people. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic, understand it as implying a marauding party. The Chaldee says, "Lilith, queen of Zamargad, rushed suddenly upon them, and carried them away." The Sabeans mentioned here are supposed to have been the same with those who were the descendants of Abraham by Keturah, whose son Jokshan begat Sheba. The sons of Keturah were sent by Abraham into the east, Genesis 25:6, and inhabited Arabia Deserta, on the east of the land of Uz. Hordes of predatory banditti were frequent in those countries and continue so to the present day. They made sudden incursions, and carried off men, women, children, cattle, and goods of every description; and immediately retired to the desert, whither it was in vain to pursue them.

#### Verse 16

The fire of God is fallen - Though the fire of God may mean a great, a tremendous fire, yet it is most natural to suppose lightning is meant; for as thunder was considered to be the voice of God, so lightning was the fire of God. And as the prince of the power of the air was permitted now to arm himself with this dreadful artillery of heaven, he might easily direct the zigzag lightning to every part of the fields where the sheep were feeding, and so destroy the whole in a moment.

#### Verse 17

The Chaldeans made out three bands - The Chaldeans inhabited each side of the Euphrates near to Babylon, which was their capital. They were also mixed with the wandering Arabs, and lived like them on rapine. They were the descendants of Chesed, son of Nahor and brother of Huz, from whom they had their name Casdim, which we translate Chaldeans. They divided themselves into three bands, in order the more speedily and effectually to encompass, collect, and drive off the three thousand camels: probably they mounted the camels and rode off.

#### Verse 19

A great wind from the wilderness - Here was another proof of the influence of the prince of the power of the air. What mischief might he not do with this tremendous agent, were he not constantly under the control of the Almighty! He seems to have directed four different currents, which, blowing against the four corners or sides of the house, crushed it together, and involved all within in one common ruin.

#### Verse 20

Rent his mantle - Tearing the garments, shaving or pulling off the hair of the head, throwing dust or ashes on the head, and fitting on the ground, were acts by which immoderate grief was expressed. Job must have felt the bitterness of anguish when he was told that, in addition to the loss of all his property, he was deprived of his ten children by a violent death. Had he not felt this most poignantly, he would have been unworthy of the name of man.

Worshipped - Prostrated himself; lay all along upon the ground, with his face in the dust.

#### Verse 21

Naked came I out of my mother's womb - I had no earthly possessions when I came into the world; I cannot have less going out of it. What I have the Lord gave: as it was his free gift, he has a right to resume it when he pleases; and I owe him gratitude for the time he has permitted me to enjoy this gift.

Naked shall I return thither - Whither? Not to his mother's womb surely; nor does he call the earth his mother in this place. In the first clause of the verse he speaks without a metaphor, and in the latter he speaks in reference to the ground on which he was about to fall. As I came out of my mother's womb destitute of the earthly possessions, so shall I return אֶרֶץ (shammah), There; i.e., to the earth on which he was now falling. That mother earth was a common expression in different nations, I allow; but I believe no such metaphor was now in the mind of Job.

The Lord gave - The Chaldee has, "The Word of the Lord, מַיְמֵרָא דַּיַּי (meymera dayai), gave; and the Word of the Lord and the house of his judgment, have taken away!" Word is used here personally, as in

many other places of all the Targums.

Blessed be the name of the Lord - The following is a fine paraphrase on the sentiment in this verse: -  
 "Good when he gives, supremely good;  
 Nor less when he denies;  
 Afflictions from his sovereign hand,  
 Are blessings in disguise."

Seeing I have lost my temporal goods, and all my domestic comforts, may God alone be all my portion! The Vulgate, Septuagint, and Coverdale, add, The Lord hath done as he pleased.

#### Verse 22

In all this Job sinned not - He did not give way to any action, passion, or expression, offensive to his Maker. He did not charge God with acting unkindly towards him, but felt as perfectly satisfied with the privation which the hand of God had occasioned, as he was with the affluence and health which that hand had bestowed. This is the transaction that gave the strong and vivid colouring to the character of Job; in this, and in this alone, he was a pattern of patience and resignation. In this Satan was utterly disappointed; he found a man who loved his God more than his earthly portion. This was a rare case, even in the experience of the devil. He had seen multitudes who bartered their God for money, and their hopes of blessedness in the world to come for secular possessions in the present. He had been so often successful in this kind of temptation, that he made no doubt he should succeed again. He saw many who, when riches increased, set their hearts on them, and forgot God. He saw many also who, when deprived of earthly comforts, blasphemed their Maker. He therefore inferred that Job, in similar circumstances, would act like the others; he was disappointed. Reader, has he, by riches or poverty, succeeded with thee? Art thou pious when affluent, and patient and contented when in poverty?

That Job lived after the giving of the law, seems to me clear from many references to the rites and ceremonies instituted by Moses. In Job 1:5, we are informed that he sanctified his children, and offered burnt-offerings daily to the morning for each of them. This was a general ordinance of the law, as we may see, Leviticus 9:7: "Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin-offering and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement for thyself and for the people." Leviticus 9:22: "And Aaron lifted up his hands towards the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering the burnt-offering."

This sort of offering, we are told above, Job offered continually; and this also was according to the law, Exodus 29:42: "This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations." See also Numbers 28:3, Numbers 28:6, Numbers 28:10, Numbers 28:15, Numbers 28:24, Numbers 28:31.

This custom was observed after the captivity, Ezra 3:5: "They offered the continual burnt-offering: and of every one that offered a freewill-offering." See also Nehemiah 10:33. Ezekiel, who prophesied during the captivity, enjoins this positively, Ezekiel 46:13-15: "Thou shalt daily prepare a burnt-offering unto the Lord; thou shalt prepare it every morning."

Job appears to have thought that his children might have sinned through ignorance, or sinned privately; and it was consequently necessary to make the due sacrifices to God in order to prevent his wrath and their punishment; he therefore offered the burnt-offering, which was prescribed by the law in cases of sins committed through ignorance. See the ordinances Leviticus 4:1-35; Leviticus 5:15-19, and particularly Numbers 15:24-29. I think it may be fairly presumed that the offerings which Job made for his children were in reference to these laws.

The worship of the sun, moon, and stars, as being the most prevalent and most seductive idolatry, was very expressly forbidden by the law, Deuteronomy 4:19: "Take heed, lest thou lift up thine eyes to heaven; and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them." Job purges himself from this species of idolatry, Job 31:26-28: "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above."

He clears himself also from adultery in reference to the law enacted against that sin, Job 31:9-12: "If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbor's door; then let my wife grind to another: for this is a heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges." See the law against this sin, Exodus 20:14, Exodus 20:17: "Thou shalt not commit adultery: thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." Leviticus 20:10: "The man that committeth adultery with another man's wife shall surely be put to death;" see Deuteronomy 22:22. And for the judge's office in such cases, see Deuteronomy 17:9-12: "Thou shalt come unto the priests and Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment." 1 Samuel 2:25: "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him."

The following will, I think, be considered an evident allusion to the passage of the Red Sea, and the destruction of the proud Egyptian king: Job 26:11, Job 26:12: "The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his

reproof. He divideth the sea with his power; and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud.â€• These, with several others that might be adduced, are presumptive proofs that the writer of this book lived after the giving and establishment of the law, if not much later, let Job himself live when he might. See other proofs in the notes.