

“Where Is He?”



Thoughts on Job 14: 1-10

By John Suttles

Coweta Particular Baptist Fellowship

“Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And doth thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?” Job 14:1-10

I want to share with you a couple of lessons found in this passage from the Bible. I would like us to see an assertion that Job makes and a question that he asks. But, first, I want us to consider together the man Job himself. There is almost no one in the English-speaking world that doesn't at least know his name. The life and experience of Job is so widely known among those of us who are English-speaking that even his name has become a proverb. For example, we talk about 'having the patience of Job' and we talk about 'having the character of Job' so that Job's name has become a proverb in itself. Probably no Bible character is more widely known throughout the world than this man Job, even among those

who have no interest in the Bible at all. He was a man of great wisdom and patience who endured great difficulties. Surely we would do well to look more closely into his life. Let us do that with an examination of Job 14:1-10.

It will be necessary for me to take you back a moment and reacquaint you with Job's life and the journey that brought him to the wisdom that is stored up for us in chapter fourteen. In Job 1:1-4, we read: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them."

In verses six through ten, the Bible records: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side..."

And so, as the book of Job begins to unfold the biography of this man for us, we find out that he is a truly godly man. The first verse tells us that he was perfect, that he

was upright, that he feared God and hated evil. And he had a wonderful family. He had seven sons and three daughters, and we can understand from what is told to us in verse four that they had great communion and fellowship together. They weren't a family that was fragmented and fractured with fighting and hatred. They were close. They visited one another's houses. They ate and drank together. Job had a wonderful family. As well, the Bible reveals to us that Job was a wealthy man. This man had a great deal of wealth, and we know that it was from the work of his hands. He didn't inherit it.

So, Job was a godly man with a wonderful family and great wealth; but along comes this day that the Bible tells us, in verse 6, was a day when Satan was in the presence of God and Job's name was mentioned. Now, we know from this passage and many others that Satan apparently has some access to God Himself at some intervals. We don't know very much about that, but we do know that Satan was in the presence of God at this time. And a question comes to my mind. Why? The answer is very simple. We don't know.

Then, as the discussion between Satan and the Lord unfolds in chapter one, we find out that the Lord brings Job directly to Satan's attention. He asks of Satan, "Have you considered Job? You said you have been roaming about the earth to and fro. Then let Me ask you, have you noticed My servant Job?" And again the question comes. Why? Why would God do that? And the answer simply is that we don't know.

I brought those two points to your attention to show us that we simply don't understand or know all that God thinks and all that God does, and neither do we need to. You see, people are so proud and so vile that they think God

needs to answer to them. I have been preaching in jails and prisons for many years; and I have heard men say things like, “You know, if I could just understand why God had allowed this...” or “If God would just tell me this...” or “If I knew what the answer to this was...then I might would believe in the Lord. I might care about the Lord.”

Let me explain something to you. God owes no one any explanation for His doings. God is under no obligation to meet our requirements or to answer our feeble questions, whatsoever. God is God; and He does whatever He wills; and His thoughts are high above our thoughts; and we cannot comprehend His ways. God gives no answer to any one for anything! In Isaiah 55:8-9, we read: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” God doesn’t have to explain Himself. God doesn’t have to give us an answer or an explanation for what He is doing. His thoughts are high above our thoughts, and God will not be called into questioning by us.

We are living in an impertinent hour when people think that they can command God, and God had better jump and move. But I have got news; it’s not so! God is God. Psalms 92:5-6 says this: “O LORD, how great are thy works! *and* thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.”

People by nature are without true light and without true wisdom—they are without understanding; and God will not be called into questioning in the courtroom of man’s reason. God does that which pleases Him. The Scriptures tell us that no man can stay His hand or question what He does. Daniel 4:34 says: “And at the end of the days I

Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation.”

God will not respond to our questioning. Why was Satan in Heaven? I don't know. Why did God bring Job to his attention? I don't know. But I know this: God's ways are higher than ours; and everything about God is good and perfect. So, God brings Satan's attention to Job.

Then, we see further in Job's biography—Job 1:14-17—that God allowed Satan to destroy everything Job had. He lost all of his wealth and all of his cattle, and he was left with nothing. And then the Lord allowed Satan to touch his children, and all of his children died. In verses eighteen and nineteen: “...there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.”

God allowed Satan to kill all of Job's children. Oh, the horror! I pray none of us have to experience it. I pray none of us ever have to experience following the casket of our own child out to the cemetery. But dear old Job followed not one, not two, but seven sons and three daughters out to the cemetery to bury them. What did Job do in these tragic circumstances? Verse twenty tells us. Dear old Job loved God and served the Lord, and he didn't command the Lord to come into Job's court to give an answer for His actions. He bowed before the Lord his Sovereign and said, “Thou art God, and I worship you.”

There are people who serve God for what they can get, and that is what Satan had implied. He implied that Job was a great man because God had blessed him, and he was rich. “Because he is rich; that is why Job is serving You!” This was Satan’s accusation. And there have always been people who have done that. They have served the Lord for what they could get out of Him. But that was not so with Job. Job loved the Lord. Well, surely this is the end of old Job’s troubles. Surely this would be the end. He had lost everything. He had lost his children—carried them to the cemetery and buried them. He was down to nothing. Surely that was the end. But it was not.

Job 2:1 says: “Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.” And we know from chapter two that with his wealth gone and his family gone and nothing left but his own body and his health, the Lord said to Satan, “You can touch Job himself.” And Satan does. In Job 2:7-8 Job loses even his health. “So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.”

Now, with Job’s health gone, comes the crowning pain. In Job 2:9, his own wife comes to condemn him. “Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thy integrity? Curse God and die!” This is the last straw. Poor old Job! Well, what did he do then? Verse ten tells us. “But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”

In all of this did not Job sin with his lips! He bit his tongue; and if we read chapters four through thirteen, we find Job's misery is increased when his friends come to offer their pitiless opinions. My goodness! With all of his suffering, surely by the time we get to chapter fourteen, we find a man who has learned much that he could teach us. Very well could Job have quoted this poem had it been written at the time:

"I walked a mile with pleasure, and she chattered
all the way.
But I was none the wiser for all she had to say.
I walked a mile with sorrow and ne'er a word said
she;
But, oh, the things I learned from her when sorrow
walked with me!"

So, we come now to chapter fourteen; and I want us to see this assertion that Job makes and the question that he asks. First Job, after all of his misery and grief and loss and pain, makes this assertion in verse one: "Man *that is* born of a woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble." Surely none anywhere in the world would be so foolish as to deny this claim. Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

James 4:13 tells us in another way: "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." What is James saying? He is saying what Job said. Man that is born of a woman is of few days. I know when we are young that it is hard to get our heads around that. When we are young we

think, “Oh boy! I have got life by the horns, and I am going to live it to the full!” But we are of **few** days at best.

And not only are our days few, but our life is full of trouble. People try in every way to numb that trouble; don’t they? But their lives are full of trouble. I don’t have to prove that, surely. Trouble is on every hand. But people do everything to deny that truth; don’t they? They will try anything—drugs, fleshly pleasures, or even outright denial—whatever it takes to escape the reality of this truth that man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

Furthermore, people try to escape the reality that trouble is everywhere because sin has wreaked havoc in God’s creation. I mentioned that I have had men in the jails say often to me one of the most common objections: “Well, if I could understand why God has allowed all of this suffering in the world...” But they need to look at the source of that suffering! It is not God. God created a perfect world. Sin brought that suffering. Suffering is not God’s fault. Man introduced suffering by his sin—that very same sin that questions God.

Well, what else is Job telling us? He is telling us that man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He is like a flower. He pops up, and he is cut down. But what else is Job telling us? He is telling us that even after a whole lifetime of exposure to trouble, to grief, to pain, to disappointment, to loss, to tragedy—after a whole lifetime of exposure to all of that—man dies! He dies.

Job 14:5 reads: “Seeing his days *are* determined, the number of his months *are* with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.” At the appointed time, man dies. This is the universal, indisputable proof of God’s truth.

Men die. Is this not what God warned? We read it in Genesis 2:15? Is this not what God said? "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." And the text of the Hebrew is, literally, "in dying thou shalt die." Does Job not speak of what God warned? Is this not the inviolable truth of God that no one can escape? No one can violate it; no one can deny it; no one can turn it back. God says we will die. And every one before us has died and every one living will die. Even the vilest reprobate and even the coldest atheist will not escape God's appointment with death. Man's days, verse 5 says, are numbered.

Do you know that the day you came out of your mother's womb, the day you were born, God had the number of your days fixed? What an assertion Job makes for us!

But, I want us to see, as well, the most vital question that we will ever entertain. Job asked this question in Job 14:7: "For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" Where is he?

Someone has said that there is nothing more certain than death, but there is nothing more uncertain than the hour. And here is the vital question. When a man dies, where is he? He is gone! He is no longer there. He won't be back. He is not like a tree. Job says, listen! There is hope for a tree,

friend. If a tree dies and it rots, even if the root rots in the ground, Job says, over the passing of time with moisture and the smell of water, it may sprout up a little green shoot and come back a tree. There is hope for a tree! But what about a man when he dies? Where is he? When you “plant” a man—when you bury him, he is not coming back.

Many years ago when I was in 6th or 7th grade, my daddy died. And I remember as if it were yesterday. The government had sent an American flag to drape his casket because he was a World War II veteran. I remember following the hearse out to that little country church in South Carolina where I was born. And I walked behind my daddy’s casket and followed him out to that grave that day. They set my daddy down in that grave, and I remember as a little boy watching and thinking, “How cold is he?” They buried my daddy. Over the years I have been back to that place many times. I go by there every time I get back home. I go by my daddy’s grave; and every time I go, he is not there. He is not coming back. There is no little shoot coming out of the ground. There is no movement of that dirt. When a man dies where is he? He is not there in the body anymore; he is gone! I can go by that cemetery for all of my life—there will never be a sign of my daddy. He is not coming back!

Friend, when you die, you are not coming back. They can plant you, and you won’t be like that tree. You are not coming back.

So then where is man when he dies? Job asked the question. Oh, listen, I can tell you where he is. He is either in Heaven or in Hell. That body is in the ground planted, and it will stay there, and it’s not coming back. Some people are foolish and superstitious and say they don’t like to be around a graveyard because they are afraid of those people. But

there is nothing to be afraid of in the graveyard. They are dead! They are not coming back, and they are not walking around out there. They are gone. So, Job puts this question to our hearts today: “But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where *is* he?”

Heaven or Hell. He is not here. I can tell you from the Scriptures where he is if he is a Christian. If he is washed in the Blood of Christ, he is in Heaven. John 14:1-3 says: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.”

Oh, where is he? I tell you where he is. If he knows the Lord—if he left this world with his sins washed in the Blood of Christ—he is with Christ. He is in Heaven. In 2 Corinthians 5:1-4, the Bible says: “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven ... For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” Where is man when he dies? Job asked that question. I tell you that if he left this world in Christ he is in Heaven.

But I must tell you, as well, that if you leave this world without Christ, you will be in a very different place. Your family might follow your body out to the cemetery; but that is not where you will be, friend. If you leave this world

without Christ, you will go to Hell. Luke 13:3 warns us: "... except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Luke 16:22-24 tells the entire story: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

But Lazarus was not there, friend. His body was buried, but he wasn't there! In verse twenty three it said: "And in hell he [the rich man] lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom..."

When a man dies where is He? I tell you where he is. Without Christ, he is in Hell! He is not in limbo or in a state of waiting. He is in Hell. Proverbs 24:19-20: "Fret not thyself because of evil *men*, neither be thou envious at the wicked; For there shall be no reward to the evil *man*; the candle of the wicked shall be put out." Oh, listen to me, Job asked this question: When a man dies, where is he? Is he in Heaven or Hell?

And how long will he be there? Well, verse twelve in our passage tells us. I told you my daddy is buried out that in that country cemetery. How long is he going to be there? In the words of verse twelve, I tell you: "So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens *be* no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." How long? Till the Heavens be no more! There is coming a judgment day when God will roll up the Heavens of this world, and He will call all people

into judgment. Peter talked about it in 2 Peter 3:10: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

God will roll it all up. Job, this dear man, had suffered so much. Job with all of his wisdom says listen to me. In chapter fourteen he said that every man who is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. And then at the end of it, he will die. Then, Job asked this question: When he dies, where is he—Heaven or Hell? How long will he be there? The answer is till God rolls the heavens up. And then when He rolls the Heavens up—judgment! “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap (Galatians 6:7). Judgment.

Where are you today? Nobody is following your casket out to the cemetery—yet. Where are you this day? Where will you be when you die? May God help us and may God give you the grace to believe in Christ, the only way of salvation for the life that is to come.

Dear Reader,

It is our prayer that you have a saving relationship with Christ. The Bible teaches that you may have salvation by repentance (turning from your sin) and by faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ means simply to trust in the obedience and shed blood of Christ to cover your sins. If this booklet has been used by God to bless your life, please let us know so that we may pray for you in the days ahead.

John Suttles

Coweta Particular Baptist Fellowship
CPBFellowship@hotmail.com
www.cpbfellowship.com