

## 31. Defining Job as a Type of Christ (Job 1–3, 12–14, 19, 21–24, 38–40, 42)

Job's descent into unprecedented trials, followed by his ascent as he became "more than his beginning" after passing God's test (Job 42:12), not only forms a classic pattern of ascending to the highest levels of the spiritual ladder but also typifies Christ himself. As a man "perfect and upright, and one who feared God, and eschewed evil" (Job 1:1), Job was not disloyal to God but loyal, not rebellious but compliant. He therefore didn't deserve the grievous suffering he endured or had any obvious reason to be ruined, punished, disinherited, and humiliated. Together with Job's salvation from his afflictions, spiritual rebirth, deliverance from evil, reinheritance of his estate, and exaltation among his people, these traits associated with Job's life constitute the seven major antithetical themes of the Book of Isaiah that define spiritual descent before ascent.

Of course, the themes we see acted out in Job's life—of ruin before rebirth, punishment before deliverance, suffering before salvation, humiliation before exaltation, and disinheritance before inheritance—depend on whether a person who desires to ascend the spiritual ladder exercises loyalty to God and compliance with his will, as they also work in reverse for those who are disloyal and rebel.

As for Job, so long as his children are alive, he serves as their proxy savior in his loyalty to God and compliance with his will. The contrast between him and his children, however, waxes ever greater until finally for them it is open season for fun dinner parties while Job atones for their lax lifestyle by offering animal sacrifices: "His sons went and feasted in their houses, everyone his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually" (Job 1:4–5).

Losing his herds, camels, servants, and children in one day, Job began a period of mourning. God permitted Satan to try Job even beyond these extremities, however, by smiting him with boils over his entire body. When even his wife rebuked him, Job neither sinned in his heart nor with his lips but exclaimed, "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

Even Job's three closest friends, though deeply sympathetic at first, in the end turned out to be accusers rather than comforters: "Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came everyone from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent everyone his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great" (Job 2:11–13).

Said Job after he had listened to many of their insinuations of his deserving his ordeal: “I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all. [When] shall vain words have an end? Or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest [so]?” (Job 16:2–3).

At issue here was the nature of Job’s afflictions, all of which Job and his “comforters” recognized from ancient Near Eastern emperor-vassal agreements as covenant curses. Job’s family, friends, and acquaintances must thus have assumed that Job was guilty of some gross transgression in order to warrant such a complete meltdown in his life. This is where Job’s serving as a type of Christ comes into focus. He was innocent, yet he suffered. Answering for the transgressions of his children, Job was smitten of God until God said it was enough. Although Job kept God’s law, his children evidently did not. Nor did they honor their father by keeping his law. God, therefore, removed them from his sight and blessed Job with a new and righteous posterity.

Gaining more power with God to intercede on behalf of others, Job even pled for his three friends after God had rebuked them: “And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and everyone an earring of gold. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters” (Job 42:10–13).