

Contemporary Mystic Christianity **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

The Four Great Tests

Job 1:1

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright and one who feared God, and eschewed evil.

The word Job has been given many meanings including "the tested", "the serpent", "the tried", "the adversary", "the afflicted one."

When the story opens Job is portrayed as wealthy, useful, influential, honored and applauded — the ideal type, materially, toward which the mass consciousness of humanity strives. According to the ancient teachings of Israel, this outward wealth and happiness is the result of job's piety and obedience to the Law of the Lord. Now, suddenly, into the life of this just and holy man, deservedly successful in all things, comes one trial after another. The problem of the book then becomes, Why does this suffering afflict the righteous? We can understand that the wicked should suffer, but why the righteous? The Prologue in Heaven gives us the answer to this question as it is worked out through the dramatic story of Job: Satan is a Son of God, and is the tester of human worth. Like the gold which

is tried in the fire, the good man is tried by the Angel of Sorrow in order that he may be made more perfect.

Job is subjected to four great testings, and these are common to all humanity under the vibratory influence of Saturn: the rupture of the family circle by death, the loss of worldly possessions, the breaking down of physical health and the misunderstanding, persecution and desertion of trusted friends. These are the four steps familiar in the lives of all men and the universal purification by means of which the mass consciousness is being gradually lifted to the place where it may know and commune with the "splendors beyond the veil."

Job 1:13-19

And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.

And there came a messenger unto Job and said, the oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away; yea they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

While he was yet speaking there came also another and said, The fire from God is fallen from heaven and hath burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

While he was yet speaking there came also another and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands and fell upon the camels and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

While he was yet speaking 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.

The catastrophes described in the text are not merely incidents affecting the affairs of one ancient family; they exemplify the karmic reactions under which the whole race, the very planet, suffers, as a consequence of our materialism. There is a law of matter, which leads to destruction and death; there is also a law of Spirit, which leads to Life everlasting. Every man has free will to choose which law he will live under. The Book of Job depicts clearly the fruits which come to bless or curse, according as the choice is made.

One whose life is lived to the dictates of spiritual law reacts as Job did when all the possessions of the outer world were taken from him. The spirit of non-attachment

was perfected in him when he said: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord" (Law). (Job 1:21)

One whose life is lived to the dictates of material law, however, under such adversities is prone to follow the cynical counsel of the lower emotional nature, represented by Job's wife: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die." (Job 2:9)

But that Job typifies the aspirant upon the way of spiritual attainment is shown in his reply: "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?" (Job 2:10)

High and Low Saturnian Aspects and Their Influence Upon Man

The destructive influences of Saturn are represented by the three principal afflictions enumerated in the Book, namely, Job's loss of his children, his possessions and his physical infirmity, ("Skin for skin," said the Tester, "Yes, all that a man hath will he give for his life"); and finally the lack of that sympathetic understanding which he had expected to receive from his friends.

The higher influences of Saturn are typified by the three great revelations. In these three instances the portals of the heavenly realms are unbarred, celestial glories are revealed and the Spirit of Heaven communes with Earth — all as parts of the initiatory sequence: (1) liberation of consciousness from the body; (2) interblending of the forces of Heaven and Earth as the Akashic Scrolls unwind; (3) the sacrificial offerings of the three friends, which symbolize the transmutation of the sense nature which is effected in every one of the three lower vehicles of the personality. We say that the "sense" nature is transformed in every one of the three lower vehicles, or aspects, of the personality, because, contrary to popular belief, sensuality is not an attribute of the bodily consciousness alone but characterizes what is called the soul and mind as well. There is such a thing as psychic sensuality, and there is such a thing as mental sensuality, both belonging to the condition called "hell."

In the Book of Job we learn how the threefold transmutation is accomplished through the agency of sorrow, or, specifically, through the forces of Saturn, or Satan:

Limitation is changed into Illumination,
The finite passes into Infinity,
The Law becomes Light.

The home of Job is identified in the text as "the land of Uz." The Moslems who now inhabit this country still revere the name of Job. When a stranger comments on the productiveness of the land, they reply proudly, "This is because it is the land of Ayyub" (Eyob).

There are accounts of an ancient Arabian custom in which, if one of their number became ill, it was incumbent upon the relatives to bear him to the rubbish heaps just outside the settlement and to place him beneath a shelter made of four poles and a cloth. His close intimates then formed a circle about the stricken figure where they might sit in silence as they listened to his lamentations. They might not address the sufferer unless he spoke to them first, and then only the eldest might reply. Thus the three friends of Job "sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him."

This ancient custom is referred to here only as an illustration of the marvelous skill with which the writer of the Book of Job has used objective material to conceal spiritual, or subjective, experiences. As previously stated, the Book of Job elucidates certain initiatory formulas which have been given to all peoples in all ages of history. The characters represent the development of man himself, as the human becomes lifted and transformed into the divine.

In the silence of the seven days and nights mentioned in the text (Job 2:13), we have the entrance of the aspirant into the vast Hall of Silence, beloved of all who have known this sublime experience. Here upon its shining walls he learns to read the Akashic Records of the Seven Creative Days of human evolution. Here may be traced the ego's karmic relationships in all the events of his life, and one sufficiently well qualified may lift the veil of the past and trace the lines of causation reaching back beyond his birth in the present Earth life, and so learn, as it is taught in Job, that the payment of karma begins not with birth, but with conception.

This is shown in Job 3:3-6, wherein he curses the day of his birth, overshadowed as it is with clouds from the past:

Job 3:3-6

Let that day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.

Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above neither let the light shine upon it.

Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it, let the blackness of the day terrify it.

As for that night let darkness seize upon it, let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.

Again he longs for release from bondage to the past, for that time when through his own soul awakening he may find emancipation from karmic shackles, "when the servant is free from his master."

Job 3:23-26

Why is light given to a man whose way is hid and whom God hath hedged in?

For my sighing cometh before I eat and my roarings are poured out like the waters.

For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

I was not in safety neither had I rest neither was I quiet, yet trouble came.

In Job's struggle with himself, he is aided and strengthened by a helper from God: "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men." (Job 4:13)

"The angels that dry our tears bear the form and features of all we have said and thought; above all, of what we have done prior to the hour of misfortune." So writes — a sage who knows much of the inner — plane ministry which is given to strengthen and bring solace to mortals.

Job's realization of the impermanence of the things of the flesh and the immutability and permanence of things

spiritual is shown in his appeal to the Divine Tribunal: "I would seek unto God and unto God would I commit my cause." (Job 5:8)

— ***Corinne Heline***