

## Governor

This title is found in Matthew 2:6, where we read, "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel". Here "Governor" means to be a leader, one who rules or has authority. We ask, For what purpose was Jesus to be such a Governor? The answer is given in the verse: that he might rule Israel.

The word "rule" here is also interesting, meaning 'to feed or shepherd animals'. Mostly it is used in the New Testament in this way. The usage of this word in Revelation as applied to Christ is worth investigating: "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them [the redeemed]" (7:17); "he shall rule them [the nations] with a rod of iron" (19:15). Clearly there is a twofold aspect to the work of shepherding. Jesus Christ will be both the gentle feeder of his sheep and the strong leader of the wayward.

This introduces us to the kind of governor Jesus Christ will be. In the Kingdom, those of his flock who desire to be fed will be lovingly cared for; those who desire to rebel will find a strong and powerful ruler who will discipline them into submission with an iron rod.

In Hebrews 13:17 we are exhorted to be obedient to such men: "Obey them that have the rule [same word as 'Governor'] over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you". How much more should we submit to the Governor who rules our lives! The consequences of a lack of submission to his directives will be disastrous.

## Chief ruler

1 Chronicles 5:2. This equates to the meaning of the title 'governor' found in the New Testament.  
(To be continued)

## Exposition

# Who is this?

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*Job's trial of affliction perplexed him. The wrong reasoning of his friends only served to anger him and lead him unwisely to challenge God to explain His apparent injustice. The answer of the Almighty, which rebukes Job and leads him to repentance, opens with the words that form the title to this article.*

**O**NE OF THE many lessons to be gleaned from the wonderful book of Job is that of understanding: how much do the people in the book understand each other? And, much more importantly, how much do they understand their God?

## Two viewpoints

It all starts with two viewpoints of the man Job being presented:

"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? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face" (1:8-11).

The adversary's contention is that Job is *only what he has*: what he has is really what he is. There is no substance in his apparent fear of God.

Who understands Job more: the God he worships and fears, or the adversary? But the question is there, How can Job be properly assessed while he is so prosperous? It is decided to put the matter to the test, and Job's dreadful trial begins. He comes through the first part with flying colours:

"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. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (vv. 21,22).

In the next exchange between the Lord and the adversary it is pointed out that Job has held fast his integrity. He has not produced the predicted cursing of his God (2:1-3). The matter now intensifies:

“And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face” (vv. 4,5).

The essence of the matter is in the word “life”:

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life” (v. 6).

No one may touch the life of those who belong to God. Job was to be tried to the utmost, but the ultimate benefit that he received would not have been possible if his life had ended. He, in his agony, would wish that it might end; but if that had happened he would not have received his final blessings. This is an aspect of the matter that Elihu considers: that Job will be tried to the end, thus producing the recantation that he eventually offers to God.

### **No one understands!**

So far we have seen that the adversary’s assessment of Job is wrong. He does not understand. Who comes next? It is his wife; but neither does she understand him when she advises him to curse God and die (2:9). He rebukes her and holds on his course: “In all this did not Job sin with his lips” (v. 10).

When Job saw his friends arriving it may have heartened him. But that did not last long when they sat there silently. He could almost read their minds. What has he done for God to do this to him?

“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” (v. 13).

Very great indeed! Very great when he searched his heart to see what he could possibly have done for the Almighty to turn against him and become his enemy. There was nothing that he could find, and he was baffled and heartbroken.

It was soon evident that his friends did not understand him either. Neither were they prepared to listen to his point of view or to be moved from their conviction that sin on his part was responsible for his predicament.

The debate that followed ended in a wrath-filled silence. More wrath was forthcoming from the young man Elihu in what appears to be a

justifiable anger (32:1-5). Here we have a scenario where a husband and wife and very friends are separated; and, in the case of the friends, angrily separated by their perception and consideration of God. How many times has that situation arisen throughout history?

What we have is a sequence of failure to understand. Neither the adversary, Job’s wife, nor his friends understood him, nor could they reach into the truth of his ruination. What Job does not understand is why God has done this to him for no apparent cause. His conclusion is that God is unjust, has not taken into account his righteous and God-fearing life, and has become his enemy for nothing, finding occasions to inflict suffering upon him. What is going to come out of this is Job’s realisation that, not only does he not understand God, he does not really understand himself either. This is seen in his heartfelt recantation:

“Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that Thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not” (42:1-3).

Job understands that he does not understand, and he is content.

### **The searching question**

What brought Job to this realisation is obviously the complete speech of the Lord, but we think that the keynote is in the opening question:

“Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” (38:1,2).

This is a direct response to Job’s curse in chapter 3: “After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his *day*. And Job spake, and said, Let the *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. Lo, let that *night* be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein . . .” (vv. 1-7)

. . . and so on through verses 8 and 9.

At the Creation God spoke into the prevailing darkness and called forth the light. He changed chaos into order, design and purpose. In Job's thinking, what has happened to him should not have happened. So in cursing the day of his birth out of existence he is saying that he no longer wishes to be part of God's creation. Better not to have been born at all, he states, than to have been born to come to this. "Let that day be darkness . . . neither let the light shine upon it" is a reversal of the Divine fiat, "Let there be light":

"although Job does not descend to the point of cursing God, he almost does. Instead, he curses God's calendar, and by implication God's providence".<sup>1</sup>

The Lord's opening question is directed against the opening of Job's curse. Let us break it down into two parts:

"Who is this . . .

. . . that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (38:2).

As Job's opening words call into question the purpose of creation, and are therefore a criticism of God's counsel in creating at all, so the Lord's opening words are a direct response. Why did the Lord not begin by saying, "Who are *you* to darken counsel by words without knowledge?"

Why did He ask, "Who is *this*?" In Hebrew, the phrase "Who is this?" asks the question, "Of what significance" is the person to whom the words refer? (See, for instance, Isaiah 63:1, "Who is this that cometh from Edom . . . ?")

So the question being put to the Lord's servant Job is, "Of what significance are you in relation to the creation that you have wished yourself out of?" As if to say, You wish to have no part in My creation, you wish to be no part of My creation, you wish that you had never been born. You want one day, the day of your birth, to be removed from the ages that I control, and to be no part of My purpose and My counsel.

In calling for darkness to obscure the day of his birth, Job has called in question the whole counsel of God and the whole meaning of creation.

### God's care

In a remarkable quotation Paul places the words of Isaiah alongside the words of the Lord to Job:

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? [Isa. 40:13] or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? [Job 41:11]" (Rom. 11:34,35).

This arises from a consideration of the ways of God with men, which are past finding out.

The only one who really understands Job is God Himself. In taking His servant on a tour of creation, wherein certain aspects are considered, He causes Job to realise that he really has spoken words without knowledge; and Job totally recants. The recantation is in two parts, the first part beginning with the words, "Behold, I am of small account" (Job 40:4, RV).

But in asking Job, "Who is this?", that is, "Of what significance are you?", we do not conclude that the Lord considers Job to be of no significance. Far from it! In teaching Job in the way that He does, the Lord shows by the way that He speaks to him that He considers him to be of great significance. He is a beloved servant who will at the end be doubly blessed. Job has only seen a God of power, a God who must be feared and obeyed. He has not considered the personality of God. He has not discerned the sensitivity of his Creator:

"Who has given to Me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine" (41:11, RSV).

Neither has he discerned the depth of true righteousness that belongs only to the Lord:

"Wilt thou also disannul My judgment? wilt thou condemn Me, that thou mayest be righteous?" (40:8).

The Lord offers Job no explanation of what has happened to him. He answers none of his questions, and does not rebuke Job for some of the harsh things that Job has said about Him. It was inevitable that it would take the personal intervention of the Lord to extricate Job and his friends from their limited and often incorrect perspectives.

We are none of us of any significance in ourselves, and we may often darken counsel by words that lack wisdom or understanding. But because of our relationship with God in Christ we have very much significance.

So, when the problems of life sometimes perplex us, we can always turn to the book of Job, remember his endurance, and hold fast to the hope that one day, like Job, we shall see the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

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1. Jack Balchin, *Sitting with Job: reflections on the man and the book*, Rhoswiol Books, Oswestry, 1998, pp. 44-5.