

The Church of the Servant King

Prophecy Series (Proph13A_Prophecy in Job and the Psalms)

Introduction

Thus far in our study of Messianic and eschatological prophecies in Scripture we have seen the concept of progressive revelation clearly demonstrated. Progressive revelation can be defined as God's unveiling of His plan to man in such a manner that each successive manifestation of that plan to man provides more details and greater clarity. Strong reference to the concept of progressive revelation is made in Scripture as follows:

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds. (Heb 1:1-2)

This passage indicates that God had two great periods of revelation to man: 1) the prophets to Israel; and 2) the Son to the Church.¹ The progress of revelation in the centuries prior to Jesus' death was uneven and sporadic in its timing. The method of revelation (i.e. the ways) varied greatly (e.g. the diversity between the finger of God writing the Ten Commandments and Balaam rebuked by the voice of his own donkey). This is contrasted with the full nature of the revelation provided through God's son, Jesus, by the writer of Hebrews.

With regard to our study, one can readily see that the amount of revelation about the Messiah/Redeemer would have left many questions unanswered to those living in the periods associated with each of the prophecies we've studied. For instance, by the time that the Psalms were written, the major prophetic utterances that had been given were increasingly specific, yet many questions would have remained:

- ❑ The first prophecy in Genesis 3:15 of a Redeemer – **date unknown** –The phrase “her Seed” in this passage is a reference to the Messiah and the term “seed” is used throughout the Bible as a Messianic term (e.g. Isa 6:13 cf. 11:1). This man would be the key to the restoration of man and the earth and would be the subject of many prophecies to follow which would expand upon this initial prophecy and key component of God's strategy. However, at the time that this prophecy was given, its full scope and impact was not realized by man even though Satan, who had knowledge of pre-historic events unknown to man, would have realized its significance.
- ❑ The Abrahamic Covenant (Ge 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-14; 22:15-18; 26:2-4; 28:13-14; 35:11-12) – **ca. 2200 B.C.** – added more specificity regarding the lineage through which the promised “seed” would come, yet the timing of His coming and the connection between how He would pay for man's sins, how He would be a blessing to all nations, and how Abraham's descendants would possess the promised land were still not totally clear. Of course, there was the animal sacrifices first instituted as a ritual in the Garden by the Lord Himself (Ge 3:21); however, for those who understood the connection between the promised “seed” and the animal sacrifice, exactly how this promised “seed” would die was unknown.
- ❑ Jacob's prophetic blessings upon his sons (Ge 49:8-12) – **ca. 1850 B.C.** – adds more specificity and identifies the tribe from which a ruler over Israel would come – Judah.
- ❑ The Messianic prophecy of Balaam (Num 24:17-19) – **ca. 1406 B.C.** – adds more specificity as to how the promised “seed” of Genesis 3:15 would fulfill provisions of God's covenant with Abraham. The pagan Balaam had a vision of the coming of the Hebrew Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. His vision was of Christ conquering His enemies to

¹ Benard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1970), 103.

- establish the Messianic kingdom. All the nations that had resisted God's work through Israel would come under the curse they unwittingly embraced.
- ❑ The Land Covenant (Deut 30) – **ca. 1406 B.C.** – provided reassurance of God's faithfulness toward a nation with a rebellious history and amplified existing provisions of the Abrahamic covenant.
 - ❑ The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7) – **ca. 1000 B.C.** – provides greater specificity regarding the family through whom the promised "seed" of Genesis 3:15 would come.

Prophecy in Job

Introduction

There is really no consensus about who wrote the book of Job or when it was written. There are a variety of opinions regarding the identity of the author of the book ranging from Job himself to Moses to Solomon to Isaiah and even others. Views regarding the period in which Job lived include the Patriarchal age (ca. 2100 to 1900 B.C.) to the sixth century B.C. However, there are several factors which point to the age of the Patriarchs to include:²

- ❑ Job lived 140 years after his ordeal (42:16), so he may have lived to be 210 years of age or older. This corresponds roughly to the length of the lives of the patriarchs. Terah, Abraham's father, died at the age of 205; Abraham lived to be 175; Isaac lived 180 years; and Jacob died at the age of 147.
- ❑ Job's wealth was reckoned in livestock (1:3; 42:12), which was also true of Abraham (Gen. 12:16; 13:2), and Jacob (Gen. 30:43; 32:5).
- ❑ The Sabeans and Chaldeans (Job 1:15, 17) were nomads in Abraham's time, but in later years they were not nomadic.
- ❑ The Hebrew word 𐤀𐤍𐤁, translated "piece of silver" (42:11), is used elsewhere only twice (Gen. 33:19; Josh. 24:32), both times in reference to Jacob.
- ❑ Job's daughters were heirs of his estate along with their brothers (Job 42:15). This, however, was not possible later under the Mosaic Law if a daughter's brothers were still living (Num. 27:8).
- ❑ Literary works similar in some ways to the Book of Job were written in Egypt and Mesopotamia around the time of the patriarchs.
- ❑ The book of Job includes no references to the Mosaic institutions (priesthood, laws, tabernacle, special religious days and feasts).
- ❑ The name 𐤁𐤍𐤁𐤁 is used of God 31 times in Job (compared with only 17 times elsewhere in the OT) and was a name familiar to the patriarchs.
- ❑ Several personal and place names in the book were also associated with the patriarchal period. Examples include (a) Sheba, a grandson of Abraham (Gen. 25:3), and the Sabeans from Sheba (Job 1:15; 6:19); (b) Tema, another grandson of Abraham (Gen. 25:15), and Tema, a location in Arabia (Job 6:19); (c) Eliphaz, a son of Esau (Gen. 36:4), and Eliphaz, one of Job's companions (Job 2:11; these two Eliphazes, however, are not necessarily the same person); (d) Uz, a nephew of Abraham (Gen. 22:21), and Uz, where Job lived (Job 1:1).

Though it cannot be stated with certainty, possibly Job lived in Jacob's time or shortly thereafter. "Job was a common West Semitic name in the second millennium B.C. Job was also the name of a 19th-century-B.C. prince in the Egyptian Execration texts. Other occurrences of the name are found in the Tell el-Amarna letters (ca. 1400 B.C.) and in Ugaritic texts."³

² Roy Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament*, John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, editors (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983), 716-717.

³ Ibid.

The book of Job is one of the best known examples of undeserved suffering in Scripture. In a matter of a day, Job, a prominent and wealthy man, lost all of his material possessions, all of his children, and his health. His wife was of no use in the spiritual battle as she offered no support. She even suggested that Job end his misery by cursing God. His friends virtually condemned him rather than consoling and encouraging him. If the events of the book of Job were indeed set within the period of the Patriarchs, Job offers us a unique glimpse into a very early understanding of the role of the unseen battle we term the angelic conflict. While we must be careful not to carry this point too far, Job provides us with a basis to conclude that there is possibly much that was understood by the early Patriarchs and passed down through the generations by oral tradition that is not recorded in Scripture, yet served as an undercurrent for that which was recorded in Scripture, e.g. an understanding of the angelic conflict. See Job 1:6-12; 2:1-10.

The Messianic and Eschatological Prophecies in Job

Job 19:25-27 – After the shock and initial reaction to his calamities in which Job dealt with his own internal spiritual battle (e.g. 3:1-26) and after hearing the arguments of his “friends” (chps 4-5, 8, 11, 15, 18) to include Job’s interaction with their arguments, Job, like David in the Psalms settles his soul by reflecting upon the doctrines he knew. In our passage (19:25-27), we see one of the great prophecies of the Old Testament testifying to the hope held by these early believers. In the end God would stand upon the earth and Job would be vindicated among the righteous. Not only would people read of his righteousness, but they would hear it from God Himself. It is indeed remarkable that Job, living in a time prior to written Scripture, had a firm belief consistent with later revelation regarding the fact that the Redeemer (Ge 3:15) would stand upon the earth. See also Job 23:10-11. Job also manifests an early belief in the resurrection.