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## **THERE WAS A MAN**

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## **CONTENTS**

01 -- There Was A Man -- Job  
02 -- There Was A Man -- John

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### **01 -- THERE WAS A MAN -- JOB**

**God Triumphant Over Man**

"There was a man" -- Job 1:1

Every life is on trial. There are two great powers at work -- God, influencing men for good, and Satan, influencing men for evil. A great conflict is being waged between Christ and Satan. This great contention is concerning man and the possession of his soul. This conflict started in the garden of Eden at the fall of man. God and the Devil are not playing checkers with man, that is, God takes some and the Devil the rest. That is not the way the game of life goes. Man settles this question. We must decide for heaven or hell; for salvation or sin; for Christ or Satan. We decide whether God shall triumph or Satan. If man chooses God and heaven, sin and Satan cannot triumph over that man. If man decides in favor of sin and Satan, God will not coerce his will, nor save him against his will. Either God will triumph over a person or Satan will. Oh! that every person would resolve in his heart that God shall triumph in his life.

The great issue that is on is not whether we will overcome Satan and defeat him, but will God prevail over us and we be saved, or will Satan win and we be lost. We do not need to personally overcome Satan. We are no match for Satan. Christ overcome him in the wilderness, defeating him for us, and will eventually bind and cast him into the bottomless pit where he belongs. The great issue in life is, Will we allow God to save and subdue us? Will we surrender and give up unto God and eternally let Him have His way with us? Will we be obedient to Him, even unto death? If so, God will triumph over us and Satan will be defeated.

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### A Man Over Whom God Triumphed

In the Bible, there is a patriarch, and God triumphed over that man. He was blessed, God was glorified, and Satan was defeated. This man is a beautiful illustration of the thought, "God triumphing over man."

In the book of Job, the first chapter, the first verse, the first clause and the first four words we read, "There was a man." This could not be said of everybody. Some people are not more than half a man. It takes more than avoirdupois, muscles and years to make a man.

A few years ago two brothers had a heated argument. One was nine years old and the elder was seventeen. It occurred on the elder brother's seventeenth birthday. This brother declared that he now was a man. The younger one declared he was not yet a man. The elder one emphatically declared he was a man. The younger one declared he could not be a man until he was twenty-one years old. Neither one could believe the other. The nine year old boy then went to his father who was in his study and asked, "Father, is John a man now?"

"What makes you ask such a question, my child?" the father replied.

"Well, John is seventeen years old today and he declares he is a man now. I told him he is not yet a man. He will not believe me and I do not believe him. He cannot be a man until he is twenty-one years old. Father, what do you say? Is he a man?"

The father's answer did not fully explain or satisfy his son. He said it required character as well as growth to make one a man. The boy has grown up since then and has also learned that it takes more than avoirdupois, muscles and years to make a man.

We do not need to wait until we are twenty-one to become a man. Boys may be little gentlemen now, if they will accept Christ and eternally settle it they will obey God. Girls may now be real little ladies. They do not need to wait until they grow up. The way to become a lady is to accept Jesus as your Savior, be holy, virtuous, modest, and do right in His sight.

There are several words employed in the Hebrew for "man." One is "adam" and another is "ish." The text reads, "There was an ish." Adam means, of the ground, red clay, and refers more generally to the natural, the physical being, that which is earthy, the lower part of man as a material

and immaterial being and that which connects him with the earth. Ish refers more generally to the inward, the spiritual and the higher part of man which connects him with God, heaven and the eternal. When the Lord God took the dust that had been moistened by a heavy mist that had fallen the previous night, He shaped and formed it with divine skill. That part was "adam." The "ish" was produced when the breath of life was imparted. This was more than the filling of his lungs with air. By virtue of the inbreathing, Adam received the quality of life God possessed, even a holy nature, and he became an immortal being. This enabled him to love, worship, please and serve God. Adam refers to the outward man; ish, refers to the inward and spiritual man that is in a right relation to God.

The sinner is dead spiritually and is not whole or complete as God created man. By reason of his physical birth (without the new birth) he is connected with the earth, -- that which is material and natural. The apostle Paul wrote, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy" (I Cor. 15:47, 48). That which is natural is first and afterward that which is spiritual. Therefore, the sinner is not a whole, a complete man, not spiritual or heavenly, but a natural man and could be classed as a mud man, not an ish, but merely adam.

"There was a man," that is, an ish. Many people do not believe that Job was a real person or that the book is historical, but that he was a fictitious person and the book is an allegory. The book of Job, like other books of the Bible has been attacked by God's enemies and modernists. We believe in the personality of Job. The book starts out, "There was a man." The Bible associates him with Noah and Daniel (Ezekiel 14:14,20). James refers to him and his trial as being a real person (James 5:11).

Let us view the man over whom God triumphed. There are three pictures given of this man, one at the opening of the book, the second one in the major part of the book, and one at the close. In other words, three views are given: one, The man before the process, The man during the process, and the last, The man beyond the process.

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### The Man Before the Process

1. Who he was. "There was a man." When we hear of a man and he excels, or is great, we want to know his name. This man's name was "Job." This is the name of a man.

2. Where he lived. Job was a real person, a man. After we learn a person's name we want to know where he lives. He lived in the land of Uz. As far as we can gather, "the land of Uz" lay either east or southeast of Palestine, adjacent to the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and north of southern Arabia, being adjacent to the Edomites of Mount Seir.

3. What he was. This man had four good qualities: he was perfect; he was upright; he feared God and eschewed evil. In this respect he was a man. Whoever meets a person that fits this description or possesses these four good qualities will see a man.

4. What he had. His substance was great. In respect to his substance he was a man. He had seven thousand sheep. What a large flock! If a farmer today had two or three hundred, he would feel important and that he was somebody. These sheep provided Job and his household with clothes and meat. He had three thousand camels. The camels are the ships of the desert. They were beasts of burden. Then, they took the place of the trucks and trains. Job could send his produce across the country. He could send sixty trains of fifty camels each, all at the same time. If a man had one camel he might feel prominent. Job had three thousand. Then Job had five hundred yoke of oxen. He could send these out to plow and turn over five hundred furrows at a time. He also had five hundred she asses. These provided him with milk and also were beasts of burden. The donkey also was used for traveling purposes. Then Job had seven sons and three daughters. Ten children make an ideal number for a family. Today, when the firstborn comes into the home, the parents feel elated or proud sometimes, but Job had ten children. In relation to wealth and possessions, Job was a man.

5. What he did. Job had a family altar. He was faithful in rearing his children around the family altar. He had a happy home. The children thought well of each other. They were kind and sociable. When one had a birthday, the rest visited and feasted, making it a day of gladness. When their feasting was over, all were called around the altar, and Job sacrificed for each one, so if any had sinned, reconciliation to God was made. This Job did continually. In fact, he was the greatest man of the east. He was well thought of by God and all heaven. But the more a man is thought of by God and heaven, the less he is thought of by Satan and hell. The more a person is loved by the Lord, the more he is hated by Satan. Satan could not stand the joy, harmony, blessing, righteousness and prosperity of Job.

\* \* \*

#### First Council of the Sons of God

There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. These sons of God were high ranking angelic beings and were sons of God by virtue of their creation. They may have been at the head of some systems of God's creation and came to give an account and to report before the Lord. Satan the accuser of the brethren came also among them. The inference is, that once, he, too, was one of the sons of God before his fall. The Lord said to Satan, "Whence comest thou?" Satan answered, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." Satan, before his fall evidently was at the head of this solar system, and especially this earth. Satan as much as said, "I am looking after my job alright."

The earth out of all the millions of planets or worlds has been the great center of attraction of God and Satan. This earth has been the great battlefield of the universe. This is the world on which man was created. This earth is the great interest of Satan. It is here where he goes to and fro. His attention is given mainly to this earth, not the other planets or stars, only when he appears before God to accuse the brethren.

At this council the name of Job came up. Job was well thought of up in heaven. Satan also knew this man and often sought to wreck and ruin him. He acknowledged God's hedge around him as the reason for not destroying Job. God knew there was none like him on earth. The accuser of

the brethren said, Job did not fear God for naught, but that he was blessed, and his religion was in his possessions and that was all for which Job cared. If these blessings were taken away, he would curse God to His face, and that he cared nothing for God, for spiritual blessings or future hopes. Satan was sure of this. The Lord gave all Job had into Satan's hand, only he could not touch Job. Satan can go no farther than God permits him.

\* \* \*

### The Stroke of Satan

After Satan made some demands of God and received permission, he came directly to this earth again. Satan awaited his day. He began to scheme how to bring destruction to the greatest, the best man on earth. It may have been a lovely spring day. The eldest son had a birthday. All the brothers and sisters were there enjoying a feast. The oxen were plowing, the asses were feeding beside them. Everything was going along nicely and Job was supremely happy. Satan was ready to strike. Blow after blow fell with rapidity and vehemence. The true character of Satan is revealed in his acts. He cared nothing for life, happiness, harmony, or prosperity, and less for anyone whom God had blessed.

The first messenger. Here came a servant running who had sad news to tell Job. He reported how the oxen were plowing, the asses feeding beside them and the Sabeans fell upon them, took them away, and slew all the servants but allowed him to escape. What a loss! Five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she asses and many servants all swept away in a moment of time. Only one servant was left to tell Job to augment his sorrows. How much greater his loss was than a farmer losing a horse, cow, or a few chickens. Even then some become discouraged. Not so Job. He was a man.

The second messenger. No sooner was the first messenger through reporting than another one came with more sad news for Job. He reported that fire, or lightning, fell and burned up the seven thousand sheep and all servants, but he alone escaped to tell Job.

The third messenger. While the second messenger was reporting the loss of all the sheep, a third one came, and he too had sad news to report. He related how the Chaldeans came in three bands and stole all the camels (three thousand), slew all the servants but one, who was left to tell the fate to his master. This was a tremendous loss.

The fourth messenger. While the third messenger was reporting the loss of all the camels, the fourth servant came, probably with his garments rent, dust on his head and wailing, he cried, Job, O Job, I have terrible news to tell you. Thy sons and daughters were eating and drinking in their eldest brother's house, and a great wind came and smote the house and it fell on them and killed them all. Job, I am the only servant who escaped. This indeed was terrible news. This was enough to crush any man. It is sad when there is the loss of one in the family, but think of ten children being cut off, all in one day. All that Job had was swept away. A day of peace, prosperity and feasting was turned into a day of catastrophe and calamity. It is probable that while Satan was striking blow upon blow, that he allowed these four servants out of many to escape to tell of the terrible fate that had befallen his vast possessions to augment Job unto wrath and tantalize him to

provocation that would sweep him off his feet and lead him to curse God. Will Job continue to love and trust the Lord? Will God's grace prove sufficient in this hour of extreme sorrow and loss?

\* \* \*

### Heaven and Hell Witnessing

The hedge had been removed and Job had become the object of Satanic wrath. Heaven, God, the sons of God, and all the holy hosts of heaven undoubtedly were witnessing this trial. Will Job curse God? Satan and wicked spirits, too, were witnessing this holy man, fully expecting him to curse God. But behold him as he is grief stricken! He rends his mantle as an expression of grief. He shaves his head which is still a greater expression of grief. Then he falls to the ground. It seems it was more than he could stand. What does he do while Satan in glee rejoices and dances in delight? Is he cursing God? No. A thousand times no. He is worshipping God instead of cursing God. With his face on the ground, bowing in submission to God, he makes an acknowledgment that he came into the world with nothing, and thus he would leave the world. He furthermore confessed what he had the Lord gave, and what he lost the Lord took away. He prayed through to victory and arose shouting, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." He did not curse God, but he blessed God. "There was a man." "The first word Job uttered in his book is the word "naked." His last recorded words were, "dust and ashes." These words express the nobility of his humble character.

\* \* \*

### God Triumphed

God, and not Satan triumphed over Job. Job did not even recognize Satan nor mention his name. He gave God all the credit and blessed Him. This must have been a tremendous jolt and surprise to Satan. He was defeated. In all this Job sinned not nor charged God foolishly. Satan was certain Job would curse God. In all this we see Satan's malicious character revealed as a murderer, a thief, an accuser and a liar. Job's lovely character also is revealed. This man of God looked beyond second causes directly to the Lord.

It always is best not to be taken up with Satan, to argue with him, nor to directly or personally fight him. Personally we are no match for him. O! that we might be like Job, that is, altogether be taken up with the Lord. Take everything as from the Lord. Praise Him for all things.

\* \* \*

### Second Council in Heaven

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also to present himself before the Lord. Since Satan professed to have come from the earth and there goes to and fro, the subject of Job came up again because he was a man who lived on the earth. Then the Lord took Satan to task concerning Job. The Lord put this question to Satan to answer: "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?" How about it Satan? Did

you not move Me against him to destroy him without a cause? Did he curse Me to My face? Did not he bless Me altogether? Does he not still retain his integrity in Me?

Satan could not say anything, nor did he answer these questions. He answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." That means, a man will give up everything to save some skin or save his own life. Is this true? What does Satan know of love or a true paternal or maternal instinct? Would a man who is perfect before God be indifferent to the death of ten children, an enormous number of servants, and the loss of seven thousand sheep? Would he shun himself from the loss of skin, or suffering, or even death and not care concerning the death of his own offspring? Does not the love of God constrain us to lay down our lives for His sake as a martyr, or for our friends? Satan was not satisfied but made more demands. He as much as said, This has not been a fair trial, and in order to prove he will curse Thee, put forth Thine hand now and touch his bone and flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face. Satan requested God to put forth His hand and touch, or hurt Job. God would not do so, but gave Satan permission to put forth his hand. The Lord said, "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." Now we will see what the hand of Satan will do if God's restraining hand is removed.

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### Job Smitten With Boils

Satan went from the presence of the Lord and came to earth to God's servant who had been bereaved, but who was a man. Satan smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Job suffered intensely. People have been known to have boils, probably one on the neck. How carefully they nursed it, carried their head and behaved in their body; or, when they had one on their arm, what great care they gave to protect the boil. Job could not stand, sit, recline, lie on his face, or on his back, neither could he lie on his right side or on the left, without extreme suffering. These boils were so great, the core reached to the bone and so many boils that they covered his entire body. Job's body became swollen and deformed. This was a time when Job needed special care and attention. But we see him, not in a hospital, but out on an ash heap scraping himself with a potsherd. His suffering and grief were great, yet he did not curse God. His integrity in God was the same in adversity as in prosperity. On an ash pile, bereaved and suffering, "there was a man."

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### Job's Greatest Trial

It seems the hardest trial and jolt came to Job from his wife. She should have been faithful and true to the Lord and Job, and helped him by standing by to comfort. Being the weaker vessel, she was the first to break down. We may wonder why she was not destroyed in the loss of his possessions. Probably she was spared by Satan to later on inspire her to augment Job to curse God. It may be she became sick and disgusted with Job at his sickly sight and kicked him out and for that reason he was sitting on an ash pile. Satan having failed again in inducing Job to curse God, tried another method of attack. Here his wife turned against him and instigated by Satan, admonished Job to let go his integrity, to curse God and die. This is just what Satan wanted Job to

do. Here is where many men would have broken down and gone under. But not so Job. "There was a man." He corrected his wife in that she had spoken foolishly. Her admonition to Job, was, "Curse God and die," which were words calculated to lead to discouragement, unbelief, idolatry and skepticism. In other words, she said, Give up your religion, don't be afraid to die, for you can never recover, there is no God and hereafter. If there were a God, He never would have allowed all these calamities to befall you. Satan employed the woman to suggest suicide to Job. Mrs. Job was willing to enjoy prosperity from God's hand,. but refused to receive trials from God which were for good. How easy it would have been for Job to break right here, to fail, to let go! Even here, Job did not curse God, nor cease trusting, but retained his integrity in God. How easy it would have been at this juncture to have sinned! Job's answer to this subtle attack was, "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?" This was a wise answer to her foolish advice. Job did not curse God, neither did he sin but he suffered. "There was a man."

\* \* \*

### Concerning Job's Wife

Job's wife has become the object of ridicule with many ministers. This should not be so, nor can it be pleasing to the Lord. One minister disdainfully remarked that at the end of Job's trial the Lord swept her away and gave Job another wife to become his companion and the mother of his last ten children. By reasoning a little this appears cruel and unfair. It is true the Bible is silent concerning her and her future. But was she not one with Job as his companion? Did she not suffer and labor in mothering and rearing Job's children? Were they not also her own children? Did she not share in owning Job's possessions as hers with her husband? Also, did she not suffer a crushing, heartbreaking blow when she heard that her ten children were killed? Up to this time she is not mentioned, but it appears that in it all she bore her tremendous sorrows uncomplainingly. It was when Satan's continued attacks came and her husband was smitten with boils so severely that to her, to him, and to everybody else it appeared that humanly there absolutely was no hope of recovery for him.

If Adam was tempted through Eve, did not Job's wife feel the shock and strain of the trial which came to her husband? Was she absolutely carefree and exempt from Satan's onslaught? When everything looked dark and hopeless, she failed, lost her faith, spoke foolishly, gave her husband the wrong advice. To her it appeared that as a family they had trusted and worshipped in vain, and after all there was no God and no hereafter. Her husband, by committing suicide would be out of his miseries. Her husband absorbed the shock that came to him through his wife, corrected her and surmounted the attack.

By continuing to reason a little further, let us consider what God said to Satan after the first series of his attacks: "Still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst Me against him without cause." Since this is true, should she be swept away when she failed under the terrific shock which befell both. Was there no recovery for her? Would it not be fair for her to be comforted and share her husband's double prosperity, and she too, be made glad according to the days God allowed affliction and evil to come to them? See Psalm 90:13-17. We will let the reader judge.

\* \* \*

## The Significance of Cursing

The English word "curse" should be given some consideration. It is employed ten times in the book of Job. In the Hebrew Bible there are five different words employed for the one word "curse". Two of these Hebrew words will be given some attention here. The first of these is found in Job 1:5 and 11, and in 2:5 and 9. This word "curse" is translated "bless" in some versions, and literally means "bid farewell to, renounce." When these four verses are read and this meaning applied to the word curse, they become very clear. In chapter 1:5, Job said of his children, "It may be that my sons have sinned and bidden farewell to God or renounced Him in their hearts." Also, Satan said twice to God concerning Job, "he will bid farewell to Thee to Thy face." On the ash pile, Job was accosted by his wife who said, "Bid farewell to God and die." In chapter 3:1, it is recorded, "After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day." The meaning of this word "curse" is "lightly esteemed, reviled." Job cursed, that is, lightly esteemed the day of his birth.

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## Arrival of Job's Three Friends

The three friends of Job, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite together had made an appointment to come and mourn with him and comfort him. These were men of great wisdom; they had knowledge of the true God. When they beheld Job, they wept, rent their garments and sprinkled dust on their heads, which was a threefold expression of great grief. "There were seven days of silence; all were stricken dumb, none found words of utterance. They beheld Job, a man full of boils, groaning, deformed, bereaved and stripped of everything; nevertheless, "there was a man."

The motive of the friends was good. However, they did not know about the council of the sons of God in heaven, neither did they know Satan was granted permission of God to afflict Job. During the seven days of silence, while all seemed stricken dumb and found no words to utter, many things must have been running through their minds, such as: Why has this come to Job? Is there not a reason for Job's afflictions? Does not God reward goodness? Does not God punish evil? etc. Regardless of what was running through their minds, the fact remains that on the ash pile, "there was a man."

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## The Silence Broken

Job breaks the silence. He cursed his day but not his God. In his address, he laments his birth, his infancy, and his manhood, and states the reason for each. There are many questions in his life which he cannot understand and cannot explain. The one question that confronts him and he greatly feared would come, was that good people -- people in whom he had confidence would not

understand him and call him a w i c k e d man, that secretly he was wicked, or had sinned. And so it came to pass.

\* \* \*

#### Eliphaz Answers Job

Eliphaz addressed Job with an apology. He was boiling and could not hold in. Seven days thinking brought many questions to him concerning Job. He was amazed at Job's failure and complaint. He seems to be able (as he thinks) to explain to Job the mystery of his calamity and affliction. He first states his philosophy then gives his advice. His theory is: God is righteous; God punishes the wicked and blesses the good. He argued from human experience. How could he help Job a man of God, when he had no revelation of the purpose of his suffering? Eliphaz virtually made out Job was a sinner, but God said, "There was a man."

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#### Job's Reply to Eliphaz

The man on the ash pile in sorrow and affliction replies, his sufferings are great and could not be weighed; the arrows of sorrow, pain and grief were in him. He had inward and outward suffering; physical, mental and spiritual sorrow and pain. He does not complain without cause. He reproached them, for he expected comfort and kindness, but they only added to his miseries.

Bildad's Address

Bildad's theory was: suffering is retributive. He thought God only punished the wicked; that suffering resulted from sin; Job suffered, therefore, Job had sinned. He is outspoken and discourteous. Bildad charges Job talked foolishly, and that his children reaped what they sowed. He tells how God deals with the wicked and the righteous, but makes the mistake of classifying Job with the wicked when God said, "There was a man."

\* \* \*

#### Job's Reply to Bildad

In his reply, Job enlarges on the power and greatness of God; His wisdom and power are manifested in earthquakes, storms, eclipses; in the sky and sea, and in the stellar system. Then Job treats on the omnipotence, the invisibility and the invincibility of God. Job takes up his hopelessness and helplessness, then he makes his appeal to God in which he questions God and says some things unadvisedly, but he does not curse God.

\* \* \*

#### Zophar Addresses Job

Zophar is harsh. He charges Job is a sinner. Zophar was a moralist and believed salvation is by merit. He starts out with a rebuke, even charges Job's sufferings were less than he deserved. He declares God is unsearchable and nothing escapes His knowledge and is aware of all Job is guilty of. He then gives Job a call to repentance and states the peaceful results of repentance. But as yet he and his two friends did not know that this is what they had to come to, they must take their own medicine.

\* \* \*

#### Job's Reply to Zophar

As to his friends, he rebukes them by assuring them he knows about God's dealings; His omnipresence and His works. As to himself, he says he does not know why he is afflicted but that he is innocent and with a note of victory, he bursts forth, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Then Job gives a true picture of man's frailty and the endlessness of man's end, and that if he dies, he will live again by waiting God's appointed time when He will raise them up from the grave.

The first series of controversies were a failure. Job justified himself and the three friends condemned him and did not comfort him.

\* \* \*

#### Eliphaz's Second Address

In the second cycle of controversies Eliphaz is impolite. He criticizes Job for his manners and for his claim to wisdom and his attitude toward God. He charges Job with pride and tells him of the wicked and their lot, which did not help Job out of his sorrow.

\* \* \*

#### Job's Answer

Job found no comfort in Eliphaz's words. He scorns his friends and brands them as miserable comforters and not divine consolers. He relates he is afflicted without cause. Then he relates what he would do if he were in their state and they in his. His miseries are described.

\* \* \*

#### Bildad's Second Address

Bildad was not courteous to a man in affliction. He reproaches Job and accused him of saying too much. Then he takes up the sure doom of the wicked and what is in store for them. What he said concerning the wicked is true, but his message did not help Job nor bring him low in submission in the dust before the Lord.

\* \* \*

### Job's Answer

Job defies his friends to show any evil in him. He rebukes Bildad. He feels afflicted by God and forsaken by man. But in his darkest hour, a ray of hope shines upon him for his trust is in God. Faith triumphs and as it were he forgets himself, his loss, his suffering, his problems and he shouts, "I know my Redeemer liveth." He sees the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ. He sees a risen, glorified, coming again Savior. He sees the resurrection and glorification of redeemed man and himself included. He could not explain to them why loss and affliction came to him, but he could say, "I know." That which was present, outward, material and literal was a mystery to him. But that which was invisible, spiritual and eternal was real to him. A man of such faith will overcome in the end. Yes, "there was a man."

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### Zophar's Last Address

This is the last time Zophar addresses Job. He speaks of the brief triumph of the wicked -- implying Job. He continues by saying the wicked are soon cut off -- implying Job. Third, he states the wicked are poisoned with their own venom -- implying Job. Zophar then states the past prosperity will be unavailing to the wicked, again implying Job. Zophar is through. He completes his charges. He pursued Job without pity and treated him as if he were a wicked man. We hear no more of him till he repents. The fact still remained in relation to Job -- "There was a man."

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### Job Answers Zophar

Job demands attention. He views the other side of the wicked -- the prosperous side. They prosper, enjoy health, are rich, have large families, large flocks, have no fear of God in death nor of judgment. As to the children of the wicked, Job admits there will be a final manifestation of their sins. He charges them as false and mistaken.

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### Third Cycle of Controversies

In the third series of controversies, Eliphaz follows the same trend, Bildad is brief and Zophar is silent. Eliphaz, in his last speech says, God only afflicts for sin. He harped on one string. He says Job's punishment was fitting to his sins. He charges Job has a misconception of God. Then he gives advice and what will happen if Job will repent. This is Eliphaz's final altar call to Job. If Job repent, he will enjoy peace and good; be built and become rich again; all he lost will be restored; God's favor will be on him; his prayer will be answered; all will be clear and he will be a blessing to others. Eliphaz is through. We do not hear of him any more until we find him at the altar repenting.

\* \* \*

### Job's Answer

In his reply, Job longs to appear before God and present his case to the Lord. His faith triumphs and he still trusts in the dark. Though he does not know why he is afflicted, nor what the outcome of his life will be, this one thing he knows -- God knows the way that he must take, and when God is through with the refining and testing process, he would come forth as gold. This indeed reveals the qualities in him of whom God said, "There was a man."

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### Bildad's Last Speech

Bildad's last speech is brief. He speaks of God, His omnipotence and omniscience, then he takes up man, his moral and physical corruption. These were two thoughts of two extreme beings -- God and man; and two conditions -- God's greatness and man's nothingness. This is true but it did not throw any light on Job's problems.

\* \* \*

### Job's Answer

Job reproves Bildad. He rises much higher than Bildad. Job, too, speaks of God's action in the seen and unseen and that God nor His ways can be explained'. Job 'speaks of the underworld; the empty space in the north; the foundations of the earth cannot be discovered; he hangs the world on nothing; then he speaks of the sky, the earth and the sea, then he speaks of God's unknown greatness. Job pauses as if he waited for Zophar to speak. The three friends are silent. Job continues by declaring he will not justify them, that is, he will not admit what they said is true in relation to himself. He speaks of his past prosperity, his past good works and his past dignity. He reveals his present state how the base condemn him, he is a by-word and is cast down. Job then declares his innocence. He enumerates twelve sins and declares his innocency in relation to them. Job is through. He has nothing more to say. It is true that all along he did not curse God. There are times when he did speak unadvisedly and some things had better been left unsaid. We must remember Job did not have any written Scriptures to go by, neither did he have a revelation of God and His dealings with man as we now have. His friends who came to mourn with him and comfort him, vexed and provoked him by condemning and accusing him of things of which they knew nothing. Job defended himself. At a moment when others go astray, or speak unjustly about us, or do not understand us, is when we need to be on our guard, for it will be easy to do, or say something that would have been better left undone or unsaid.

\* \* \*

### Transition of the Controversy

An interesting division in the book of Job is after he was silent and before the Lord spoke. Elihu fits well in this transition. He acts as a mediator. He had been an interested listener through the controversy. He was younger than either Job, or the three friends, therefore, had remained silent which was wisdom and courtesy. He now speaks. He is full. Elihu is no respecter of persons, nor does he employ flattering words, but claims inspiration. He was doubly stirred, first against Job because he did not glorify God as he should, and second, against the three friends for failing to give a single proof against Job.

Elihu's philosophy of suffering differs from the others. He believed suffering was sent from God for the good of the sufferer. He was free from the suspicion that Job was a hypocrite. He quotes some of Job's words as being unwisely uttered but he does not charge Job of being guilty of evil acts. Job thought God had dealt unfairly with him when he was innocent.

Job is informed of God's twofold dealing with man, His greatness being revealed in creation and His goodness in revelation. God can speak to man while he is asleep, He chastens man and speaks through sickness and a mediator. God cannot do wickedness, but exercises a beneficent care over all His works, is omniscient and demands submission, therefore, Job needs to submit.

At this stage storm clouds were gathering, but Elihu continues his splendid address. He states that God is unaffected by man; why the cry of the oppressed is not answered; that man should trust God though he understands not and there is value in suffering.

As the storm was nearing, Elihu proceeds to illustrate God's greatness as seen in the thunderstorm, clouds and rain. God has His way in the storm and He works out His purpose and none can prevent a storm nor floods. At this juncture, the storm was overhead with peals of thunder and flashes of lightning. A whirlwind, or a tornado had formed and evidently headed to the scene of controversy, and as the funnel of this tornado approached and seemed as if it might strike the men any moment, Elihu dropped out of the discussion as suddenly as he appeared. All feared and no doubt the words of Elihu left their impress, making room for God. As all feared, there came a silence, no one speaking. When all were silent, it was possible for God to speak.

\* \* \*

## God and Job

Out of the vortex of the funnel of the tornado, which was probably right overhead, enabling the men to look up into the blue heavens, came the voice of the Lord. This is what Job had asked and waited for, for God to take up his case. This is what we all have wished as we pursued the study of the book, and listened to the series of debates. After all, the subject was too great for man. God, Who knew all about the case, knew how to vindicate Himself and deliver Job. As ever, "Judgment must begin at the house of God." So it was here. God must deal with Job before He dealt with the three friends.

\* \* \*

## God Gives an Examination to Job

The address of the Lord to Job was mostly in the form of questions. What does Job know? What can he do? He is so puny, so weak and limited. Yet God reveals Himself. These questions revealed the greatness, omnipresence, omniscience, beneficence and eternity of God. Who can answer God one question in ten thousand? The Lord continued asking one question after another concerning the creation of the world; of things inanimate in the earth and the heavens, of the stellar heavens; concerning storms, rain and snow; His care over the animal creation, and his special care to their young. Job listened to the Lord, the Creator and Sustainer, Who is perfect in wisdom and Almighty in power. He then received a vision of the Lord in His justice, wisdom and power; he also received a vision of himself in his folly, vileness and weakness. Here was the root of his trouble, he had sat in judgment upon God.

\* \* \*

## Here Was a Man

As the Lord spake, here was a man on a pile of ashes under the funnel of a tornado. He wilts, he droops lower and lower. He was a man in that he listened while God spake, was silent, neither presumed to speak back. He did not presume to answer one question, but as it were gave himself no grade, only a zero. Instead of controversy and contention there was a confession. Not many people are men enough to make a confession of vileness and weakness. Job confesses, Lo I am vile, what shall I answer thee? Rather would I lay my hand upon my mouth. Already have I spoken too much. I cannot answer; I will add nothing more. I am not able to answer Thee, and less than that, I am not fit to answer Thee.

\* \* \*

## God Continues Speaking

With the whirlwind still encircling, the Lord lets Job go down deeper. The Lord called upon him to exercise government and as it were for Job to clothe himself with glory and majesty and take over the throne of God. Could Job chasten the proud, deal out justice to all men? God was not trying to crush Job, but was giving him a vision of Himself in His holy and just administrations. Two creatures, behemoth (hippopotamus) and leviathan (crocodile) are creatures with remarkable anatomy before whom even man is helpless and cannot stand. They are a part of God's creation. Job caught a deeper vision of God's perfection and that He cannot be unjust in His dealings with man.

\* \* \*

## Confession and Submission

Job went to the bottom and came to the end of himself. He acknowledges the omnipotence and omniscience of God. He is convicted of his own ignorance and confesses it was he who uttered things which he understood not. He confesses his impotence, vileness and foolishness, and

that he will no longer dispute with God. He loathed his words, his thoughts and himself. Job took his right place before God, crying out, "I abhor and repent in dust and ashes." These were the words the Lord was listening for. There was a man, loathing, repenting and abhorring himself. What God wants is not so much doing, He can do things without the aid of man. What God desires from man is humility, obedience, patience, and that he will love and serve God even though it costs sorrow and suffering. Where there is sweet submission to God, elevation will come. Job had been brought low in sorrow, loss and pain, now when God spoke he went down still lower. God could not stand this any longer. He called Job up and began to use him right away.

\* \* \*

### God Triumphant

God was victorious in the trial of Job, and Satan was defeated. Job did not curse God as Satan declared he would, but with all the stateliness of a man in his confession of God's sufficiency and a humiliation of himself is a revelation of the power, glory, and majesty of God nowhere else revealed. As long as people can contend with God, argue, question Him, fail to submit, try to run Him, or those who are over them to whom God demands submission, so long Satan is triumphing and not God. God demands submission to Himself, His ordinations, laws and commandments.

\* \* \*

### Job Becomes God's Servant

The three friends evidently saw and heard God's voice and Job's confession and submission and may have rejoiced. When Job took his right place, God made the three friends take their place. Job became the "Servant of the Lord." Four times God calls him "My servant." At no time had God disclaimed, disowned, or discarded Job through his trial. His love, care, attention and eyes were constantly on Job. He saw all that befell him, heard all he said and that others said to him. Job was still the "servant of the Lord." It is to be observed that it required no blood offering for Job to be restored and God's anger was not kindled against him. But the anger of the Lord was kindled against the three friends. He asks them no questions. God's message to them was short and emphatic. He deals with them as sinners. Blood sacrifices were required of them to make them right before the Lord. In His anger toward them, the Lord mingles mercy. God employed Job as a priest and intercessor for them. They tried to restore Job to God by philosophy. He was appointed by the Lord to be the human means of restoring them by prayer, and through their sacrifice, God saved them.

\* \* \*

### An Altar Scene

Three men at an altar seeking forgiveness were being prayed for and instructed by "a man" still full of boils, but being made a blessing. Though suffering Job forgot much of his pain while he was helping others. It was while he prayed for others that the Lord instantly and miraculously

healed him. Then the tornado lifted, the clouds were removed, the sun shone, Job a healed and blessed man rejoiced in the midst of three men who had been set right with God. Then each man was rejoicing and fellowshiping the other, for God had triumphed and Satan was defeated.

\* \* \*

### The Man Beyond the Process

All of Job's relatives and friends who had forsaken him now returned and feasted with him which was a symbol of fellowship and restoration. Each one comforted him and gave him some money and gold. It was not long until he had more than he lost. In fact, the Lord gave double. Instead of possessing seven thousand sheep, he had fourteen thousand; instead of three thousand camels he had six thousand; in the place of five hundred yoke of oxen, he possessed a thousand, and in the place of five hundred she asses, he had a thousand. His possessions were doubled, his blessings were doubled, his joys were doubled. Yes, "there was a man."

\* \* \*

### Family and Life Doubled

In the beginning we read, "And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters." In the end we do not read, fourteen sons and six daughters were born to him, but "he had also seven sons and three daughters," that is the same number as he had in the beginning. If in the end it would have stated fourteen sons and six daughters, we would be in doubt as to the safety, or salvation of his first family. Since only seven sons and three daughters were born unto him in the end, (he having double) the inference is the first seven sons and three daughters were still his, and were saved and safe in Paradise. In reality, he had double -- fourteen sons and six daughters. Half of his family was in Paradise and half was with him on earth.

The three daughters were named: "Jemima," meaning beautiful, pure, affectionate, a dove. The second, "Kezia," meaning, cassia. The third, "Kerenhappuch," meaning child of beauty, horn of paint. Moreover, it is stated, "In all the land were no women so fair as the daughters of Job." This teaches that the disease of Job was so completely healed it left no taint or evil effect even in the next generation. Then it also has been pointed out that the name of the first means, regeneration; the second, sanctification, and the third, glorification. This reminds us of the experiences which are essential to our complete salvation which are provided for all through Christ.

It is reasonable to assume that Job was seventy years old when the test came in his life. Assuming that his life also was doubled to that which it was before, as were all other things, he lived "an hundred and forty years," afterward. One half of this would be seventy and altogether he evidently lived two hundred ten years. The Lord allowed him to see his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, even to his great, great grandchildren. "There was a man."

\* \* \*

### Some Noticeable Facts

All the mysteries which come to the saint will not be fully explained in this life. However, some day they will understand and shall know as they are known. What Christ said to Simon Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," may be applicable to all saints and the mysteries in their lives. Some omissions in the book of Job which the Holy Spirit purposely left out have caused some to wonder. We suggest several of these when God personally dealt with Job and vindicated him:

The Lord made no mention of the councils held in heaven in which Job was the main object of discussion and that Satan was granted permission to take all of his possessions from him.

In His dealings with Job, the Lord does not make any reference to the main part of the controversy which occupies the major part of the book of Job.

Thirdly, the Lord does not make any reference to the future state in His words to Job. Many are inquisitive concerning the future state. Since God knows all things, why is the unseen state not revealed in His address? This was not the object of the book of Job; and moreover, the future state and abode are revealed sufficiently in the New Testament.

Then the Lord did not make any attempt to explain the mystery of suffering to Job. The mystery of suffering confronted Job as it has every saint in every age. The riddle of the ages has been, Why do the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer? Not only Job, but David, Asaph, Jeremiah and many more have been faced with this mystery (Ps. 73 and Jeremiah 12). There are many reasons for suffering. When all references concerning suffering in the Bible are grouped together the student will be enlightened.

\* \* \*

### The Result of Job's Trial

Trials, when endured joyfully, serve an immediate and a remote purpose. Job's trial, in relation to God, has been bringing glory to God ever since he suffered. God and not Satan triumphed in the trial which could be considered as an experiment which verified God is stronger than Satan, that He can supply a super-abundance of grace for every trial and that He can plant His love so deeply in the soul that a man will love his Lord more than his own life and choose rather to die than to recant or curse, that is, bid farewell to God.

In relation to Satan, Job's trial revealed that he was defeated and silenced. As to his character, he is revealed as a murderer, thief, accuser and liar. After this he could not accuse Job before God's presence, nor accuse God in his presence.

The three friends were convicted and converted. God's anger was removed from them by obedience and faith in the substitutionary death of Christ. They were set right in their hearts and philosophy.

In relation to Job, he was vindicated and employed as God's servant to pray and help his friends into an experiential knowledge of salvation. Job was instantly healed, comforted and restored in his favor with all men. Then he was blessed doubly, that is, God gave him again as much as he possessed before Satan's onslaught.

Then in relation to all men, he became a universal example to all people. The apostle Paul wrote that God comforts us in all our tribulation that we may comfort those who are in trouble (II Cor. 1:4). Many saints through the succeeding ages have been comforted through the sufferings of Job. His experience and the events which cluster around it have been written by an inspired writer, which evidently was Moses, and this book has become an integral part of the Bible.

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## 02 -- THERE WAS A MAN -- JOHN

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" -- John 1:6

"There was a man." This is what the Spirit said concerning John the Baptist. The Holy Ghost could not say this concerning every person because many lack manly qualities.

The great concern of the Trinity from eternity has been humanity. The Triune God had much in mind, heart and plan, when God said, "Let us make man." God is a Trinity in a Unity and a Unity in a Trinity, or Three in One and One in Three. There was unity in the Trinity in the creation of humanity in that he should be created in the image of the Trinity. God created man in a state that he could love, worship, believe, please, honor and serve Him. God designed that man should honor and glorify Him. God had His mind on man and is mindful of him. That is, God's mind is full of man. God wants men -- men in reality -- men in quality, not in name, not dummies, not merely mud men, but men. There are great possibilities in a man. The need of our times is for men.

\* \* \*

## A Crisis Time

There come times of crisis in the history of man. There came a time when God saw the need for a man, so He created man. Since the fall, the need for men has been great. "There was a man," and in the days of this man -- John the Baptist -- there was a great crisis. The heavens had been closed and silenced. Malachi had given the closing message. Four hundred years had passed and no prophet had appeared. No divine revelation from heaven was being given. God desired to break the silence. He wanted to open the windows of heaven again. He was looking for a man. The eyes of the Lord were running to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose hearts were perfect toward Him.

\* \* \*

## Godly Parentage

In the calling and selection of a man for service, we must consider the parentage of great leaders. It is true God calls people out of the raw, the uneducated, the uncultured and those who have no religious background, but from the careful study of the Scriptures and observation, God more generally calls those who have godly parentage. In looking for a man to whom God could reveal Himself and use to break the silence, God considered parentage. There was an old couple living in the days of Herod, named Zacharias and Elisabeth. They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. It is remarkable that Zacharias means, "Jehovah remembers," and Elisabeth means, "the oath of the Lord." Putting the two together, for they were united and one, means Jehovah remembers the oath of God. Truly the Lord remembered His oaths and covenants made to the patriarchs and prophets. God does not forget His promises, nor the prayers of His children. This old couple was childless. Elisabeth was barren and both were well stricken in years. They prayed for a son and had grown old waiting, and even had given up hope and forgotten their prayers. Elisabeth considered it as a reproach to be childless. To this couple it meant that each one's genealogy which could be traced back to Aaron, Levi, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham would become extinct. Zacharias was a priest and it fell to his lot to burn incense. While he was in the temple an angel appeared unto him and said, "Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord." The angel also announced that he should be a Nazarite; that he would be filled with the Holy Ghost before he was born; that he would turn many unto the Lord; that he should go before the coming Messiah and prepare the way for Him. Zacharias doubted the possibility of this and questioned the angel. The angel answered, "I am Gabriel." That means God is mighty. Probably Gabriel's message had never before been doubted. Zacharias asked, "Whereby shall I know this?" The angel gave him a sign whereby he was to know. He became tongue-tied and could not speak. The ministry of burning incense continued longer than usual and the people wondered why he was delayed. When he came forth, Zacharias had no message. All he could do was talk sign language, nor could he pronounce the priestly benediction.

\* \* \*

### Born in Answer to Prayer

Zacharias returned to his house. Elisabeth was blessed with motherhood. She immediately hid herself for five months. This was quite natural. Nevertheless, she rejoiced in that she considered the Lord had taken away her reproach. The angel Gabriel was sent to the virgin Mary at Nazareth and announced the birth of Christ. Mary fled to the hill country of Juda and entered into the house of her cousin Elisabeth. When they met, there was shouting among them and John shouted before he was born. John was filled with the Holy Ghost in a prenatal state. Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. Later Zacharias was filled with the Spirit.

\* \* \*

### The Birth of John

The time came when John was born. As the angel said, many rejoiced at his birth. The news spread and many of the relatives came to rejoice with them. On the eighth day the child was

circumcised. These relatives took it upon themselves to name the child, but this was needless. They were too late. John was named before he was born. He was named by heaven not by earth. All desired to name him Zacharias, in honor of his father and to perpetuate the family name. The mother said, "Not so; but he shall be called John." She knew for the Holy Spirit rested on her. The relatives protested, suggesting no one in that line had been named John, and that name was not popular. It was up to the father as the head of the house to settle the name-question which had been settled with the child's parents, for it was settled by God's messenger, even Gabriel. Signs were made to Zacharias how he would have him called. He made motion for writing. A pen was given him and he wrote, "His name is John." Not, his name shall be John, but "is," and they were too late, for he had already been named. This surprised all the relatives. Zacharias obeyed the Lord in this and demonstrated his faith. That instant his tongue loosened and he intelligently praised the Lord. He was filled with the Holy Ghost and uttered some remarkable prophecies.

\* \* \*

### In the Desert

John was not brought up in Jerusalem, nor in the temple courts. He was in the desert until the day of his manifestation. This was the place where God wanted him to be, -- that is, alone. John was unique in every way. He was taken up with the Substance and not the shadow. The great Reality had come and the shadows meant nothing to him. While he was alone it gave him much time to think, to pray and to wait on God. The person who is alone much, who secludes himself, who cares naught for crowds, but is all taken up with God will make an impress on the public. The person who spends much time alone with God will move the public. The person who never is alone, who always talks, mingles and fellowships everybody moves nobody. All of God's great characters are those who like John are much alone with God. The desert, not the temple courts with its sacrifices, was the God-appointed place of preparation for him who was to turn the hearts of Israel unto Christ. This qualified John to more effectively preach Christ and point people away from the shadows to the great Light. "There was a man," and this man was in the desert alone with God. He who is alone with God gives God an opportunity to make out of him a man.

\* \* \*

### What He Wore

Often a person can be told what he is by that which he wears. John was unique in what he wore. He was a priest and the garments of the priests were garments of beauty and holiness. They were soft and made of fine twined linen, with white, red, blue and purple colors in their garments. The priestly garments were made a special style which distinguished them from all other people. John wore raiment made of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle. He could not be told by that which he wore. We cannot always tell what is buttoned up in a coat. But inside this camel's hair and leathern girdle, "There was a man."

\* \* \*

### What He Ate

The living of the priests was provided by the tithes and offerings of Israel. They also received a certain portion of the sacrifices, the firstfruits, and ate the bread on the golden table. But John ate none of these delicacies. His diet was grasshoppers and wild honey. It did not take him long to get his meals. Neither was he confronted with the bread and butter question. When meal time came for him, he went out in the field and caught grasshoppers till he had his fill, then he satisfied himself with the wild honey. He was dependent on no man.

\* \* \*

### What He Was

Not only was John a man that was unique in his birth; unique in what he wore and ate; unique in his qualities, but especially was he unique in his call. He was one of the tribe of Levi. John was a direct descendant of Aaron, therefore, he was a priest. Yet as a priest, he did not wear any priestly garment, nor did he eat of the priestly allotment, neither did he minister in the temple courts. In addition to being a priest, he was a preacher -- a wilderness preacher. Then John was a prophet. He was the last and the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. He was a prophet whom the other prophets prophesied should come. All the other prophets saw Christ only in vision. John saw Him in reality. The other prophets wrote, "He is coming." John cried, "He has come, He is here." Then John was the forerunner of Christ. He went before Christ and opened the way for Him. He heralded the coming of Christ. He also was a voice. As a voice, he cried and made known the Living Word. And last, John was the friend of the Bridegroom. John recognized in the Person of Christ the Bridegroom. After he finished his ministry, John introduced the converts he had made unto Christ, then he stepped out of sight. He was true to his calling and filled his place well. In all this he was a man.

\* \* \*

### God Sent

This man was God sent and he went. In this he was unlike many who have been sent but have not gone. As he went, he blazed his way through the wilderness, the formality and indifference of his times, the unbelief and unorthodoxy of his day that left a trail for many and the Messiah to follow. John left an influence so powerful for good that after he was gone, many knew that he had been along.

\* \* \*

### He Had Crowds

The wilderness preacher did not lack for crowds. He did not go to them, but the people came to him. God sent him, the Spirit rested on him, and Christ was following in the trail he blazed. John had the endorsement of the Trinity on him. This endued him with a power that was drawing, charming, and captivating, and yet was unexplainable by the people. People came from every direction. They came from Jerusalem, the place of religious gathering; from all Judea, from

Galilee, and beyond Jordan, that is, the east side of the river. The bank of the river Jordan was lined with people. The reason John had crowds was

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### He Had a Message

The man with a burning message of salvation will have a hearing. The most wholesome way of building up a lasting work is through the preaching of the gospel in the power of the Spirit in an uncompromising manner. If people are taken into the church by soup they must be fed on soup to hold them; if taken in by entertainment, they must be entertained to keep them, but if taken in by the preaching of the gospel, the same will hold them in the church. The great keynote of John's ministry was "repent," and that was the great need of the hour.

\* \* \*

### He Had Results

The kind of preaching John gave the people brought results. He had a great revival. Many came and confessed their sins and were baptized. The common people came inquiring "What shall we do then?" John was faithful to tell them and in doing as he admonished them, they became generous and that would again open the windows of heaven. Likewise came the publicans, the low and despised class inquiring, "What shall we do?" The soldiers came with the same question.

\* \* \*

### He Had a Backbone

John did not pat them on the back, smile on their worldliness, nor say they were alright when they were all wrong. Many Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism. John called them a generation of vipers and such they were for they had poisoned the orthodox teaching of the Old Testament by their traditions and the denial of the supernatural. John recognized them as sinners and children of the devil that Old Serpent. They began to dodge the preaching of John and claimed to be alright because they were the seed of Abraham. John told them their hearts were as hard as stones, and if they would repent and confess their sins and make their wrongs right, God would raise them up as the children of Abraham, even as Isaac who was born of promise and faith. He also reproved Herod for his wicked deeds. John did not cater to the wishes of the people nor preach to suit them. He had nothing to lose, but by being faithful he gained and so did the people. The crowd did not hire him, therefore, the crowd could not fire him. "There was a man" and he was faithful to God; to his call; to his God-given message and he was faithful to the people.

\* \* \*

### He Honored Christ

In this he is to be admired and emulated. He honored Christ and exalted Him to His rightful place. He told the people, "He is here." John declared Christ was the Lamb of God, and for that reason he sacrificed no animal. He said unto the people, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of Whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." What a beautiful tribute he contributed to Christ. John made a great distinction between himself and Christ, between his baptism and the baptism of Christ. Though he was mighty, yet he felt unworthy to even take a place at his feet. He honored Christ as King and that He would usher in the kingdom of heaven. So highly did he honor Christ that he had the people in great expectancy and as it were on tiptoe, looking for the Messiah. John had little to say concerning himself. So mighty was he many mused in their hearts whether he was Christ. The Jews from Jerusalem sent a delegation of priests and Levites to John to inquire who he was. He did not have a sermon on his life's story, neither did he swell up and declare his pedigree or write a long autobiography. He kept himself in the background. They asked John, "Who art thou?" He gave an answer of five words, "I am not the Christ." They also asked him, "What then? Art thou Elias?" John answered in three words, "I am not." "Art thou that prophet?" they asked. John answered in one word of two letters by saying "No." The delegation said, "Who art thou, give us an answer so that we can make a report." John said, "I am a voice." Then he pointed them to Christ. John also said, "I am going before Him, but He is preferred before me. Truly he was a man, a great man, because he honored and exalted Christ. He was a man in that he said much concerning Christ and little concerning self."

\* \* \*

## Baptizing Christ

The man who was sent by God to go before the face of the Lord preceded Christ by at least six months, for he was His senior. John had received this revelation before he started in his ministry: "Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." It was an interesting scene when John and Jesus met. It seems Christ waited until all the people were baptized. Luke says, "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him." Christ waited for several reasons. This gave the people opportunity to repent and prepared them to receive Him. It also kept them in expectancy for Christ. Then it gave John opportunity to finish his God-given task. Then all he had to do was bear record that Christ had come and was the Lamb of God. John shrank from and was reluctant to baptize Christ. Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now." It was humiliating to John to baptize Jesus. Yet it was a blessing and a privilege to John, for then he saw the Spirit descend on Him and heard the voice of the Father saying, "This is My Beloved Son." John initiated Christ into the ministry, and he being a priest placed his seal on Christ that He was the Son of God. The Father also put His seal and endorsement on Christ that he was the Son of God. In this John truly was great.

\* \* \*

## He Must Decrease

There was a "must" in John's life, and that was, he must decrease. There was a "must" in the life of Christ, that is, He must increase. When John bare record that Christ was the Lamb of God, he lost some of his followers. They followed Christ. Gradually John was losing out in numbers and Christ was getting a great following. Some of John's disciples became jealous for John and reported to him that Christ was getting a greater following than he. John rejoiced in this. He began to sink out of sight. This took great grace to blaze his way through the wilderness, build up a mighty work, then lose out in favor of his successor. But John was a man.

\* \* \*

### Cast Into Prison

It was soon after John baptized Jesus that he was cast into prison. His ministry may have been a little longer than a year, then he was cast into prison because of his testimony. He reproved Herod because he took his brother's wife. His ministry was short but powerful. It was brief but mighty. Even though it was brief, yet he fulfilled his ministry. He accomplished more in a year than many preachers put together in a lifetime. He was a man. John did his work well. In prison he sent his disciples to inquire of Christ how things were coming along. Christ sent assurance to John that things were coming along in accordance with the writings of the prophets. A special message was included for John, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." No doubt John had a burning passion to be free, unite with Christ, help Him put the message of repentance across, declare the nearness of the kingdom and be with Christ when He set it up.

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### He Lost His Head

Herodias did not feel easy in her sins as long as John was alive and no doubt she felt worse after he was dead. At a feast, Herod's illegal step daughter danced before the drunken men. This pleased everyone and Herod promised her one half of the kingdom. Just think what all she might have had for the asking! Her wicked mother instructed her to request the head of John the Baptist. An executioner was sent and John's head was severed. It was given to the damsel and she brought it to her mother. There the Bible record leaves his head. John's disciples buried his body. This wicked murderess still has the head on her hand as far as her plot, conscience and guilt are concerned. It will stare at her at the judgment. John was carried by the angel's into Paradise. He is awaiting his time and will stand in his lot in resurrection life in the last days. To be sure, John will again receive his head, and on his head will be a shining crown. He will pass with Christ into the kingdom and shine as the stars for ever and ever.

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### Christ's Testimony Concerning John

Better than a dying testimony from the lips of John, we have a testimony from the lips of Christ concerning the man who "was a man" -- Christ asked the people concerning John, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to

see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

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### The Crisis of Our Times

The eyes of the Lord still are running to and fro throughout the whole earth, looking for those whose hearts are perfect toward Him. If we seek after Him, His gaze will fall on us. The need is for men who seek to be men. Men who have a vision, who will obey the great commission. Men who will help break the silence who will help open the windows of heaven; blaze their way through the wilderness; preach repentance; keep themselves in the background and honor Christ. Men who will point people unto the Lamb of God and prepare the way for the Lord to return. May we live and labor for the Lord that it may be said of us, "There was a man."

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THE END