

THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Exercising The Mind || Igniting The Heart || Preparing The Hands

A free quarterly paper for rural pastors.

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Editor: Aaron Dunlop



Thorns on the Acacia nolitica tree. Photo by Aaron Dunlop

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Editor: Aaron Dunlop; All articles by the editor, unless otherwise stated. || Proofreading: Odelia Chan;
Layout & Design: David Frye (USA)



WELCOME TO THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Welcome to the first 2025 issue of The Pastor's Study. This magazine is designed to help pastors in the study of the Word and in subjects that are helpful for a broad, instructive and effective teaching ministry. We begin with the editorial on four steps in effective preaching (page 5).

The theme of this issue is the affliction of Job with a particular focus on the work of Satan in testing Job's faith, Job 1:6–2:13. The commentary on this text is found on pages 16-23, and a Preacher's Workshop in the centre pages (pages 27-34). Other related articles include a look at how Satan was cast out of heaven (pages 24-26), and a helpful "preparing to preach" by Alexander Stephenson (pages 8-11).

We have included for the first time, a sermon by Rev. C.H. Spurgeon; "What Job learned in

the ashes” (pages 35-37). Dr. Charles Barrett provided us with a helpful look at praying in the darkness, linking Job’s affliction with the selfinflicted suffering of Jonah (pages 46-49).

In our Pastoral and Practical Theology section, we are thankful to have Dr. Beeke again, on “The Pastor and the World” (pages 41-45), and Dr. Haykin brings us another part of his article on friendship, looking particularly at the relationship between Paul and Timothy (pages 50-54). May this Lord bless this issue to his own glory.

Sincerely, Aaron Dunlop

EDITORIAL: FOUR STEPS IN EFFECTIVE PREACHING

Pastor Aaron Dunlop

There is a perception in many churches that preaching is about motivating people, stirring people up or inspiring them. This is a false perception. Preaching is about making God known as he is revealed in the Scriptures. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to motivate, inspire and stir up. This of course does not mean that we should not exhort, implore and charge our people, but it does mean that people should not be motivated by our wisdom, passion or appeal or manipulated by the arguments that we make. Let the Word of God do its work by the power of the Holy Spirit.

If this is the case, then an important part of your preaching is reading, studying and applying the Word of God. If you are called to preach you are called to read, to study and to

research. You are called also to pray and wrestle through the text and your thoughts for the most appropriate words (Ecclesiastes 12:10).

Sermon preparation is hard work. It takes time and lots of mental, spiritual and emotional energy. Broadly speaking there are four areas of work that the preacher needs to think about. He needs to read carefully, research deeply, wrestle prayerfully and write intentionally.

Read the text carefully, and make sure you are reading each word consciously. There can be so much meaning hidden behind the most common words, like prepositions or conjunctions.

Research the text deeply, looking at each word carefully in the context of the passage.

Wrestle prayerfully through the text, seeking a spiritual understanding of the text. There is

an intellectual understanding of Scripture and a spiritual understanding. Praying through the text will embed it into your soul with spiritual benefit to yourself and your hearers.

Write your sermon intentionally, making sure that what you intend to say can be easily connected to the text. Don't get lost in your own thoughts or ideas. Your sermon should not just reflect the text accurately, but present the text simply, with a clear flow of thought and with application that is directly relevant to your congregation.

PREPARING TO PREACH FROM JOB 1:6–2:10

Alex Stephenson

From week to week, Christians forget the God they live for and are confused about the world they live in. As a pastor, therefore, you must faithfully preach the Word of God so that your people will understand who their God is and what life in His world is like. Before explaining and proclaiming the truths of a given text, you need to familiarise yourself with its structure.

The Structure

Take Job 1:6–2:10 as an example. This passage has two episodes with two scenes. The first scene occurs in heaven, while the second occurs on earth. The two are connected because Job's suffering on earth is the outcome of the conversation between God and Satan in heaven.

Episode 1: Job's Wealth is Tested

- Scene 1: Events in Heaven (1:6– 12)

- Scene 2: Events on Earth (1:13– 22) Episode 2: Job's Health is Tested
- Scene 1: Events in Heaven (2:1– 6)
- Scene 2: Events on Earth (2:7– 10)

Chapters 1–2 emphasise the righteous character of Job. He was a man 'who feared God and turned away from evil' (1:1, 8, 2:3). Satan believed, however, that Job only worshipped God because of the great wealth and good health that God had given him (1:9–10). Thus, the central question is whether Job will curse God (1:11; 2:5, 9) or continue to bless God (1:21) when his wealth and health are tested.

The prosperity gospel—also known as the health and wealth gospel—falsely teaches that it is always God's will for Christians to be wealthy and healthy.

Pastor, Explain the World Christians Live In!
 Job 1:6–2:10 teaches that Satan is active in our world. The word 'Satan' literally means

‘accuser’ because accusations are his primary weapon (Zechariah 3:1; Revelation 12:9–11). You can illustrate this truth from Job 1:7–11 and 2:2–5. Remind your people, then, that Satan, like a lion, travels the earth ‘seeking someone to devour’ (1 Peter 5:8).

Job 1:6–2:10 also teaches that Christians will suffer in our world. Although Job was God’s righteous servant (1:8; 2:3), he suffered greatly. Likewise, Jesus, God’s righteous servant, was a ‘man of sorrows’ (Isaiah 53:3). Your people have heard or are hearing the false message of the ‘Prosperity Gospel,’ so take this opportunity to explain “that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

Pastor, Proclaim the God Christians Live For!

Job 1:6–2:10 teaches that the God Christians live for is in control of all suffering. Notice that it is God who invites Satan to test Job (1:8; 2:3); it is God who sets limits on Satan’s power

(1:12; 2:6); and, according to Job, it is God who is behind all of his suffering (1:21; 2:10).

Although we, as the readers, know about the events in heaven, Job did not. Yet, despite his lack of knowledge, Job worshipped God because he knew God was in control (1:20–21). Encourage your people to do the same by focusing more on the Sovereign One than the suffering one.

Who is Satan?

The name Satan, meaning “adversary,” is one of the names given to the devil, the head of the fallen angels (Matthew 12:24) and the arch enemy of God and humanity. He is a created and finite (limited) being first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 3 when he tempted our first parents and was cursed with the promise that the Lord would crush his head. The last reference to him in the Bible described his final destruction in the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:10).

Satan’s rebellion against God and his fall from his created perfection was soon after his creation. He took with him a third of the angels (Revelation 12:3–4).

There are many names and descriptions for Satan throughout the Bible. Among them are, the devil, meaning “slanderer” (Matthew 4:1), Abaddon, Hebrew for “destroyer” and the

Greek equivalent Apollyon we are more familiar with (Revelation 9:11). Paul calls him Belial, meaning “worthlessness” in 2 Corinthians 6:16, and the Pharisees called him Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24), a name of Chaldee origin which refers to the “dung god.” In the Old Testament he is called Lucifer, meaning “light-bearer” or “morning star” (Isaiah 14:12).

This reference in Isaiah is one that the apostle Paul picks up on and tells us that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Throughout the Bible we are told of many of the activities of Satan against the world in general and God's people in particular. As Christians we should not be ignorant of his designs (2 Corinthians 2:11), because it prepares us for the fight against him.

- He harasses God's people (Job 1:12).
- He suggests and inspires and tempts to sin in

God's people (Genesis 3:4; Luke 4:8, see also John 13:2).

- He produces false signs and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9).
- He sows weeds among God's people (Matthew 13:38).
- He opposes prayer and spiritual life (Zechariah 3:1).
- He removes the good seed of the gospel (Matthew 13:19).
- He slanders (devil, the slanderer) and accuses God's people (Job 1:9- 11; Revelation 12:10).
- He blinds the minds of unbelievers and keeps them captive (2 Corinthians 4:4; Acts 26:18).
- He obstructs and opposes God's people (Ephesians 6:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:18).
- He destroys bodies (Job 2:7; Luke 9:42).
- He lies (John 8:44).

All of this is under God's control and God turns it to glorify himself. Also, the gospel enables

believers to navigate a path through all of this to God's glory.

COMMENTARY: JOB'S AFFLICTION

The story of Job begins with an account of the righteous character of the man and his wealth (vss. 1–5). The author sets it out clearly that Job was righteous, wealthy and the ideal family man, symbolized in the number of his children—seven (completeness), three (wholeness) bringing a total number of children to ten (perfection). As the story unfolds we see that Job endures two tests; the test of faith regarding material possessions (1:6–22), and then on his health (2:1–10).

These opening two chapters are essential to understanding the affliction of Job because they set the context with God, not with Job. Notice the four scenes, alternating between heaven and earth.

Scene 1: On Heaven (1:6–12)

As the angels appeared before God in a sort of heavenly council (1 Kings 22:19–22; Isaiah

6:1–3; Daniel 7:9–10), Satan also came among them. The name Satan means “accuser” or “adversary.” It is used here with the definite article; i.e. “the adversary,” and he clearly had access to the heavenly council, but as an intruder, or an unwelcome guest. Yet God converses with him.

In the conversation with Satan, God delights in the faith and integrity of his servant Job (Psalm 149:4). Satan however, brings an accusation, claiming that Job’s faith was rooted in what he received from God, and not in God himself (1:10). Satan is also aware that God protects his own people thoroughly; God had “made” (NASB, KJV) or “put” (ESV, NIV) “a hedge around him...on every side.” This word means to surround with thorn bushes, like a wall.

Satan could not touch him but he challenged God to stretch out his hand against Job, assumed that Job would let go of God. He had

no confidence in Job's faith, and no knowledge of the security of God's salvation.

Scene 2: On Earth (1:13–22)

In the previous scene we saw the ultimate cause of Job's affliction; God did it, or rather God permitted Satan to do it, but God was in ultimate control. Back on earth the immediate cause of Job's sorrow and indeed of all sorrow is manifest in human depravity—the attacks of the Sabeans (vss. 13–15) and the Chaldeans (vs. 17), and in natural disasters on a cursed earth— lightning (vs. 16, see also 1 Kings 18:38) and a whirlwind or tornado (vs. 19).

Job's reaction was exemplary; deliberate and dignified and in it all he did not sin, but affirmed confidently that everything that happens comes from God—"the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." (vss. 21, 2:10).

Scene 3: In Heaven (2:1–6)

Job had passed the first test and maintained

his integrity (vs. 3). But Satan did not give up, and responded to God with what seems to be a proverb of that day, “skin for skin,” i.e. a man will give anything or anyone to save his own skin (vs. 4). Stretch out your hand, he told God and touch his body (his health) and “he will curse you to your face” (vs. 5).

Satan suggests that if Job has lost his health and his wealth, then he has nothing to worship God for, and he would let go of his faith. Satan is given permission again to go after Job, with everything he has got, only he is not to kill Job.

Scene 4: On Earth (2:7–13)

In the first attack it seems that there was some time between Satan going out from the presence of God and “the day” when he attacked the possessions of Job. Here it seems that he went immediately from the presence of the Lord to attack Job’s health (vs. 7).

The afflictions of Job included not only the multiple bereavements, economic loss, and complete health breakdown, but also the weakness of his wife and false accusations from his three friends.

The focus here is his physical suffering which included: painful boils (2:7–8, 30:17, see also “festering boils” Exodus 9:8-11; Deuteronomy 28:27), disfiguration (2:12), darkened, cracked and scabby skin, infected with worms (7:5, 30:30), fever and chills (21:6; 30:30), eyes red and swollen with weeping (16:16), diarrhea (30:27), sleeplessness (7:4), delirium (7:13–17), bad breath (19:17), and weight loss (19:20).

The custom at that time for someone in mourning was tearing the outer cloak, shaving the head and sitting among the ashes outside the city (1:20; 2:8). Satan had afflicted Job sorely and put his thoughts into the mouth of

his wife—“curse God” (2:9; see the words of Satan 1:11; 2:5; see also Matthew 16:21–23).

Job’s faith was sound; he prayed for his children (1:5), and in the midst of his suffering, he was called on to counsel his wife; “shall we receive good at the hand of God and not evil?” He was confident that all things, good things and calamities come from God (Ecclesiastes 7:14; Lamentations 3:38). These words not only answer his wife’s struggles and faithless challenge, but they put to death Satan’s malicious accusation that Job only worshiped God because of the good he received from him.

Conclusion

News of Job sufferings spread far and wide. His friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite arrived at an appointed time to comfort him (2:11). Such was his condition that when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognise him

(vs. 12). They sat in silence for seven days. This custom of mourning still exists in some African cultures, and points to the fact that in times of intense suffering, there are no words that can sufficiently speak to the situation. In times like that, silence says much more than words.

In the end, all that Job was left with were the four messengers of woe (1:14–19)—his wife who was either an unbeliever, or more likely struggling with a crisis of faith at this point, and three suspicious friends, who brought more accusations.

The Adversary of course had his way in all of this, but we are clearly told that God had a purpose in it. We should never think of Satan as an independent power. When we think like this we become fearful and discouraged, and this is how Satan wants us to be. No, we need to think of Satan as being subject to God. He can do nothing except when he has God's permission (Job 1:12; Luke 22:31). We learn

from Job that God turns Satan's malice into a blessing for his own glory. If God has blessed you with salvation, anything that Satan does against you, or any curse you think he has put on you, only builds on God's blessing (Romans 8:28).

God's purpose was twofold; to vindicate Job's integrity and faith against the accusations of Satan (1:9) and to grow him spiritually, or to deepen his spiritual insight (42:3–4). Like Job in the middle of his sufferings, when he could not understand why, we do not know why God brings suffering and affliction into our lives. But we can know, and we should take comfort in this fact, that God is vindicating our faith and growing us spiritually, and making us examples of perseverance for others in the Church (James 5:11).

SATAN CAST OUT

Both the Old and New Testaments tell us that angels are messengers of God who assist and protect God's people (Psalm 34:7; Daniel 6:17; Matthew 4:11; Acts 12:7–10). Satan has turned this original purpose against God's people.

Before Christ's victory on the cross, Satan appeared "before God day and night" to bring accusations against the Church (Revelation 12:10). We see this in the story of Job (Job 1:7), and also with Joshua the high priest (Zechariah 3:1–2). Also, Satan asked to have Peter so that he might exploit his weaknesses (Luke 22:31–32).

After Jesus' death and resurrection, however, the whole landscape of Satanic activity changed when Satan was defeated and disarmed (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14). As Jesus was defeating Satan on earth, Michael

and his angels fought against Satan and his angels and cast them out of heaven (Revelation 12:7–11; John 12:31). Before Jesus' victory, Michael would not contend with Satan (Jude 9), but the cross changed everything.

By his death and resurrection, Jesus accomplished the sacrifice for sin for his people. Satan no longer has any grounds for accusing us (Romans 8:31–34), and he has been cast out of heaven.

His malice continues with greater intensity because he knows he is beaten and his time is short. But his activity is limited to earth, bringing accusations, not to God against us, but now against our conscience. We must of course keep sober and vigilant (1 Peter 5:8), resisting him by faith, knowing that we fight in the victory of Calvary, and conquer him on the merits of Christ's sacrifice (Revelation 12:11).

Satan is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2), with dominion on the earth (Deuteronomy 1:36; 11:24; Joshua 1:3; 14:9; 1 John 5:19), but the lessons from Job still apply. Satan can do nothing outside of God's control, and as he goes "to and fro" to harm us, "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro" also to watch over us (2 Chronicles 16:9; Zechariah 4:10). Every act he accomplishes against us, he does so with the permission of God, and every curse he intends towards us is turned into a blessing, as it was with Job.

PREACHING NOTES (Points for explanation and application)

God accepted Satan's challenge against Job and put his servant into Satan's hands (1:10–12). God did this because Satan himself was already in God's hand.

God's hand was at work in the whole affair, hidden behind Satan's malice, human depravity, and natural disasters, but through all this, Job, by faith, still recognized the hand of God, and worshipped him.

In Luke 22:31, the Lord tells Peter that Satan had asked for him also, but Jesus prayed for him.

Satan has seen enough of "God's people" to know that there are those in it for their own ends ... but he was wrong about Job.

Satan knows that God protects his own people (1:10). Notice how Satan develops the thought; “a hedge around him... his house... all that he has... on every side.” Everything is under God’s control and Satan knows it.

Satan assumed that Job would let go of God, but he did not think about how God would hold on to Job. He had no confidence in Job’s faith and no knowledge of the security of God’s salvation.

There are four causes to suffering and affliction in the world; all in this story: A sovereign God (the ultimate cause), satanic aggression, a cursed world and human depravity

EXEGETICAL NOTES (Notes on the text, words, and grammar)

1:6 “Satan” In the original language, the word Satan has the definite article; “the Satan,” which functions more like a title than a personal name, “the accuser.”

1:6 “sons of God” These are angels, courtiers who give account of their activity to God.

1:7 “Where have you come from” This is not a question seeking information; God knows where Satan is, but this is to draw Satan out and to cause him to state his business among the angels.

1:10 “a hedge around him” God has made (NASB, KJV) or put (ESV, NIV) a hedge. This word means to surround with thorn bushes, like a wall.

1:15 “the fire of God” is a reference to lightning strikes.

2:4 “skin for skin” this is a difficult proverb, a riddle, but it seems to be a trading term. Satan is saying that everyone will exchange anything for something else of better value – he has surrendered his possession in exchange for his own life. In fact a man will abandon anything he owns in order to save his life. But is this true?

2:3, 9 “integrity” God knew his integrity, and Job knew it also (27:5), and Job was willing for God to search him (31:6). This word is found in one other place where we read that “the integrity of the righteous will guides them (Proverbs 11:3)....

PREACHER'S WORKSHOP: QUESTIONS

Here are some questions you should ask as you prepare your sermon. They will help you focus on the most important matters. You might choose to mention these questions in your sermon, or you might not. Some suggested answers are provided.

1. What does the story teach about God?

God has a twofold purpose in Job's suffering: to vindicate Job's integrity against the accusations of Satan (1:9) and to grow him spiritually (42:3–4). Like Job in the middle of his sufferings, we may not know why God brings suffering and affliction into our lives.

2. What does the story teach about Christ?

This story points us to Christ who has defeated Satan and cast him down to the earth (Revelation 12:7–11; Luke 10:18–20; John 12:31; Colossians 2:14–15). In Christ, nothing

and no one can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38–39).

3. What does the story teach about Satan?

Satan is God's primary enemy, hostile to God's reign and showing contempt in his responses to God (vs. 9; 1 Chronicles 21:1). Second, Satan is a vengeful accuser of the brethren (vs. 9; Zechariah 3:1–2; 1 Peter 5:8). Third, Satan does not act outside of God's control. Fourth, God uses the works of Satan to his own glory.

4. What does this story tell us to do?

Satan has seen enough of the Church to know that there are those in it for their own ends. He was wrong about Job, and misjudged his motives. We should examine the integrity and strength of our faith, to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10).

PREACHER'S WORKSHOP: APPLICATIONS

Application is an important part of every sermon. Show your hearers how the Bible's teaching affects them personally. Show them what God wants them to do and how God wants them to change. Apply your sermon specifically to different kinds of people. Here is an example:

The lost

There was a day when Satan had access to the presence of God as an intruder, but he has now been cast out (Revelation 12:7–11).

Today, through Christ, you have access to the presence of God as his friend, do not harden your heart (Hebrews 4:7) or you too will be cast out (Matthew 22:13).

The tempted

Satan has dominion on the earth (Deuteronomy 1:36; 11:24; Joshua 1:3; 14:9). He is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2), and the world is under his

control (1 John 5:19). But when Satan goes “to and fro” to disturb God’s people, “the eyes of the Lord run to and fro” to watch over them (2 Chronicles 16:9; Zechariah 4:10).

The fearful

Satan assumed that Job would let go of God, that his faith would fail, but Satan did not think about how God would hold on to Job. He had no confidence in Job’s faith, and no appreciation of the security of God’s salvation.

The faithful

Hold on, looking to God by faith and he will vindicate you (Psalm 35:22–24).

WHAT JOB LEARNED AMONG THE ASHES

Excerpt from Rev. C.H. Spurgeon

In the confession which now lies before us (Job 42:5–6), Job acknowledges God’s boundless power. He felt that whatever the Lord chose to think or desire he could at once accomplish. But Job is also impressed with his own folly. Previously he had spoken what he felt was true, but he now feels that he did not understand what he said, and he confesses that he may have said many unwise things, and therefore he bows his head before the Lord and confesses that he has uttered things that he did not understand. I will make three observations.

First, we sometimes have very clear views of God. Job said, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.”

In order for Job to have this close and clear view of God he had to be afflicted. The Lord had taken everything away from Job, and this paved the way to his giving him more of himself. It was not till after he had scraped himself with the potsherd, nor till his friends had scraped him with something worse [their false accusations], that Job could say, "Mine eye seeth thee." Not till every camel and every sheep had been stolen, and every child was dead, could the afflicted patriarch cry, "Now mine eye seeth thee." In the absence of other goods the good God is better seen.

Happy is that man who in prosperity can hear the voice of God in the abundant flocks. But, remember, prosperity is a painted window which shuts out much of the clear light of God, and only when the colours are removed, is the glass restored to its full transparency. Adversity thus takes away the painted colour and allows us to see our God far better than before, if our eyes are prepared for the light.

Secondly, when we are favoured with these clearer views of God, we have lowlier thoughts of ourselves. Job said, “wherefore I abhor myself...” When we see God with admiration, then we see ourselves with self-loathing. The more you appreciate God, the more you will depreciate yourself. While the thought of God rises higher, and higher, and higher, you also will sink lower and lower in your own esteem. The word used by Job, “I abhor myself,” is a strong one. It might be paraphrased thus, “I nauseate myself. I am disgusted with myself.

Why are the wicked so proud? It is because they forget God. Why did Pharaoh dare to say, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?” It was because he did not know Jehovah. If men knew God, how it would change their thoughts and talk! If they could “see” him as Job did, and behold his inexpressible glory, they would become far more meek and lowly. Too often we compare

ourselves among ourselves, and are not wise. We must measure ourselves by the holiness of God; God himself is the standard of perfect holiness, truth, love, and justice; and if we fall short of his glory, we have fallen short of what we ought to be. When I think of this, self-righteousness seems to me to be a wretched insanity.

If you would know what God is, he sets himself before us in the person of his dear Son. In every respect in which we fall short of the perfect character of Jesus, in that respect we sin. Oh that we had a manifestation of God, and then we would know ourselves! God grant it to you for his mercy's sake!

Thirdly, whenever we are made lowly, our heart is filled with repentance. Job said, "I repent ..." Job's expression here refers to all that had come out of himself, or had lurked within himself. He abhorred all that he had been doing and saying.

WORD STUDY

Identifying key words is important because it will help you better understand the text. But there are some words or phrases that bring out the text's important theological lessons.

The word translated “to and fro” (Job 1:7; 2:2) indicates both the restless activity of Satan and the sphere of his activity. As the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2), he has dominion on the earth (Deuteronomy 1:36; 11:24; Joshua 1:3; 14:9). The Bible is clear: the world is under his control (1 John 5:19), and Satan goes “to and fro” with evil and destructive purposes (Matthew 13:25; 1 Peter 5:8).

This word means to push forward, to row, or, as it is used here to go about or “to and fro”. This word is used thirteen times in the Old Testament, to speak of people going about gathering the manna (Numbers 11:8), or the

king's officials going through the tribes (2 Samuel 24:2), or the rower or mariners (Ezekiel 27:8, 26).

But what is interesting about this word is that although Satan goes “to and fro” to disturb God's people, the Scripture also uses this word to speak of the eyes of the Lord “run[ning] to and fro” to watch over God's people (2 Chronicles 16:9; Zechariah 4:10).

THE PASTOR AND THE WORLD, PT. 3: A MINDSET OF A PILGRIM

Dr. Joel Beeke

We have considered previously “Using not abusing the world,” (issue 4.3) and “Use the World as God’s Good Gift” (issue 4.4). Here Dr. Beeke gives us the final article on the mindset of the Christian in the world.

We must use the world in a way that is holy and pleasing to God. We must allow the teachings of the Bible to shape how we think about the world and our activities in it. We have been thinking previously about the doctrine of creation to help us think rightly about the world or act rightly in it.

Another doctrine that is helpful in this regard is the return of Christ and the end of the age. In 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul refers to “the latter times,” and in verse 8 he mentions “the life ... which is to come.” He returns to the theme

again (6:12, 14–15, 19), and shows how we must always view the things of this present world in light of “the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 6:14).

We must use this world knowing that it is neither our true home nor our lasting treasure (Matthew 6:24–34; Hebrew 11:8–10). Calvin said Christ “teaches us to travel as pilgrims in this world.” Your goal should not be to accumulate large quantities of possessions. You may use what you need and sample what you like, but you should constantly ask whether this possession or that activity will help you along to heaven or hinder you.

We are not tourists in this world living for pleasure and entertainment, but wanderers banished from paradise and longing to return. Calvin wrote, “If heaven is our homeland, what else is the earth but our place of exile?”

The Puritans picked up Calvin's pilgrimage theme and developed it further. The pilgrim view should include at least six perspectives:

- A biblical outlook for our faith and practice.
- A godly outlook that promotes diligent living in the childlike fear of God in our duty to God, to family, and to country.
- A churchly outlook that is concerned preeminently with God's glory and the worship, fellowship, doctrine, government, and discipline of Christ's church.
- A warfaring outlook, since the church on earth wages war against indwelling sin (for the remains of our old nature lie dormant within us like a volcano that can burn out of control at any time), and against a beckoning, seducing, yet hostile world that does not agree to cease-fires and does not sign peace treaties.

- A methodical outlook that trains the believer to use the spiritual disciplines faithfully and regularly every day.
- A two-worldly outlook, which enables us to have heaven “in our eye” while we are walking on earth, so that we are willing to deny ourselves anything that would hinder us from running the Christian race with our eyes on Jesus and glory (Hebrews 12:1–2).

The Word of God teaches us that we are pilgrims, but it also teaches us that all mankind is headed for one of two ultimate destinations. A pilgrim mindset therefore is also an evangelistic mindset. We are not to envy the rich and powerful but to pray for their salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:1–5).

We are to use the world with one eye on Judgment Day. This perspective makes us willing to make great sacrifices in this life so that other people will find eternal life. It also

reminds us that God will call us to account for how we used the world, and whether we did so in a manner that advanced God's purposes and kingdom.

PRAYING IN THE DARKNESS

Charles M. Barrett

This article on Jonah is included here in connection with the suffering of Job for two reasons. First, the theme of prayer—and how Job interacts with God—is worthy of our attention. One of the benefits of suffering is that it inclines the heart toward God. Second, drawing from other parts of the Bible in our preaching is a very powerful tool to illustrate and confirm a point. There are many lessons we can learn from Jonah's prayer, but I will draw your attention to four.

First, remember what you have learned in the light when you find yourself in the dark. Jonah's prayer reveals a remarkable understanding of God's Word. Jonah's prayer is biblical from beginning to end. In this brief prayer, almost each line is an allusion to Scripture, drawing from at least ten Psalms. Jonah was a man who had previously

meditated on God's Law day and night and who hid God's Word in his heart. Let us fill our minds with Scripture that we may know how we ought to think and pray in all situations of life.

Second, remember the lowbending ear of God. It is not difficult to grasp that God hears the prayers of His people when they are on the proverbial mountain top enjoying God's nearness and presence. It is when we find ourselves in the depths, whether by our own sin like Jonah or the depths of trials like Job, that we need to remember that God bends His ear low to hear His people's cries.

Like Jonah and the Psalmist, we can cry unto the Lord from the depths, and He will hear the voice of our supplications (Jonah 2:1–2; Psalm 130). May you know the encouragement of the reality that God hears your supplication. No matter where you are, you can always cry out to God.

Third, remember that God guides and comforts even in deep waters. One remarkable lesson from Jonah's prayer is what he was ignorant of while in the belly of the fish. He cried out to God for deliverance while He was navigating the fish to dry land near Nineveh. We find ourselves in distress and often do not know how God will work or answer prayer. Jonah was not directing the fish from the belly. God navigated the fish through the waters all while Jonah prayed and brought Jonah through the valley of the shadow of death where God willed the prophet to be.

We may not understand the providential leading of God. Job had not been in heaven to hear the conversation between God and Satan. We have never been commanded to understand all His ways, but we have been called to trust in the Good Shepherd who leads us, sometimes by still waters and

sometimes through the valley. But through it all, He providentially guides and comforts us.

Fourth, remember God's grace to change the disposition of our heart. Jonah's prayer begins in a desperate cry and ends in joyful praise, and Job's affliction similarly begins with a cry of desperation (3:1), but end with a clear vision of the sovereign God (42:1–6). God uses prayer to change us and conform us to what He desires us to be. As will be evident in the rest of this short book, Jonah still needed greater transformation. But through the means of grace of prayer, Jonah was different by the end of the prayer. Let us be people who pray and take full advantage of this gracious means by which God changes us to love Him more.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF PAUL AND TIMOTHY, PT. 2

Dr. Michael Haykin

In the previous issue, (Issue 4.4) we noted that the apostle Paul is exhorting the Christians at Philippi to address their disunity and be “like minded.” Paul illustrated this with the example of Christ (Philippians 2).

After he has outlined the work and motivation of Christ, the Apostle continues the theme of thinking of others’ best interests. In Philippians 2:19–22 he gives a second example of being likeminded and having the interests of others at heart. This time he turns to his friend Timothy.

“Likeminded” (Philippians 2:20)

From the words and phrases that Paul uses in Philippians 2:19–22, it is clear that he is

recommending Timothy as an example of Christlikeness.

Unlike others that Paul knows, Timothy sincerely cares for the state of the Philippians. He is genuinely concerned about the needs of other believers and is not solely seeking to promote his own interests. He displays the mind of Christ. Paul describes him as “like minded.” Because of his desire to be like Christ, Timothy is one who fully shares Paul’s heart and mind, and is thus a completely trustworthy companion and friend of Paul.

Due to their age difference, Paul naturally speaks of Timothy as his son. But he quickly adds that Timothy did not serve him, but together as equals before God, they served the Lord of the gospel, Christ. Paul is always very careful to avoid giving the impression that he is lord and master over the faith of others.

In this text from Philippians we see clearly the way that Paul prizes his friendship with Timothy, and the way that it is based on a harmony of heart and mind. Without such harmony there can be no intimate friendship.

“Come before Winter” (2 Timothy 4:21)

The final record of this friendship is found in 2 Timothy. This letter was written weeks, perhaps a few months, before Paul's death by a Roman executioner. As he wrote Paul was in a cell in Rome, while Timothy was in Ephesus, on the coast of what today is modern Turkey. Paul opens the letter by describing Timothy as a “beloved son” whom he regularly remembers in prayer and whom he eagerly desires to see. As he thinks of Timothy, he especially recalls the last time that the two were together, when Timothy broke down and wept (2 Timothy 1:2–4). This occasion may well have been when Paul was arrested.

After encouraging Timothy to hold fast to the gospel, to pursue godliness, and to fulfill his ministry, Paul tells his friend of his impending death. He faces this prospect of death with confidence, aware that he is saved and stands in a right relationship with “the righteous judge” (2 Timothy 4:6–8; 1:9). But so strong is his friendship with Timothy that he no sooner mentions his death that he urges him to be “diligent to come to me quickly” (2 Timothy 4:9).

In fact, as he draws the letter to a close, he again urges his friend: “do your utmost to come before winter” (2 Timothy 4:21). During the winter months from November to March it was dangerous to sail the Mediterranean Sea, and much of the shipping in that region halted for that reason. Aware of this fact and conscious that his death was close, Paul is urging Timothy to sail from Ephesus for Rome before the winter months. If he didn’t, then he would have to travel overland to Rome, which

would take considerably longer and he might not arrive before Paul's death.

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CONTRIBUTORS

- **Aaron Dunlop** was a pastor in Canada before ministering in Kenya. He holds a degree in theology from Geneva Reformed Seminary in South Carolina, USA. Aaron is the director of The Krapf Project and lives in the UK with his wife and children. He blogs at thinkGOSPEL.com.
- **Joel R. Beeke** is a minister of the Heritage Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan (USA), and President of the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, where he is also the professor of Systematic Theology and Homiletics. He is the author of many books and articles.
- **Michael A. G. Haykin** is Professor of Church History and Biblical Spirituality, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Kentucky, USA), and Director, The Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies.
- **Alex Stephenson** is from Northern Ireland and is a missionary church planter in Germany with UFM.
- **Charles H. Spurgeon** (1834–1892) preached at the Metropolitan in London, England, from 1854 to 1892. He was known as the Prince of Preachers.
- **Charles M. Barrett** serves as Associate Pastor at Wayside Presbyterian Church in Signal Mountain, TN, USA.

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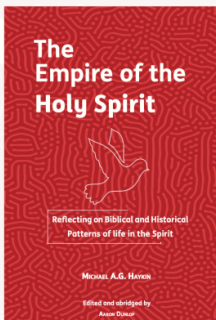
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from the Introduction

Edited and abridged by

AARON DUNLOP