Odes to Job 《约伯记》之歌

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“Odes to Job” is used as the title for the 47 poems that I am writing from Job in the Bible. And here the following ten poems have been written from the chapters of Job 1-8.

1. Prologue

In th’ land o’ Uz there lived Job a man,
Feared God, Shunned evil, blamel’ss he was.
He had three daught’rs, and sons seven,
Owned se’en thousand sheep, three thous’nd camels.

Yoke o’ oxen five thousand he had,
And five hundred asses female.
He had a large number o’ household.
He’s great’st man of all th’ east people.

His sons used to hold feasts i’ their homes;
They would inv’te their three sist’rs to join.
In morning Job would off’r burnt off’rings,
Worship God to cleanse th’ childr’n from sin.

2. Job’s First Test

One day to Satan the Lord said:
“On earth like Job there is no one;
He is blameless and high-minded,
Who fears God, shuns e’il, he’s a man.”

Sat’n Repl’ed, “Give all Job needs you ’lways,
That’s why for you he has respect.
Reach out your hand, ruin all he has,
Then he’ll speak evil things you ’gainst.”

The Lord said to Satan, “All right,
All that he has is in your hand.
But Job himself you must not hurt.”
Sat’n went out from th’ presence of th’ Lord.

Satan made Job’s li’estock off carried,
And the servants killed by robbers;
Th’ fire of God fallen Satan made
And burned the sheep and th’ farm workers;
Sat’n caused a mighty wind swept in
And struck the house’s four corners,
Job’s heirs were killed for th’ house fall down.
Mess’ngers came to tell Job ‘bout these.

Then Job ’rose, shaved and his robe rent,
He fell to th’ ground i’ worship and said:
“Naked I came, naked I will depart;
May the name of the Lord be praised.”

3. Job’s Second Test

Later then th’ Lord said to Satan,
He thought Job was blamel’ss and trustw’rthy.
Though Sat’n incit’d God to him ruin,
He still maintained his integr’ty.

“Skin for skin!” Satan said to th’ Lord,
“For his life a man will give all.
Strike his flesh and bones with your hand,
And curse you to your face he will.”

Hav’ng got th’ second perm’ssion from God,
Satan affl’cted Job wi’ painful Sores
From soles o’ his feet to top o’ his head.
Job took potsh’rd to scrape skin i’ ashes.

“Do you still persist i’ your goodness?
Curse God and die.” Job his wife told.
Job answered, “You are talk’ng nonsense!
Be faithf’l whate’er we’ve got from God.”

3. 约伯再受试炼

随后神对撒旦话，
约伯无错可信人
虽汝激神攻击他，
他仍持守他正纯

撒旦答主“皮连皮!”
“为保人命願全舍。伤他骨肉伸手击，
当面咒祢骂口破。”

撒旦再得主诺允，
击打约伯长毒疮。
疮生头顶到脚心，
瓦片刮疤坐灰上。

“夫还持守你纯正？
诅神死去。”言他妻。约伯答妻“屁哧哼！”
忠神无论得与失。”
4. Job’s Three Friends Come to Comfort Him

When Job’s friends heard ‘bout all th’ troubles
Upon their friend Job that had come,
So they started out from their homes.
They came to show care and comf’rt him.

When they got clos’r to where he lived,
They could see him but rec’nize not.
And they raised their voic’s and wept ’loud;
They tore their robes, on heads sprinkl’d dust.

Then they sat with him on the ground
For seven nights and seven days,
And to him no one spoke a word,
For they saw how great his torm’nt was.

5. Job Curses the Day He Was Born

After this, Job opened his mouth and said,
And th’ day on which he had been born he cursed:
“May the day perish in which I was born,
And the night that said, ‘Is conceived a man.’
May that day be darkness, God ’bove seek not;
Never again may light shine upon it.
Make it a day of gloom and thick darkness;
Cover it wi’ clouds, o’erwhelm its light blackness.
Th’ night I was born may deep darkn’ss take over;
May it not rejoice among th’ days of th’ year.
May no childr’n e’er have been born on that night;
And may no joyful cry be heard in it.
May th’ sorcerers who curse days curse that day,
To rouse Levi’than those who are ready.
May morn’ng stars be dark; wait for daylight i’ vain
And may it not see the first rays of dawn.
’Cause it didn’t shut th’ doors of my mother’s womb,
It didn’t keep my eyes seeing trouble from.
Why did I not in my mother’s belly?
And not as I came out o’ my moth’rs body?
Why did my mother on her knees me hold?

4. 三位友人来安慰约伯

听闻约伯遭不幸，
一切灾祸临他身，
友朋离家出门行，
来表关爱安慰人。

约伯住处友朋到，
眼看约伯认不出。
放声大哭友嚎啕；
撕袍头上扬尘土。

随同约伯坐地上，
同坐七天又七夜，
友无一言与他讲，
见其苦痛难除解。

此后约伯开口言，
咒诅出生那一天：
“願生我日当毁灭，
灭没‘怀男那一夜。’
願那日暗神无找，
也願其上光非照。
使其黑暗也阴霾，
乌云弥补日食在。
生吾那夜黑暗夺，
年中不在日欢乐。
但願那夜无生育；
欢快声音其间无。
咒日之人咒那日，
惹动鳄鱼其有意。
那夜黎明願星暗，
盼望不见晨光线。因未关闭怀我胎，
吾眼未隐患难外。
为何余不娘胎死？
何不母腹出断气？
为何膝接余娘怀？
6. Eliphaz Speaks: Innocent Do not Suffer

"Job, will you be annoyed if I utter?
I cannot keep silent any longer.
See, you have instructed many people,
And you have given strength to hands feeble.
Your words have upheld those who stumbled;
You have strengthened faltering knees to stand.
But now trouble comes, and you’re impatient;
It touches you, and you’re dismayed to face it.”
Is not your fear of God your confidence,
And of your ways your hope the uprightness?
“Think now: who that was sinless e’er perished
Or where were ever destroyed the upright?
As I have observed, those who plough evil
Harvest the same and those who sow trouble.
By th’ breath of God they are annih’lated;
And by th’ blast of his wrath they are consumed.
The wicked roar and growl like th’ fierce lions,
But God breaks their teeth and them silences.
The old lion perish’s for lack of food,
And the cubs of th’ lioness are scattered.
“Now a word was secretly to me brought,
And an undertone of it my ears caught.
Amid disquieting dreams the night in,
When a very deep slumber falls on men,
Alarm and trembling of me got hold,
Every bone in my body shake that made.
A spirit glided past my countenance,
And th’ hair on my body stood on finis.
It stood still, but tell what it was I’d not.
A form b’fore my eyes, and I heard an ’ccent:
“Be righteous before God can the mortals?
Be pure before their mak’r can hum’n beings?
Even in his servants he puts no trust,
And his angels he charg’es error against;
He’ll trust a creature of clay do you think,
A thing o’ mud that can be crushed a moth like?
A man may be alive in the morning,
But die unnoticed before comes evening.
Are not their tent-cords plucked up within them,
So that they die even without wisdom?”

7. Job Is corrected by God

“Call out, Job. See if answers anyone?
To which of the holy ones will you turn?
For resentment slays the foolish people,
And jeal’usy destroys those who are simple.
I saw that fool’sh people were hav’ng success,
But sudd’ly came down on their hous’s a curse.
Find secur’ty his children can never;
They’re crushed in th’ gate with’ut a deliverer.
Th’ hungry eat his crops, e’en grain thorns among,
For th wealth of th’ foolish thirsty people long.
For misery does not come from the dust,
Nor does adversity from the ground sprout.
But human beings are born to hardship
And that is just as sure as sparks fly up.
“But as for me, I would appeal to God
And present my event to him I would.
We cannot fathom the wonders he does,
And there is no end to his miracles.
He bestows raindrops upon the soil land;
And he sends waters upon th’ countryside.
He sets up on high those who are lowly,
And those who morn are lifted to safety.
He frustrates the devices of the shrewd,
So that the work o’ their hands does not succeed.
He catches th’ wise by their own craftiness,
Away th’ evil plans of th’ sinful he sweeps.
With darkness in the daytime they confront
And fumble at noonday as in the night.
From th’ sword of their mouth he saves the needy;
And the poor from the clutches of th’ mighty.
“So th’ impecunious has ambition,
And iniquity must its mouth fasten.
Blessed is the one whom God reproves, behold;
Therefore despise not the discipline of th’ Lord.
For the injures, but he also up binds;
He damag’s, but also makes whole his hands.
From six calam’ties rescue you he will;
Will not touch you e’en in seven evil.
In fam’ne God shall redeem you from dying,
And in war he will keep you from killing.
From the lash of th’ tongue you shall be hidden,
And shall not fear destruction it comes when.
You shall laugh at violence and hunger,
And the beasts of the earth you shall not fear.
For you shall be in league wi’ the stones of th’ field.
And shall be at peace wi’ you th’ animals wild.
You shall know that your wigwam is at peace,
And you’ll inspect your fold and nothing miss.
You can be sure you’ll have a lot o’ children,
And your offspring as th’ blades of grass th’ earth on.
You shall come to your grave in ripe age old,
Like a crop that is gathered i’ its period.
See, it is true that we have searched this out.
So hear it and to yourself apply it.”

8. Job Replies: My Complaint Is Just

“Oh that my anguish were actu’lly weighed
And on th’ scales all my misery be placed!
Than th’ sand of th’ seas it would be heavier;
My words have been imp’tuous no wonder.
The Almighty has shot me with arrows,
And ‘gainst me God has lined up his terrors.
Does a wild donkey bray its grass over,
Or does an ox low over its fodder?
Can tasteless food be eaten without salt,
Or is there any flavor i’ an egg’s white?
My appetite refuses to touch them;
They are like food that is to me loathsome.
“I wish I could have what I’m requesting,
And God would grant me what I’m desiring;
It would please God to crush me even that,
That he would loose his hand and me off cut!
This would be my comf’rt, rejoice even i’ pain,
For I’ve not denied th’ words of th’ Holy One.
“What strength do I have, that I should still wait?
And what is my end, that I’d be patient?
Is th’ strength of my body the strength of stones,
Or are my blood and flesh as strong as bronze?
Th’ power to help mys’l if I don’t have any,
All wisdom has been taken from me ’way.
“A man’s friends should love him when hope is gone,
E’en though he forsakes th’ fear o’ Almighty one.
As a torrent-bed my broth’rs are treach’rous,
As torrential rivers that away pass,
With thick snow and ice the rivers are checked,
The rivers rise when the snow starts to melt.
But they stop flowing when the dry seasons comes,
When it’s hot, they vanish from their channels.
The paths of their way are divert’d aside;
They go up into the waste, perish and.
Look for water th’ caravans of Tema,
And look in hope th’ travelers of Sheba.
They are distressed, because they had trusted,
They arrive there, only to be ashamed.
And now you too have proved to be nothing,
Dreadful and are afraid you see something.
Have I e’er asked you to give me a gift,
Pay a rans’m from your wealth me free to set?
Deliver me from th’ hand of th’ enemy,
Redeem me from the clutches of th’ mighty?
“Teach me, I’ll be quiet and hold my tongue;
Make me understand how I have gone wrong.
Honest words are so excruciating
But your reproof doesn’t prove anything.
To correct what I say do you intend,
As if th’ words of the desperate were wind?
You would even cast lots over th’ orphan,
Trade away your clos’st friend you would even.
“But now be so kind as to look me at;
Lie right here in front of you I will not.
Relent now, let no injustice be done;
My righteousn’ss is yet i’ it, desist even.
Is there any injustice on my lips?
Cannot my palate discern thing perverse?

9. Job: My Suffering Is without End

“Does not man have hard service earth upon,
Are not his days like those of a hired man?
Like a slave longing for the gloom shadows,
Or a hired man waiting for his wages;
So I am allotted months o’ vanity
And are assigned to me nights o’ misery.
When I lie down I think, ‘When shall I ’rise?’
The night drags on, and I toss ’ntil sunrise.  
My body is covered with worms and dirt;  
My skin is brok’n, it has boils all o’er it.  
“Than a wea’er’s shuttle my days are swifter,  
And they come to an end without desire.  
O rem’mber that my life is only wind;  
And my eyes will never again see good.  
The eyes that see me now see me ’gain won’t;  
Your eyes are upon me, but I am not.  
As a cloud vanish’es and is fore’er gone,  
So he who goes down to th’ grave won’t return.  
Come to his house again he will never;  
E’en his own home town doesn’t him rem’mber.  
“I will speak in th’ anguish of my spirit;  
Complain i’ my soul’s bitt’rnss, be calm I can’t!  
Under a safeguard why do you me keep?  
Am I the sea, or the monster of th’ deep?  
Sometimes I think my bed will me comfort  
And I think my couch will ease my complaint,  
But even then you frighten me with dreams  
And terr’fy me through visions and nightmares;  
So that my soul would choose suffocation,  
And death rather than this body of mine.  
I loathe my life; I would not live alway.  
Leave me ’lone; for my days are vanity.  
“What is man, that you should him exagg’rate,  
And that your mind upon him you should set,  
And that every morn’ng inspect him you should,  
And put him to the test every second?  
Will you not depart from me for a while,  
Nor let me ’lone till I swall’w my spittle?  
“If I sin, what to you, O watcher o’ men?  
Why have you made me your targ’t, a burden?  
Why don’t you my offens’s and sins forgive?  
When you seek me, I’ll be gone and i’ my grave.”

10. Bildad Speaks: Job Should Repent

“Job, will you talk about these things how long?  
And the words of your mouth be a wind strong.

夜过辗转日升起。  
虫灰为衣满身上。  
皮肤暴裂多瘀疮。  
快似飞梭余时日，  
绝望之中其飞逝。  
吾命不过如风吹；  
余眼不见好迍回。  
看余之人难再见；  
汝眼看余再无面。  
云彩散去永消失，  
人下坟墓无归兮。  
不再回他自己家：  
故土不再记得他。  
“吾灵愁苦余要言：  
哀情吐露口无掩！  
问神为何防守余？  
岂余是海是大鱼？  
时想吾床余安慰，  
也想吾榻止屈委。  
可祢用梦吓唬我，  
异象噩梦余恐吓；  
窒息而死余肯宁，  
胜过身骨留一命。  
余厌生存非再活，  
时日虚空勿管我。  
祢视人大他算啥，  
费心祢竟看顾他。  
每天祢要他察鉴，  
时刻祢将其试验。  
何不转身余放过，  
让余独自唾沫沐？  
若罪于主有何妨？  
何以余靶空皮囊？  
何不赦免余罪过？  
当祢寻余坟中卧。”

10. 比勒达言：约伯应忏悔

此话何时了？
如风言乱道。
Does God ever integrity pervert?
Does the Almighty distort what is right?
If your progeny have sinned against him,
And so as they deserved he punished them.
But if you will look to the Almighty,
And plead with God the Lord for charity,
Be pure and hon’s’t, rouse hims’If for you he would,
And restore your estate as your reward.
Though your beginning was insign’fican,t
Yet your latter days will be very great.
“Please inquire of bygone generations,
And think ’bout th’ things searched out by their fathers.
For we are but o’ yest’rday and nothing know,
And our days on earth are as a shadow.
Will they not enlighten you and you tell?
And will they not bring forth words from their soul?
Can papyrus grow tall without a marsh?
And can reeds where there’s not water flourish?
While yet in its greenness and cut down not,
They dry up faster than any oth’r plant.
Such is the fate of all who forget God;
The hope of the godless will be destroyed.
What they trust in is fragile, very weak;
What they depend on is a spid’rs house like.
If one leans ’gainst his house, it falls apart;
If one lays hold of it, it’ll endure not.
He is like a well-wat’red plant in th’ sunshine,
It spreads its new shoots all over th’ garden.
It wraps its roots around a pile of rocks;
And for a place among the stones it looks.
But when a green plant from its place is torn,
Th’ sport disowns it and says, ’I’ve ne’er you seen.’
Surely this is th’ joy of his happy ways,
And out of the earth will spring still others.
“Surely God won’t reject a blamel’sss person,
Or the hands of evildoers strengthen.
Until he will fill your mouth with laughing,
And yet refill your lips with rejoicing.
Those men who hate you will be clothed in shame,
And the tents of th’ wicked will to naught come.
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References


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