**The Righteousness of Job**

I know, the common expression is, “the patience of Job.” The book of Job is a case study in steadfast faithfulness to God despite the total disintegration of one’s life. But I believe Job’s character presents another valuable lesson for us. There are principles of righteousness that have always been important to our creator regardless of the period of human history.

Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.” From the beginning of time until the coming of the Christ, God communicated His will directly to the fathers and looked to them to be the spiritual leaders of their families. About sixteen centuries before Christ, He made a special covenant with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (the children of Israel) and gave a written Law exclusively to them. When Jesus died on the cross, the Old Law was taken away and all are now under the authority of Christ (Hebrews 8:13).

That being said, it is instructive to observe God’s definition of righteousness in the life of Job 4,000 years ago, long before Moses’ Law was given. The similarities with the character that Christ wants for us is remarkable. God said, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.” Let’s consider Job.

Job was compassionate, kind, generous and hospitable (chapter 29). He was also concerned about justice for those who had no voice. He treated his servants fairly and had a formal grievance program millennia before the first labor union! (31:13-15). He was a man of great integrity, both personally and in his business dealings (27:3-4; 31:38-40). He was a family man with a firm commitment to moral purity (31:1;9-12). Job was an extremely wealthy man but he put his trust wholly in God, not his possessions (31:24). While many around him fell foolishly into pagan worship, Job remained totally devoted to Jehovah, the only one true and living God (31:25-28).

The rock-solid foundation supporting his exemplary character was his profound respect for the word and authority of God. Long before there was a divine written Law, Job said, “My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (23:11-12). When God gave the Israelites a written Law through Moses, those ordinances fell into two categories: Love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40). That is a great description of the character of Job.

Jesus compared building our lives on His teachings to building a house on a solid rock foundation (Matthew 7:24-25). Isn’t it interesting that Christ’s teachings center on total devotion to God and love for one another? God’s desire for His people has been basically the same from the very beginning.

**John McKee**

**West Murray church of Christ**