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There was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless, a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil.

–Job 1:1, NLT

What can be learned from a biblical character who lived almost five millennia ago? A lot!

Job was a man who experienced tremendous tragedy and loss but ultimately experienced restoration as well. You might say Job is the “comeback kid” of the ancient world.

The literary content of the book of Job fits into the Old Testament category known as biblical poetry. By “poetry” we’re referring not to the Western genre that is based on rhyme and meter, but rather to the Hebraic model, which is based on storytelling and thought.

The book itself overflows with a variety of meaningful words that are not found elsewhere in the Bible. For instance, the author uses five different words to describe “darkness,” each of which conveys a distinct, separate meaning. The writings are filled with similes and metaphors meant to evoke deep feelings.

Interestingly, the name “Job” means “the persecuted one.” Symbolically it is a reflection of the enemy’s plot to remove Job’s influence and power in the land. When you and I take up the cause of God, we automatically become Jobs, or “persecuted ones.”

According to the Scriptures, Job was revered by both God and man. He is quoted at least twice in the New Testament and was so renowned in Old Testament times that God mentions him by name through the prophet Ezekiel (see Ezek. 14:14).

Many scholars believe Job lived in what is known as the “patriarchal” time period. Cultural features found in the book of Job place him after the flood and sometime between the Tower of Babel and Abraham.

Some scholars question the authenticity of Job as an actual biblical figure. Others see the whole story as being allegorical.

However, the prophet Ezekiel calls him by name in conjunction with Daniel and Noah, who both were real people. It is highly unlikely that a fictional character would be mentioned with such giants of the faith.

As we can see, there is much to be learned from the life of Job. He was a real person with real issues.

I invite you to join us during the next few months on a journey of discovery while we study the life of Job.

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