

PREFACE

“I think this book of Job took a turn when pastor, maybe a few years back, preached the message that there was a time that Job was justified, and it wasn’t at the beginning, but it was at the end. I remember hearing the message conveyed by Zephaniah Soh after it was preached by pastor. And today, pastor went through this aspect of Justification by Faith, not only the fact Job did question how a man can be justified by God, but even his own life was an example for us as to when a man is justified. I know it was very hard – when Zep was conveying it, it was hard for certain people to take it. And even in my heart, at that point of time, I almost couldn’t believe it. But it conforms to the preaching of pastor all these years concerning justification. [Pastor: “Also if you study the book, this question is asked throughout, when and how is a man justified before God? How can a man be just before God? All these questions lead us to the final thing. Ultimately, the final answer comes when he experimentally tastes of it. God didn’t give him a doctrinal answer as much as an experimental answer.”] Sometimes, when we look at the book of Job and we think that he was justified in the beginning, it also tends to expose our Arminian understanding of what justification is, because he was rich, and he was blessed, God even boasted about him. [Pastor: “I agree with that. A lot of people, newcomers, superficial believers think that because you are blessed materially in the world, you are justified by God.”] Even we, who are under pastor’s ministry, have that thinking. It is hard to take it that Job was only justified at the end because that means he had to go through the whole process of the law. It was an anguish not just of the body but of the soul. That disturbs our human heart. So today, pastor brought out this aspect of the application of the law as well; and that this book of Job does not just speak of justification, but also how integral the application of the law is to justification. Job is a Gentile, so this is another book dedicated, in that sense, to the Gentiles in the Old Testament. Pastor asked whether Job understood all the doctrines – to what extent? Considering he might not have the Torah or any other Scriptures at that time. [Pastor: “He did have – I don’t know how he got it. Somebody was having the ‘KJV version’ of the time, at least the authentic manuscripts – the Masoretic text, the Old Testament version.”] Pastor may not say it directly but in one way or another, he did show us that whether it was the arguments between Job and his three friends or the interception of Elihu, their conversations were all highly doctrinal and experimental. Although Job’s three friends were doctrinally right, yet experimentally they still fell short. I’m shocked that there were a motley number of Gentiles at that time who knew so much; God gave them special revelation to a very deep degree about objective and subjective aspects of salvation. At the end, I know the whole book of Job is about the experimental aspect; about the law, about going through pain, about suffering, about waiting on the Lord, being patient to take the heavy hand of God again and again, on one’s body and one’s soul. Though it is hard to appreciate the link and development of the narrative of this book unless pastor will expound the book on a chapter to chapter basis, it is obvious the whole book focusses on the doctrine of Justification By Faith. Thank God for pastor who showed us the last chapter is the end result, when Job abhorred himself in dust and ashes before the Lord accepted him and turned his captivity. First, pastor showed us that sometimes people ask, how broken must I be? And sometimes I also have that question. How broken is the broken? Although I feel I have a very easy life and God has blessed me in many aspects – I don’t have to take much hardship, but often time, when I read about the lives of our brethren, especially from their obituaries, I see God prepares a person by making them go through difficult things in their lives, in their families. But today pastor showed me, like Leah Chua prayed at the end, it must be Christ Who finds us, not so much we find Christ. That is very profound because – pastor is saying there is no formula, there is no answer. It is the sovereignty of God to find us and it is our responsibility to just continue to wait actively in hope upon the Lord; to continue to be patient, to continue to go through this valley of humiliation. I see that at the end, Job was not counted blessed because of his material blessings, but it was the fact that first of all, God turned his captivity in his heart, in his soul, and two, that God gave Job the spirit of forgiveness to forgive his brethren. [Pastor: “So that he could intercede for them sincerely. Otherwise how to intercede for your brethren who have been accusing you?”] Two very intangible changes in Job, that is Job’s greatest blessing. And I think Job also knew it, after going through the self-discovery throughout the whole book. Actually, back to my point about how broken must we be, I was very shocked to know that Job questioned why he was even born (Job 3), but I was more shocked when pastor said it is like suicidal thoughts or borders on suicidal thoughts. Sometimes certain people go through the law, but they have suicidal thoughts at certain periods. When you read Pilgrim’s Progress, there is Giant Despair. I see the lows during this process of the law can be very depressing. It is not just low spiritually but even in your flesh, you can be affected. Such is the down; when you talk about bi-polar, there is high and there is low; such is the low that you even wonder why you were born or like pastor said, think of euthanasia. I cannot say that I have come to that point, ever. Not that I want to, but I think pastor is showing us God really brings a man, very, very low. That’s why I feel the blessedness of this book being placed before the Psalms – the wisdom of the Holy Spirit; because sometimes when you run out of words, you run out of the meaning to live, to go back to the Psalms is very healing. It is a sanctified way of praying to God. I agree with pastor that the psalms today were very appropriate in the light of the message. I’m sure that if Job had the psalms, the deeper, the longer he waited, the deeper his sufferings were, the more he would have appreciated the different psalms and the depths of each

psalm. Thank God for using pastor to give us this message. Yesterday, he was quite tired so I was quite scared for him given what happened to his leg this week. I know some people think pastor pulls messages out of the bag, but it takes a lot of meditation and burden from God, so, I thank God for strengthening pastor to preach once again.” Response of Ruth Thomas Lovelace to pastor’s exegesis of the book of Job, Albin, Teaneck, NJ, USA; 20 May 2018 AD