

Job 1:4-5

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Job's Children

Job has been blessed by God with seven sons and three daughters. His children would host feasts, rotating at whose house the party would take place. When each feast ended, Job would summon his children and make sacrifices on their behalf, so that they could be forgiven in case they had sinned in their hearts.

In the previous section we were introduced to Job, an ancient billionaire (so to speak) who was the “greatest of all the men of the east.” Job had impeccable character, as well as overseeing a sprawling and prosperous commercial enterprise that was likely multi-national in scope.

The next section will shift to a cosmic drama hatched in heaven. But before that begins, we are told a brief anecdote that gives us an insight to Job’s outstanding character—the reason scripture says he was “blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil” (vs 1).

The anecdote begins by explaining that *His (Job’s) sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them* (vs 4). This would apply to *each* of the seven sons *on his day*. We are not told whether *his day* was just an allocation of shared responsibility, or whether it had some other significance, such as a birthday. It is inferred that Job did not attend these feasts. Later in the chapter, a disaster occurs at the feast, and Job was not present, which seems to confirm his absence from all prior feasts.

The passage goes out of its way to note that the *three sisters* were also included on the invitation list. Perhaps this indicates the high extent of family unity that had been fostered by Job. Chapter 2 infers that Job was the husband of one wife (Job 2:9).

Each of Job’s children would *hold a feast in the house* of each son *on his day*. The family party lasted for *days*. We are then told that *When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all* (vs 5).

The first thing in the list showing Job as the greatest man of the east was his ten children. We can see from this intentional effort by Job that he viewed his children as a top priority. Now, even when they are grown, Job is still actively investing in their welfare.

The *feast* would last for *days*, then when the *days of feasting completed their cycle*, Job would take action to bless his children. The phrase *completed their cycle* infers that these days of feasting occurred around a circuit. So it seems that the children would assign an order in which they would feast at the home of each son, then when the circuit was finished, Job would *send and consecrate them*.

The rationale Job had for this custom was explained: *for Job said, "Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts."* Thus Job did continually (vs 5). This infers that Job did not attend the feasts, because Job does not appear to be concerned about their outer behavior. He is not concerned about what was visible, but whether his sons *cursed God in their hearts*. It seems Job expected to get a report if his sons had openly done something against God. But Job is so concerned even about their inner thought life that he intercedes to God for even the thoughts and intents of his sons (Hebrews 4:12).

Job was not only blameless and upright in his own actions, he also interceded for his grown children. When he went to *offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all*, Job would do so as the first priority of the day, *rising up early in the morning*. And it appears that he offered a *burnt offering* for each child, not relying on doing one for all. The passage infers that Job did this year after year, saying *Thus Job did continually*.

Job was not only blameless, he was also diligent. Since Job is investing in the spiritual welfare of his adult children, we can infer that he also invested diligently in the rearing of his kids. Thus Job was not only a great businessman, but also a great father.

The *burnt offerings* would have been offered to atone for unintentional sin (Leviticus 4:1-2, 24). Sacrificial offerings were an established precedent long prior to God's institution of the sacrificial system under Moses. Abraham lived some five hundred years prior to Moses, and he practiced using burnt offerings (Genesis 22:2-14).

Job's precaution was against the possibility that one of his children had *cursed God in their hearts*. Later in the story, Job's wife will urge him to "curse God and die" (Job 2:9). The idea of cursing in scripture is to blame, speak ill of, or wish harm upon. Job is commended for not blaming God (Job 1:22). This might be the same idea as cursing God in one's heart—to blame God or complain against Him.

Interestingly, it could be said that Job's friends will unintentionally curse God beginning in chapter 3, because they speak of God in a manner that is untrue. God calls them to account for this later (Job 42:7). God will forgive them when Job offers a sin offering on their behalf (Job 42:8). Therefore, the story has bookends with Job making sin offerings on behalf of his family in the story's beginning, and his friends at the end, while Job himself is said in the story to never have sinned himself (Job 1:22).

Therefore this great man, Job, is a man who walks in a sinless manner, while also interceding on behalf of all whom he loves.

Biblical Text

⁴ His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵ When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, "Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.