

SPIRITUAL WARFARE



EVERY

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NEW MERCIES CHRISTIAN CHURCH | JOHN 4: 28-30

THE BOOK OF JOB

- One of the best-known examples of undeserved suffering is recorded in the Book of Job. In a matter of minutes Job, a prominently wealthy and godly man, lost all his material possessions, all his children, and his health.
- Job's intense suffering was financial, emotional, physical, and spiritual.

- Everyone was against him including, it seemed, even God, whom he had served faithfully.
- Yet Job was a spiritually and morally upright man (1:1, 8; 2:3).
- Could any suffering be more undeserved? Should not such a righteous person be blessed, not badgered, by God?
- The fact that Job, an outstanding citizen and upright person, had so much and then lost so much makes him a supreme example of affliction that defies human explanation.

- Many individuals can identify with Job, whose distresses were agonizingly prolonged and so seemingly unfair.
- Many people wonder why they should undergo affliction, why they should experience tragedy, heartache, and adversity.
- For anyone, suffering is hard to comprehend, but especially so when it strikes the undeserving.
- When pain does not seem to be punishment for wrongdoing, it is puzzling.

- The Book of Job addresses the mystery of unmerited misery, showing that in adversity God may have other purposes besides retribution for wrongdoing.
- The Book of Job also teaches that to ask why, as Job did (3:11–12, 16, 20), is not wrong.
- But to demand that God answer why, as Job also did (13:22; 19:7; 31:35), is wrong.
- To insist that God explain one's adversities is inappropriate for it places man above God and challenges God's sovereignty.

Job's Piety

- Job was blameless (*“without moral blemish,”* or *“morally whole”*) and upright (*“straight”* in the sense of not deviating from God's standards).
- Also he feared God, that is, he was aware of, revered, and submitted to God's majesty.
- And he shunned evil, rejecting the opposite of God's character.

Job's Prosperity

- Job had seven sons, often considered evidence of divine blessing (*cf. Ruth 4:15; 1 Sam. 2:5*) and three daughters. This family size was common in those times.
- He was remarkably wealthy. His 7,000 sheep provided clothing and food. The 3,000 camels provided transportation and milk. The 1,000 oxen (*500 yoke*) provided food and milk, and the power for plowing. The 500 donkeys also provided transportation.
- Such a huge livestock estate required much land and many servants.

Job's Prosperity

- Each time his seven sons held a feast (*possibly a birthday party*) in one of their homes along with their ... sisters (*cf. v. 13*) Job would purify (*sanctify*) them by 10 burnt offerings, one for each child.
- He was concerned that they receive forgiveness of any sins committed knowingly or unknowingly.
- His concern that they might have inwardly cursed God anticipates, ironically, Satan's insinuation that Job would curse God (2:5).

Job's Prosperity

- Job was an exemplary person. His sterling qualities made his upcoming adversities, by contrast, all the more severe.
- No one deserved suffering less than he did, and few if any have suffered more.

Job's First Test (1:6–22)

- Job was subjected to two tests, one on his possessions and offspring (vv. 6–22) and one on his health (2:1–10).
- In each test are two scenes, one in heaven and one on earth.
- Each scene in heaven includes an accusation by Satan against Job, and each scene on earth includes an assault by Satan against Job and Job's reaction.

God Called Job's Name

The Lord spoke of Job by the honorable title My servant (*cf. Job 2:3; 42:7–8 [three times in v. 8]*) and referred to him as a supreme example of piety:

- There is no one on earth like him.
- Satan had and has dominion over much of the world, but God pointed out that Satan could not dominate Job!

God Called Job's Name

Satan responded by attacking Job's motives:

- Does Job fear God for nothing?
- “For nothing” is rendered “without any reason”
Because Satan could not deny God's assessment of Job's godliness, he questioned why Job was pious.
- The accuser suggested that Job was serving God not out of love but only because of what he got from God in return.
- If Job's rewards were removed, out would go his reverence.

My Worship Is For Real

- Satan's subtle suggestion that worship is basically selfish hits at the heart of man's relationship to God.
- The Book of Job does more than raise the question of the suffering of the righteous. It also, through Satan's words, deals with the motives for godly living.

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My Worship Is For Real

- Will anyone serve the LORD if he enjoys no personal gain from it?
- Is worship a coin that buys a heavenly reward?
- Is piety part of a contract by which to gain wealth and ward off trouble?

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My Worship Is For Real

- Job, Satan claimed, would no longer insert his coins of worship if nothing came out of the machine. Job, in other words, was worshiping for selfish reasons.
- This accusation also attacked the integrity of God, for it suggested that the only way He can get people to worship Him is to promise them wealth.

My Worship Is For Real

- Perhaps this indictment against His character is one of the reasons God let Satan buffet Job.
- God knew Job's heart, but He used Job as a demonstration to silence Satan.
- In addition, God wanted to deepen Job's spiritual insight.

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Satan's First Attack

- The assaults were alternately caused by human and “natural” forces: a Sabeian attack (v. 15), “the fire of God” (v. 16), a Chaldean raid (v. 17), a great desert wind (v. 19).
- God permitted Satan to move both kinds of causes to accomplish his purposes—and to do so in rapid, precise timing.
- Job, while reeling in shock from the news of one loss, was stunned by another.

Satan's First Attack

- All Job's livestock had been stolen; all his servants had been murdered (except perhaps four messengers who had escaped to report; they were either Job's servants or others who had witnessed the tragedies); and all his children had been killed.
- In a few minutes, Job had plummeted from wealth and prosperity to grief and pauperism.
- Would he also plummet from loyalty to God to disloyalty?

Job's Response To The First Test

In response to the fierceness of Satan's rapid fourfold assault, Job ... tore his robe, symbolizing inner turmoil and shock (*cf. 2:12; Gen. 37:29, 34; 44:13; Jud. 11:35*), and shaved his head (*cf. Isa. 15:2; Jer. 48:37; Ezek. 7:18*), depicting the loss of his personal glory.

- Falling to the ground, not in despair, but in obeisance to God, Job worshiped.

Job's Response To The First Test

- Recognizing God's sovereign rights (*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away*), Job praised the LORD.
- It is truly remarkable that Job followed adversity with adoration, woe with worship.
- Unlike so many people, he did not give in to bitterness; he refused to blame God for wrongdoing.

Job's Second Test

- Satan suggested that if Job were made to suffer physically, he would curse God to His face (*cf. 1:11*) for Job would have no reason for worship.
- He would see that God was against him.
- Surprisingly the LORD permitted Satan to afflict Job but not to kill him.
- God knew that Job would not deny Him.

Satan's Second Assault (2:7)

- The first test involved Job's wealth, children, and nearly all his servants; the second one involved his health.
- Satan immediately caused Job to have painful sores over all his body.
- Some scholars say the disease may have been smallpox; others say it was elephantiasis.

Satan's Second Assault (2:7)

This disease, as attested by physicians today, matches the symptoms of Job's afflictions—
inflamed, ulcerous sores (*Job* 2:7), itching (*v.* 8),
degenerative changes in facial skin (*vv.* 7, 12), loss of
appetite (*3:24*), depression (*3:24–25*), loss of strength
(*6:11*), worms in the boils (*7:5*), running sores (*7:5*),
difficulty in breathing (*9:18*), darkness under the
eyes (*16:16*), foul breath (*19:17*), loss of weight (*19:20*;
33:21), continual pain (*30:17*), restlessness (*30:27*),
blackened skin (*30:30*), peeling skin (*30:30*), and fever
(*30:30*).

Job's Reaction To The Second Test

- Job sat among the ashes, on or near a pile of dung ashes and garbage outside the city.
- Missionaries in primitive cultures have reported that pemphigus foliaceus patients have soothed their sores with ashes.
- How humiliating for Job! He who had sat at the city gate as a local judge (29:7) was now outside the city with beggars, scraping his itching, running sores with a piece of broken pottery.

Who's Around You?

- When Job's wife urged him to forget his integrity, curse God and die, he called her a foolish (*nāḇāl*, “spiritually ignorant or non discerning”) woman.
- Unknown to her, this advice that he curse God was exactly what Satan had twice predicted Job would do (1:11; 2:5).
- When Job needed comfort from her, he received another terrible blow—evidence of her bitterness toward God.
- In calm confidence in God's ways Job pointed out that trouble as well as good comes from God.

Who's Around You?

- Hearing about Job's perils, three of his friends—Eliphaz ... Bildad, and Zophar, apparently prominent men—met together and visited Job.
- The purpose of the three comforters was to sympathize with Job and comfort him.
- But their speeches soon became anything but comforting!

Don't Give Up!

This book, probably the oldest in the Bible, deals with mankind's most pressing problems:

- The question of suffering and man's relationship with God.
- Job's experience billboards the truth that man's worship of God does not stem from a businesslike contract.

God's Love For You

- Misfortune does not mean God has forsaken His own.
- It does mean He has plans that the sufferer may know nothing of.
- A believer's unmerited tragedy may never be fully understood.
- Yet he can realize that God is in charge, that God still loves him and cares for him.

You Will Come Out Of It Stronger

- Job did not receive explanations regarding his problems; but he did come to a much deeper sense of the majesty and loving care of God.
- Thus he came to trust Him more fully, knowing that His ways should not be challenged.
- Though often inexplicable and mysterious, God's plans are benevolent and beneficial.