

Is This Really Happening to Me?
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Job 1 and 2

Opening questions: When you think about the Biblical character Job, what comes to mind? Does suffering come because we have done something to deserve it? Is it God's punishment for our sins? How have some "name it and claim it" prosperity gospel types perverted the truth about when good people suffer?

As we'll see in the book of Job, you can do everything humanly possible to live a godly life and still have suffering. The challenge for us comes down to two questions:

- How will God use this suffering for my good and His glory?
- And, will I TRUST Him even when I don't understand my circumstances?

Since this is our first week in Job, a little introduction to this book:

- We don't know who wrote the book of Job or exactly when it takes place. However, most scholars believe it is the oldest book in the Bible.
- This book struggles with the age-old question: Why do bad things happen to good people? And, further, as I said a minute ago, "Can God be trusted?"
- Let's begin in Chapter 1, verses 1-3:

Job 1:1–3 (ESV)

1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. 2 There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. 3 He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east.

- **In those three verses, what do we observe about Job?**
- Verse 1 says Job was "blameless; upright; feared God; and turned from evil."
- **Why would it be important for us to know this about Job first thing in the story?**
- **Does it say Job was sinless so we can't relate to him? How CAN we relate to him?**
- **Question: Do you think there was a connection between the evident blessings in Job's life and his devotion to God?**
- Job was not a perfect man, but a GOOD man who did his best to honor God.
- Job was a BLESSED man with a wonderful family and material wealth.
- But, Job had a TARGET on his back. Satan hates this kind of man.
- The next few verses tell us that Satan is talking to God. It may be surprising to us that Satan has access to God's presence. **We think of Satan in hell, where is he (v.7)?**
- In verse 8, a puzzling thing happens. It is GOD who brings Job up to Satan.

Job 1:8–11 (ESV)

8 And the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” 9 Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “Does Job fear God for no reason? 10 Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.”

- **Why would God initiate things by bringing Job up to Satan? What do you think?**
- **Why does Satan, the ACCUSER, say Job is so upright and blameless?**
- **Does God promise to insulate us from all suffering? What DOES he promise?**

Isaiah 43:2 (ESV)

2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

Job 1:12 (ESV)

12 And the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

- **What do verses 8-12 tell us about God’s power?**
- **What do they tell us about Satan’s power?**

Satan went to work...in just hours Job loses everything he has including his kids.

One by one Job’s servants come to tell him the terrifying news:

- The Sabeans and the Chaldeans killed all your servants
- Fire from heaven burned up all the livestock
- All your sons and daughters were having a birthday party in your son’s house and a great wind blew down the house and they are ALL DEAD.
- This morning Job arose blessed beyond measure; by sundown he has NOTHING.
- Picture this in your mind. This isn’t some abstract Bible story. This is Moore, Oklahoma!

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How does Job respond? Verses 20-22:

Job 1:20–22 (ESV)

20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” 22 In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

Verse 22 is one of the most quoted verses of scripture. Job says no matter what I gain or lose, I will trust God. In the face of unbelievable loss and grief, Job never questioned God. Satan hates that kind of response. He went back to God and said, *“Losing his family is one thing; losing his stuff is another; but if Job was struck with a devastating illness, surely he would curse you!”* God said, *“You can hurt him, but you can’t kill him.”*

Job 2:7 (ESV)

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

This wasn't a minor skin rash. Verses through out the rest of the book of Job describe his symptoms: 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). [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Job's condition is so gross he doesn't want to be around people, so he goes to the garbage dump and there he sits scraping his sores with broken pieces of pottery.

Job 2:9–10 (ESV)

9 Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.”

Humanly speaking, how can we blame Job's wife? They've lost everything including Job's health. *“Just get it over with Job, curse God so he'll finish you off!”* She just wanted it all to END. She just wanted some RELIEF!

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10 But he (Job) said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Warren Wiersbe writes:

“In times of severe testing, our first question must not be, “How can I get out of this?” but “What can I get out of this?” Job's wife thought she had the problem solved; but if Job had followed her counsel, it would have only made things worse. Faith is living without scheming. It is obeying God in spite of feelings, circumstances, or consequences, knowing that He is working out His perfect plan in His way and in His time.”

- **When God allows suffering into the life of a believer, what are the two ways it can affect our relationship with him?**
- **If a friend asked you “How can you keep trusting God when He’s allowed this into your life?,” what would you tell them?**

So, What’s The Takeaway?

Charles Spurgeon famously said:

“God is too good to be unkind. He is too wise to be confused. If I cannot trace His hand, I can always trust His heart.”

- DO we trust His heart?
- When God allows bad things to happen to his children, the real issue is: DO WE TRUST HIM? Is He GOOD and LOVING? Is He ALL POWERFUL and ALL WISE?
- It’s easy enough to say those things and to believe those things when life is good.
- The real test of our TRUST in His sovereignty is in the midst of suffering.
- The way we BUILD that TRUST before suffering comes is MOMENT BY MOMENT and DAY BY DAY. Will we trust Him this week no matter what?