

Title: **JOB**
 Why do the righteous suffer?
Text: Job 23:10
Subject: *The Suffering of God's Saints*
Introduction:

The Apostle Paul tells us that “*tribulation worketh patience.*” The fact is, we are all such sinful and hard-hearted creatures that we cannot and will not learn patience by any other means. If I should ask you to give me an example of patience, what is the first name that pops into your mind? – Job. No man is more famous for the exercise patience (James 5:11).

(James 5:11) "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

But patience was no more natural to Job than it is to you and me. It was something he had to learn by tribulation, great tribulation. It was a hard lesson, but a lesson he learned. He expressed that patience the Lord taught him, displaying confident faith in God's the wisdom and goodness of God (23:10).

(Job 23:10) "But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

POETIC BOOKS

This is a gripping story, a fascinating drama. But it is much more. The Book of Job is an inspired narrative of the life and trials of a righteous man in this world.

Here we begin a new section of Scripture. Genesis through Deuteronomy, the five Books of Moses, are commonly referred to as “the Law.” Joshua through Esther are “Historic Books.” In

these we have seen, in the events of history, living parables, designed and worked out by God's good providence, that explain and illustrate what is going on in our own lives.

In the Poetic Books (Job through the Song of Solomon, and the little book of Lamentations) we see God's saints in worship. Perhaps that is what makes them the most commonly read portions of the Old Testament. In these Books, we are allowed to go with God's saints into their private closets, as they pour out their hearts to their heavenly Father, and put into words the very things we often want to say, but simply cannot find either the words or the honesty to speak before the throne of grace. That makes them both precious and instructive as well as comforting and inspiring.

The Book of Job is a great poem. Tennyson called it, "the greatest poem whether of ancient or modern literature." Martin Luther considered the Book of Job "more magnificent and sublime than any other book of Scripture." It reads like a drama, an epic drama much like Homer's Iliad and Odyssey.

But the book of Job is also historical. Job was an actual, living person and these events actually took place, but God recounts them for us in this beautiful style so that we might have an answer to the age-old, haunting question, "Why do the righteous suffer?"

Job suffered by the assaults of Satan. He suffered by the words of his wife. And he suffered by the accusations of his friends. But if you asked Job why he suffered as he did, what the source and cause of his sufferings was, he looked past all those secondary sources to the Lord his God.

Proposition: At the very beginning of the Book, we see clearly that the righteous suffer by the hand and will of the God we

worship, trust, love and serve.—Everywhere we turn in these 42 chapters, when Job speaks of that which he suffered, he declares that he suffered because the Lord God ordered it.

(Job 19:21) "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me."

(Job 23:10) "But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

GOD'S BOOK

Though the Word of God is neither a book about science or history, whenever it speaks of scientific and historic matters, it is always precise and accurate. We have before us, in the Book of Job, that which is probably the very first Book of the Bible to be written. Job lived during the days of the patriarchs, probably about the time of Abraham. So this Book was written more than 3000 years ago, slightly before the invention of modern scientific technology. **Yet, no other Book of the Bible contains as much scientific data as Job.**

- (Job 26:7) "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, *and* hangeth the earth upon nothing."

What could more accurately describe the position and stability of our planet in space?

“Job's contemporaries all believed that the earth was flat, and that it rested on the shoulders of one of the gods, or the back of an elephant or giant sea turtle. Think of it! Startlingly accurate scientific statements written more than 3,000 years before the discovery of America!” (Paul VanGorder)

- (Job 38:7) "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

No one in the world of “*all-wise*” scientists ever dreamed that rays of light give off sound that no human ear can hear, until modern times; but Job declared it, and it was written down in the Book of God, more than 3000 years ago by the inspiration God to whom the morning stars sing praise.

- (Job 38:24) "By what way is the light parted, *which* scattereth the east wind upon the earth?"

Reading those words, you would think Job had distinct knowledge of spectrum analysis. But this was written more than 3000 years ago.

- (Job 38:31) "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?"

Pleiades is a group of seven stars in the constellation of Taurus. But I wonder how Job knew that. Remember, he did not have a telescope. This was written more than 3000 years ago!

Pleiades and Orion no man can control. Contrary to the modern environmentalists' proud thoughts, the seasons are not to be altered by men. Job was taught by God that it was not in his power to make any change in the dispensations of Providence; to turn the winter of adversity into the spring of prosperity, or the spring of prosperity into the winter of adversity. Providence is God's dominion, not man's. All we can do is submit to God's work and quietly wait before him.

What you have in your hand is the Word of God. That fact cannot be denied by any reasonable person.

(Psalms 19:1-3) "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. {2} Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. {3} *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*"

But it is not my purpose tonight merely to demonstrate the veracity of Holy Scripture. I want us to see Christ in the Book and learn the lessons he has for us in this Book.

BEHIND THE SCENES

In the first two chapters of Job (1:1-2:8), we are allowed to look behind the scenes to see what was happening and why. Remember, when you read these chapters, that Job did not have this luxury. It is written here for our learning.

1. **Here we are told, and told by God himself, that Job was a righteous man, a believer, a saved sinner.**

Many have misjudged Bro. Job, asserting that he was a lost, self-righteous hypocrite, as his three friends accused him of being. But the Lord God asserts otherwise (1:1, 8; 2:3).

(Job 1:1) "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name *was* Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."

(Job 1:8) "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"

- Ezekiel 14:14, 20

Job was not a righteous, or perfect man by nature. And we see clearly that he was not perfect in his personal conduct and behavior. He was, just like you and me, a sinner saved by grace.

- Imputed Righteousness
- Imparted Righteousness

Job was a man who had been greatly blessed of God with grace and one to whom God had given greater wealth and honor than any other in the East (v. 3). He worshipped God and interceded for his sons and daughters at the throne of grace continually (1:5).

2. The Lord God is the absolute Monarch of the universe, ruling and controlling all things in heaven, earth and hell, even Satan.

I do not know what to make of or how to explain everything written here; but I do know that this passage is an assertion of God's dominion and sovereignty.

- The angels came to give report to God; and Satan came among them.
- It was God who took the initiative in challenging Satan, regarding his servant Job, not Satan (vv. 7-8).
- It was God who gave Satan permission to do what he did to Job and God who told him exactly what he could not do. The devil was allowed to roar against him and afflict him tremendously, but not to harm him.

Satan accused Job, as believers are always accused, of serving God for gain. And the Lord turned the fiend of hell loose on him both to prove otherwise and to improve his beloved servant Job (vv. 9-12).

JOB'S TRIALS

As we read the first two chapters of this Book, it is impossible for us to put ourselves in Job's place and form any right idea of what he felt.

(Job 1:13-22) "And there was a day when his sons and his daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: {14} And **there came a messenger** unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: {15} And the Sabeans fell *upon them*, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. {16} **While he was yet speaking**, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. {17} **While he was yet speaking**, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. {18} **While he was yet speaking**, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: {19} And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. {20} **Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped**, {21} And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. {22} **In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.**"

(Job 2:1-10) "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also

among them to present himself before the LORD. {2} And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. {3} And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. {4} And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. {5} But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. {6} And the LORD said unto Satan, **Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.** {7} So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. {8} And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. {9} **Then said his wife unto him,** Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. {10} But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

JOB'S FRIENDS

Beginning at verse 11 in chapter 2 and going through chapter 31, we see Job's conflict with his friends. Wonderful friends they were. We've all had some like them.

(Job 2:11-13) "Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for **they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.** {12} And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and

sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. {13} So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that *his* grief was very great."

Satan's work was nothing compared to the work of these three, self-righteous, reformed legalists. Job's name means persecuted, and they made sure he lived up to his name.—It was not their doctrine that was wrong, but their attitude!

- **Eliphaz** (My God is Fine Gold) was the first to speak. He had a vision, and assumed that his vision gave him authority to sit in judgment over God's servant (4:12-16).
- **Bildad** (Confusing Love) thought himself a scholarly intellectual, and backed his words with the authority of a long list of forefathers, who could not be mistaken (8:8).
- **Zophar** (Sparrow) was described by someone as one of those irksome people we all hope never to meet again, fresh out of seminary, who knows everything about everything.

Job described them considerably more pleasantly than I would, as "*miserable comforters.*" They were all fully convinced that Job was a hypocrite and that he suffered divine judgment because he was, after all, a man with secret sins God was determined to expose by his afflictions. There are multitudes like them around the world in every age and in every church.

"These three men stand as lasting reminders of the need to handle suffering friends with great care and to refrain from giving quick and easy solutions to complex and trying problems...to speak little and listen much in our dealings with those stricken by calamity." (Roger Ellsworth)

- **Elihu** (He is my God) comes on the scene in chapter 32 (32:1-37:24).

Elihu was a young man, but a man with a message from God. He rebuked Job's miserable, tormenting comforters for their accusations, and rebuked Job for spending more time justifying himself before them than in justifying God before them.

Elihu spoke of God's incomparable greatness. In chapter 33, Elihu gives us a marvelous picture of God's method of grace, by which he delivers chosen sinners from going down to the pit (vv. 13-30).—In Salvation—In Chastisement.

(Job 33:13-30) "**Why dost thou strive against him?** for he giveth not account of any of his matters. {14} For **God speaketh** once, yea twice, *yet man* perceiveth it not. {15} In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; {16} **Then he openeth the ears of men,** and sealet their instruction, {17} That he may withdraw man *from his* purpose, and hide pride from man. {18} **He keepeth** back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. {19} **He is chastened** also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong *pain*: {20} So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. {21} **His flesh is consumed away,** that it cannot be seen; and his bones *that* were not seen stick out. {22} Yea, **his soul draweth near unto the grave,** and his life to the destroyers. {23} **If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his** (GOD'S NOT MAN'S!) **uprightness:** {24} **Then he is gracious unto him,** and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. {25} **His flesh** shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: {26} **He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.** {27} He looketh upon men, and *if any* say, I have sinned, and perverted *that which was* right, and it profited me not; {28} He will deliver his soul from going

into the pit, and his life shall see the light. {29} **Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, {30} To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.**"

- Psalm 107

GOD CONFRONTS HIS SERVANT

In chapter 38 (38:1-42:17), the Lord God himself confronts his servant out of the whirlwind, by the irresistible, convincing power and grace of his Holy Spirit. Here, the Lord God effectually applies to Job what his messenger, Elihu had declared (Rom. 10:17). The Lord graciously showed Job his greatness, glory, and solitary majesty as God.

- **Job repented of his own sin.**

(Job 40:3-5) "Then Job answered the LORD, and said, {4} Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. {5} Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further."

(Job 42:1-6) "Then Job answered the LORD, and said, {2} I know that thou canst do every *thing*, and *that* no thought can be withholden from thee. {3} Who *is* he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. {4} Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. {5} I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. {6} Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes."

- Job forgave and made intercession for Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (42:7-9)

- The Lord blessed Job (42:10-17). When the gold was refined, God took him out of the furnace. His riches and honor were doubled. His children were added in the same number—(7 Sons and 3 Daughters)—as before.

(Job 42:10-17) "And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. {11} Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. {12} So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. {13} He had also seven sons and three daughters. {14} And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. {15} And in all the land were no women found *so* fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. {16} After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even* four generations. {17} So Job died, *being* old and full of days."

GOSPEL DOCTRINE

Though mistaken in many things, Job's doctrine was pure, gospel doctrine.

- **Divine Sovereignty**
- **Need for a Mediator a Kinsman Redeemer** (9:20, 32-35)

(Job 9:20) "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: *if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.*"

(Job 9:32-35) "For *he is* not a man, as *I am, that* I should answer him, *and* we should come together in judgment. {33} Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, *that* might lay his hand upon us both. {34} Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me: {35} *Then* would I speak, and not fear him; but *it is* not so with me."

▪ **Redemption and The Resurrection of The Dead**

(Job 3:17) "There the wicked cease *from* troubling; and there the weary be at rest."

(Job 14:13-15) "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! {14} If a man die, shall he live *again*? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. {15} Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands."

(Job 19:21-28) "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. {22} Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh? {23} Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! {24} That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! {25} For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: {26} And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: {27} Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me. {28} But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?"

Why do the righteous suffer?

(Hebrews 12:5-11) "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: {6} For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. {7} If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? {8} But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. {9} Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? {10} For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. {11} Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

(Job 3:3-4) "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night *in which* it was said, There is a man child conceived. {4} Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it."

(Job 3:13) "For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,"

(Job 3:17) "There the wicked cease *from* troubling; and there the weary be at rest."

(Job 23:10) "But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

¹ Date: Tuesday Evening—June 10, 2003
Todds Road Grace Church, Lexington, KY (Wednesday PM – 06/11/03)
Rescue Baptist Church, Rescue, CA (Wednesday PM – 07/02/03)
Tape # X-63a
Readings: Bob Pruitt and Rex Bartley