

Job And The Problem of Suffering

Why do the righteous suffer?

Introduction

- Often, we wonder why a loving God would allow suffering to exist in the world
- Further, we ask, why do the righteous suffer?
- In the book of Job, we have an example of a righteous man who suffered greatly

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Introduction

- Why does God allow Job to suffer?
- What can we learn from Job that will encourage us today while suffering?
- Many so-called Christians teach that God has promised Christians would be healthy and rich
- If we are not healthy and rich, then we lack faith
- Account of job denies such claims

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Job And The Problem of Suffering

The problem for Job
His friends' wrong views
Job's understanding
The Lord answers Job
The Lord restores Job

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Job A Righteous Man Materially Blessed By God

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.

Job 1:2 Seven sons and three daughters were born to him.

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Job A Righteous Man Materially Blessed By God

Job 1:3 His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Job 1:4 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.

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Job A Righteous Man Materially Blessed By God

Job 1:5 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.

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Satan Denies Job's Righteousness Is Genuine

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

Job 1:7 The LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it."

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Satan Denies Job's Righteousness Is Genuine

Job 1:8 The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."

Job 1:9 Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"

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Satan Denies Job's Righteousness Is Genuine

Job 1:10 "Have You not made a hedge about 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.

Job 1:11 "But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face."

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Satan Denies Job's Righteousness Is Genuine

Job 1:12 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

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Satan Denies Job's Righteousness Is Genuine

- God affirms Job's righteous character to Satan
- Satan insists Job only serves God because he is paid to serve Him through material and physical blessings
- Satan claims if Job suffers the loss of his children and possessions, he will curse God to His face
- God allows Satan to take away Job's children and possessions

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Satan Permitted To Take Away Job's Children and Possessions

Job 1:13 Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,

Job 1:14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them,

Job 1:15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

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Satan Permitted To Take Away Job's Children and Possessions

Job 1:16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

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Satan Permitted To Take Away Job's Children and Possessions

Job 1:17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

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Satan Permitted To Take Away Job's Children and Possessions

Job 1:18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,

Job 1:19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

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Job Still Faithful To God

Job 1:20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

Job 1:21 He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

Job 1:22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

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Satan Again Denies Job's Righteousness Is Genuine

Job 2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.

Job 2:2 The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it."

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Satan Again Denies Job's Righteousness Is Genuine

Job 2:3 The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause."

Job 2:4 Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life."

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Satan Again Denies Job's Righteousness Is Genuine

Job 2:5 "However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face."

Job 2:6 So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life."

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Satan Again Denies Job's Righteousness Is Genuine

- God affirms Job's righteous character to Satan even after losing his children and possessions
- Satan insists Job is still serving because he has his health
- Satan says Job and anyone would trade anything for their health

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Satan Again Denies Job's Righteousness Is Genuine

- Take away his health and he will curse God
- God allows Satan to take Job's health but prevents him from killing him

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Satan Permitted To Destroy Job's Health

Job 2:7 Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Job 2:8 And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes.

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Job Still Faithful To God

Job 2:9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"

Job 2:10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

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The Problem For Job

- Although still serving God, Job's problem is, why are these things happening to him?
- Who is behind it, is it God?
- God allows Job to be tested to prove his righteousness is freely given not because he is being paid in some way

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The Problem For Job

- Job is seeking to serve God even if he does not understand why he is suffering and who is behind it
- Job unaware of Satan's involvement

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Eliphaz's Wrong View

Job 4:6 "Is not your fear of God your confidence, And the integrity of your ways your hope?"

Job 4:7 "Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed?"

Job 4:8 "According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity And those who sow trouble harvest it."

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Eliphaz's Wrong View

Job 22:23 "If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored; If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent,

Job 22:24 And place *your* gold in the dust, And *the gold of Ophir* among the stones of the brooks,

Job 22:25 Then the Almighty will be your gold And choice silver to you.

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Eliphaz's Wrong View

- All suffering is punishment for sin
- Job is suffering and therefore he has sinned
- If he repents and confesses his sin, the Lord will forgive and restore him

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Bildad's Wrong View

Job 8:1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered,
Job 8:2 "How long will you say these things,
And the words of your mouth be a mighty
wind?
Job 8:3 "Does God pervert justice? Or does
the Almighty pervert what is right?
Job 8:4 "If your sons sinned against Him,
Then He delivered them into the power of
their transgression.

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Bildad's Wrong View

Job 8:5 "If you would seek God And implore
the compassion of the Almighty,
Job 8:6 If you are pure and upright, Surely
now He would rouse Himself for you And
restore your righteous estate.
Job 8:7 "Though your beginning was
insignificant, Yet your end will increase
greatly.

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Bildad's Wrong View

- Same as Eliphaz – Job is suffering because he has sinned
- Job needs to repent and confess his sins
- Goes farther by saying even Job's children have sinned also

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Zophar's Wrong View

Job 11:1 Then Zophar the Naamathite
answered,
Job 11:2 "Shall a multitude of words go
unanswered, And a talkative man be
acquitted?
Job 11:3 "Shall your boasts silence men?
And shall you scoff and none rebuke?

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Zophar's Wrong View

Job 11:4 "For you have said, 'My teaching
is pure, And I am innocent in your eyes.'
Job 11:5 "But would that God might speak,
And open His lips against you,
Job 11:6 And show you the secrets of
wisdom! For sound wisdom has two sides.
Know then that God forgets a part of your
iniquity.

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Zophar's Wrong View

- Agrees with first two – Job's suffering is a result of his sins
- He needs to repent and confess his sins
- Also, his suffering is not as bad as he deserves

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Job's Understanding

Job 6:1 Then Job answered,

Job 6:2 "Oh that my grief were actually weighed And laid in the balances together with my calamity!

Job 6:3 "For then it would be heavier than the sand of the seas; Therefore my words have been rash.

Job 6:4 "For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, Their poison my spirit drinks; The terrors of God are arrayed against me. ³⁷

Job's Understanding

Job 6:8 "Oh that my request might come to pass, And that God would grant my longing!

Job 6:9 "Would that God were willing to crush me, That He would loose His hand and cut me off!

Job 6:10 "But it is still my consolation, And I rejoice in unsparing pain, That I have not denied the words of the Holy One.

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Job's Understanding

- Job asserts his innocence
- Job says his suffering is excessive
- Job believes somehow God is behind it

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Job – No Understandable Moral Standard

Job 9:22 "It is *all* one; therefore I say, 'He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.'

Job 9:23 "If the scourge kills suddenly, He mocks the despair of the innocent.

Job 9:24 "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges. If *it is not He*, then who is it?

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Job – Will Serve God Who Will Vindicate Him

Job 19:22 "Why do you persecute me as God *does*, And are not satisfied with my flesh?

Job 19:23 "Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book!

Job 19:24 "That with an iron stylus and lead They were engraved in the rock forever!

Job 19:25 "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. ⁴¹

Job – Will Serve God Who Will Vindicate Him

Job 19:26 "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;

Job 19:27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!

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Job – Will Serve God Who Will Vindicate Him

Job 19:28 "If you say, 'How shall we persecute him?' And 'What pretext for a case against him can we find?'

Job 19:29 "*Then* be afraid of the sword for yourselves, For wrath *brings* the punishment of the sword, So that you may know there is judgment."

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Job – Will Serve God Who Will Vindicate Him

Job 23:10 "But He knows the way I take; *When* He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Job 23:11 "My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside.

Job 23:12 "I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.

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The Lord Answers Job

- The Lord tests Job's knowledge of the Universe and animal world
- Job is found ignorant and lacking in knowledge
- God has purpose for His actions in the world although we do not understand
- God has purpose for allowing us to suffer although we do not understand

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God's Wisdom Displayed In The Universe

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,

Job 38:2 "Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge?

Job 38:3 "Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!

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God's Wisdom Displayed In The Universe

Job 38:4 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell *Me*, if you have understanding,

Job 38:5 Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it?

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God's Wisdom Displayed In Nature

Job 39:15 And she forgets that a foot may crush them, Or that a wild beast may trample them.

Job 39:16 "She treats her young cruelly, as if *they* were not hers; Though her labor be in vain, *she* is unconcerned;

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God's Wisdom Displayed In Nature

Job 39:17 Because God has made her forget wisdom, And has not given her a share of understanding.

Job 39:18 "When she lifts herself on high, She laughs at the horse and his rider.

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The Lord Restores Job's Health, Children and Wealth

- Job served the Lord out of love and devotion to Him not because he had been materially blessed
- Job trusted the Lord in spite of unexplained intense suffering
- The Lord never explained to Job Satan's involvement in Job's suffering
- Because of suffering, Job became more humble, patient and dependent on the Lord

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The Lord Restores Job's Health, Children and Wealth

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the LORD and said,

Job 42:2 "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

Job 42:3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."

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The Lord Restores Job's Health, Children and Wealth

Job 42:4 'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.'

Job 42:5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You;

Job 42:6 Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes."

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The Lord Restores Job's Health, Children and Wealth

Job 42:10 The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold.

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The Lord Restores Job's Health, Children and Wealth

Job 42:11 Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him, and they ate bread with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the LORD had brought on him. And each one gave him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold.

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The Lord Restores Job's Health, Children and Wealth

Job 42:12 The LORD blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys.

Job 42:13 He had seven sons and three daughters.

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