



OUR QUESTIONS: The Book of Job

Session 4

Opening Prayer:

Almighty God, your servant Job suffered though he was more righteous and blameless than any man on earth. Teach us to view all suffering in light of the suffering your Son Jesus endured. In His name we pray. Amen.

Study:

Q: Job is a book that seems to stand alone. It is not a book that, on the surface, interacts clearly with other parts of the Scriptures. And yet, what do we know about all Scripture? (John 5:39-40, Luke 24:44)

A: Jesus is the heart and center of the Scriptures and, therefore, the key to understanding all of God's Word. As He says, the Scriptures give witness to Him.

Q: Job is spoken of by God as the most blameless and upright man on earth in his day. The New Testament commends his steadfastness as an example to follow (James 5:11). What one man surpasses him and every other great man or woman in the Bible? (Matthew 12:38-42)

A: In the verses in Matthew, Jesus declares that He is a greater prophet than Jonah, and wiser than Solomon. He is more upright than Job. He suffers more, and for even less reason, of His own accord. He endures it more faithfully. Because of His faithfulness amidst suffering Jesus is able to intercede, not only for three friends like Job did, but for all people.

Q: In the Psalms and other places in the Scriptures, words first spoken by one of God's people of old find their true meaning only when applied to Christ. This is also true of words we read in Job. How do the words found in the following verses apply to Christ, his life, and his works? (Job 7:11, 7:20, 9:17-18, 9:32-33, 12:9, 13:15, 14:4, 14:4-7, 19:25-27, 42:8) It might be helpful to have the participants imagine Jesus saying the words of these verses.

7:11 Jesus speaks in anguish from His cross

7:20 Jesus became sin for us and endured the judgment of God on the cross

9:17-18 We could think of the wounds that Christ endures on the cross

9:32-33 This verse speaks to the need of Jesus to become man. Jesus is God in the flesh. He becomes man and is, therefore, able to become arbiter between God and man.

12:9 Jesus suffers at the “hand of the Lord.” It is important for us to remember that, since Jesus endures suffering of the cross as a payment for sin.

13:15 While Job uses hyperbole to talk about God slaying him, Jesus actually went to His death on the cross according to the Father’s will.

14:4 This verse shows the problem for all of us: sin. We are all corrupt. Without Jesus taking on our flesh, we were destined to be unclean forever.

14:14-17 Job speaks of the Lord covering over his iniquity. It is ultimately Jesus’ blood that covers over Job’s iniquity, and that of everyone who believes in Him.

19:25-27 This is probably the most well-known passage in Job, because it so clearly testifies to Jesus. We often sing the hymn based on these words when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter.

42:8 While it might not be immediately clear, we must remember that all Old Testament sacrifices point to the Sacrifice of Christ.

These verses provide a sampling of ways the book of Job gives witness to Jesus. Much more can be found and considered; however, the point is to affirm that this book points us to Jesus. This is especially important to remember when it comes to the question of why suffering happens. Just as the book of Job should point us to Jesus, any suffering that somebody endures should ultimately point us to the One who suffered and died in order to save all.

Q: In general, we could say that Job is a book about a righteous man suffering as God works in ways not comprehensible to man. Jesus is the perfect man, who suffers as God works salvation in ways that man cannot comprehend fully. And if He suffered even while perfectly righteous, what should we, his disciples, expect in our lives? (Luke 6:40)

A: These words remind us that we are not greater than Jesus. If His lot in life was to suffer, should we Christians expect any different? The clear answer in this passage is that we should not. Often, we forget this because suffering is so miserable. We need to be continually reminded as Christians that the greatest answer to the question of suffering is found by connecting our suffering to Jesus. While we endure suffering, we need to remember that Christ suffered also. This is more than “misery loves company.” While it is true that we are not alone in our suffering, ultimately, the suffering of Christ is the answer we need as the death and resurrection of Jesus will end all suffering for God’s people on the Last Day.

Q: While we wait for the Last Day and the fulfillment of God's promises, what comfort do we find in the following verses when enduring suffering? (2 Corinthians 1:5, Philippians 3:10-11, 1 Peter 2:19, Acts 5:41, Romans 5:3-5)

2 Corinthians 1:5 We are reminded that we share in the comfort of Christ in addition to the suffering of Christ.

Philippians 3:10-11 As we share in Jesus' suffering and death, we have the sure and certain promise that we will share in His resurrection also.

1 Peter 2:19 God's grace is always sufficient for us. His grace ensures that our reward in heaven will be far greater than any suffering we endure in this world.

Acts 5:41 The example of the disciples should be of great encouragement to us. This reminds us that we are not the only ones who suffer. Also, their faith is something we should emulate – to rejoice that we are worthy to suffer for the Name of Christ.

Romans 5:3-5 These words remind us that suffering can produce good things in us such as endurance and character. While these are good things, the greatest thing produced in us is hope. Please note that this is not untethered hope. This hope is tied to Christ. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, we hope in the God who raises the dead.

We must note that suffering can produce something good. Here it should be said that suffering and discipline are different. Sometimes people are disciplined for a particular reason. This can bring about something good as Hebrews 12:5-7 demonstrates. However, suffering can seem senseless to us. But as all Scripture must be seen through Christ, the same can be said about our lives. So, in the end, all suffering is only bearable and even fruitful when we understand that our suffering is connected to Christ's suffering, which caused our salvation.

Closing Prayer:

O God, by the patient suffering of Your only-begotten Son You have beaten down the pride of the old enemy. Now help us, we humbly pray, to rightly treasure in our hearts all that our Lord has of His goodness borne for our sake, that following His blessed example we may bear with all patience all that is adverse to us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.