

Religious Spirits



Why Do These Things Happen to God's People? (Part 8)
by Derek Prince

Let's just look at one passage, Job 22:5–11. Eliphaz comes out and accuses Job of all sorts of things he never did. So Eliphaz says in Job 22:5 and following:

> "Is not your wickedness great, and your iniquity without end? For you have taken pledges from your brother for no reason, And stripped the naked of their clothing."

That was not true, Job had never done that.

> "You've not given the weary water to drink, and you withheld bread from the hungry. You have sent widows away empty, and the strength of the fatherless was crushed. Therefore, snares are all around you, and sudden fear troubles you."

In other words, you've been wicked and that's why all this is happening. The Lord said they said the wrong thing, Job said the right thing.

Then they said:

> "God never lets the wicked prosper."

Is that true? Some people will imply that it is.

Chapter 4, verses 7 through 9:

> "Remember now, whoever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off? Even as I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of His anger they are consumed."

In other words, if you've sown evil you'll be cut off. But that isn't true. Job is very careful to point that out emphatically. But it's really an issue that you and I have to face today. Does God always judge the wicked? Job says no. I notice a kind of silence comes. I think some of you probably never really faced that issue, does God let the wicked get away with it?

The answer is yes, He does. Not always but sometimes.

And then they said to Job

> "If you would acknowledge and repent, everything would go right with you."

Now it's easy for religious people to say that. You see, what they gave Job was a lot of religious talk and God didn't accept it. Job 8:3–7:

> "Does God subvert judgment? Or does the Almighty pervert justice? If your sons have sinned against Him, He has cast them away for their transgressions?"

There's no record that Job's sons had sinned.

> "If you would earnestly seek God and make your supplication to the Almighty, If you were pure and upright, surely now He would awake for you, And prosper your rightful habitation. Though your beginning was small, yet your later end would increase abundantly."

In other words, if you were really right with God you'd be prospering. The fact that you're not prospering shows you're not right with God. Have you ever heard that teaching? Well, the Lord says it's wrong. You see, this is why it's very important, the issues of Job are all current, they concern us today.

Then Eliphaz, who was the sort of leader, preached what I call the prosperity gospel. You see how relevant this is? I mean, how concerned we have to be to find out what God really thinks. In Job 5:17–26:

> "Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects. Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty."

In other words, you're being chastened by the Almighty. It wasn't true.

> "For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole. He shall deliver you in six troubles, yes, in seven no evil shall touch you."

Is that true? No, unfortunately. I can see you looking. At least I've got your attention. What I want you to see, the issues of Job are right up to date, they face things that we face today.

> "In famine He shall redeem you from death, and in war from the power of the sword."

In other words, us Christians never get killed in war. True or false? All right.

> "You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, and you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes. You shall laugh at destruction and famine, and you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth."

Much of Africa is racked by famine. Are Christians exempt? That's what Eliphaz was saying. I won't go any further but it comes out again, it's difficult to find just one place where it's all said.

I'm saying, this is my version, the friends preached the prosperity gospel to Job. They said, "If you hadn't sinned you wouldn't be sick." Have you ever heard that? It's very, very cruel because to the problem of sickness it adds the problem of guilt. And a lot of Christians today begin to feel guilty when they get sick because they've been fed an incomplete doctrine. It's not altogether wrong but it's not altogether right. And the thing about that teaching is it works often enough that people can go on teaching it. If it never worked they couldn't but it certainly does not always work. Amen? All right.

And then they come up with a fearful catalog of all the terrors that await the wicked. And what are they saying? "Job, this is what you could expect." Job 20:20–29, this is about the wicked, I can't get to the whole context:

> "Because he knows no quietness in his heart, he will not save anything he desires. Nothing is left for him to eat; therefore his well being will not last. In his self sufficiency he will be in distress; Every hand of misery will come against him. When he is about to fill his stomach, God will cast on him the fury of His wrath, and will rain it on him while he is eating. He will flee from the iron weapon; a bronze bow will pierce him through. It is drawn, and comes out of the body; Yes, the glittering point comes out of his gall. Terrors come upon him; Total darkness is reserved for his treasure. An unfanned fire will consume him; it shall go ill with him who is left in his tent. The heavens will reveal his

> iniquity, and the earth will rise up against him."

In other words, "Job, that's what happens to the wicked and it's going to happen to you."

Job's response is really quite interesting.

Something very interesting that you probably never noticed, Eliphaz reveals one of the sources of his teaching and it's an evil spirit. Turn to Job 4:12–16.

> "Now a word was secretly brought to me, and my ear received a whisper of it. In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, When deep sleep falls on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, Which made all my bones shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair on my body stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; There was silence; then I heard a voice saying…"

That is a visitation of a spirit and it brought great fear with it. This is what the spirit said and this is really the crux of the whole issue:

> "Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his maker? If he puts no trust in his servants, If he charges his angels with error, how much more those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed before a moth…"

So, what is the message? It's ridiculous and presumptuous for a man to claim to be right with God. No man can claim righteousness in the presence of God.

And Bildad comes up with the same thing in Job 25:1–6:

> "Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said, 'Dominion and fear belong to him [that's the Lord]; He makes peace in his high places. Is there any number to his armies? Upon who does his light not shine? How then can man be righteous before God? Or how can he be pure who is born of a woman? If even the moon does not shine, and the stars are not pure in his sight, How much less man who is a maggot, and a son of man who is a worm?'"

In other words, it is a ridiculous presumption for any man to claim to be right with God. And that's really, I believe, the basic issue that Satan is resisting. He ridicules any claim to be right with God. And it came from a spirit but not a Spirit of God. I would call it a religious spirit.

I wonder if you've ever had to deal with a religious spirit.

I'll tell you about religious spirits, they're too good to be true. And they use their goodness to make you feel guilty. Right? If you haven't encountered it I have an idea you will pretty soon. It's very deceptive because like Job's friends they use all the right language, they're more religious than God Himself, and they cause no end of trouble.

Let me ask you a question. What is the Scripture's answer to can a man be right with God? Where would you look in the Bible for the answer? What book? Romans, that's right. That is the theme of Romans. The whole issue of Romans is righteous. Is it possible to achieve righteousness with God? And God says yes it is. Satan says not it is not. He uses religious arguments to make you feel guilty. Does that seem up to date to you? I'm impressed that the book of Job which is probably 4,000 years old, at least possibly, is so totally up to date, so exactly relevant to the situation that we find ourselves in today.

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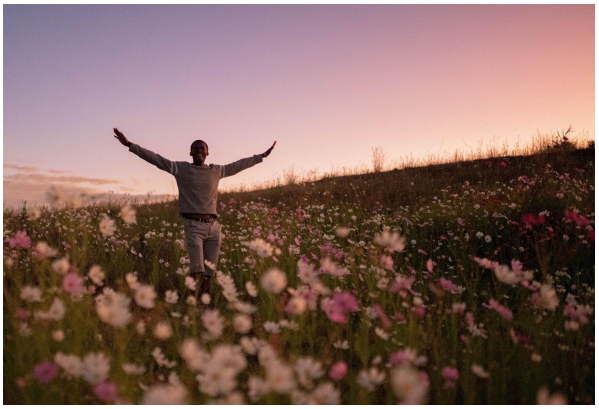

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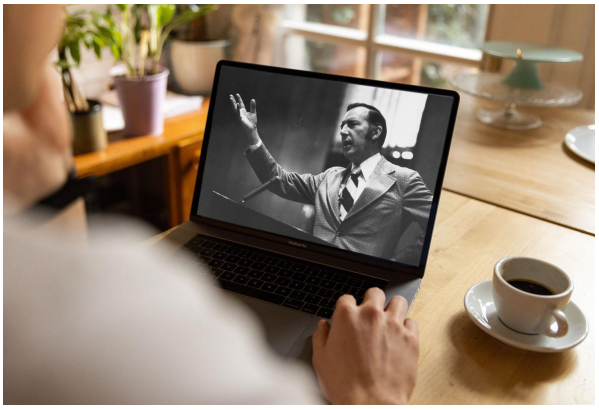

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