

Job's Response



Why Do These Things Happen to God's People? (Part 9)
by Derek Prince

Now let's come to Job's response.

Job's first response was reverent submission. He said the Lord gave, the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

The second time his wife said, "Go on, curse God and die. Why should you want to live?" He said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we receive good and not receive evil from the Lord's hand?" And it says in all this Job did not sin nor charge God foolishly. His initial reaction was totally right.

Now, I learned something from that because when my first wife died it was the hardest experience that I'd been through. But, I saw that Job gave me the answer. The Lord gavel, the Lord has taken away. If we can trust God to give we have to trust Him to take away. And that for me resolved the doctrinal problem. There was still a personal problem but I wasn't troubled by what had happened.

Secondly, in Job 3, Job goes into a long lament and he says things I don't understand because he says, "I wish the day I was born would be blotted out of the number of months." I don't understand how that could happen. How a past day can be blotted out of the calendar, I don't understand but I'm sure there's something about it. But, he really lets go his feelings and I want to say that is the right reaction. We are not stoics, that's an alien, un-Christian doctrine, Stoicism. We never let anything affect us, we never get so involved in anything that it's going to hurt us. I've met Christians like that and I've always seen there's a reason. They got hurt once and their inner attitude is I'm never going to let anybody get close enough to me to hurt me again. Brothers and sisters, I can understand that but I want to say it's the wrong reaction. You cannot afford to shut up your feelings. You study the Bible, especially the book of Psalms, especially David. A great man, a man of action, a man of war, a man God loved. He poured out his feelings in tremendous language. And if we don't do that, if we bottle it up we suffer. Something inside us goes sour.

It's appropriate to mourn. When Moses died the children of Israel mourned forty days for him, they didn't move. That's a right way to respond. Let it out. Tell God how you feel. Don't hold it in., don't stifle it. Let it out. And that's certainly biblical.

You read the psalms one time and see how many times David let it all hang out. Amazing.

So that's number two, Job lamented.

Number three, he wanted to die. I won't turn to the passage but there's various places he says, "What's the good of living, I've got nothing to live for, let me get out of it. Let me get to a place where I have peace." I think that's deception because I don't think the wicked or the unconverted do have peace after they've died.

Then Job affirmed his righteousness, he would not back down in the face of all his critics and accusations. I think we need to read that in Job 13:15, talking about God he says:

> "Though He slay me, yet will I trust him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him."

And apparently God liked that. He doesn't want religious hypocrisy. He doesn't want religious platitudes, he wants people to be honest. Job said, "I've done nothing wrong and nobody is going to make me say I've done something wrong when I haven't, not even God."

And then in chapter 27, verses 3 through 6:

> "As long as my breath is in me, and the breath of God in my nostrils, My lips will not speak wickedness, or my tongue utter deceit. Far be it from me that I should say you are right; Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let go; My heart shall not reproach me as long as I live."

He said, "You can go on accusing me but I don't accept it. I have not done wrong, this has not happened because I've sinned." Was he right?

Do you know why it happened to him? I'll shock you with the answer. Because he was righteous. See, that overthrows a whole lot theories, doesn't it? And you'll find, as we'll see, God never did anything but uphold Job's righteousness. From the beginning to the end of the book he said, "My servant Job is right." Now that really staggers you, doesn't it? I'm going to say it again. Job's problems didn't come because he'd sinned, they came because he was righteous. How many of you still want to be righteous? Amen. I do, too.

The next thing that Job says is God has not treated me justly. Job 27:2–4. This is really astonishing because remember God said at the end Job said what is right.

> "As God lives, who has taken away my justice, And the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter, As long as my breath is in me, and the breath of God is in my nostrils, My lips will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. Far be it from me that I should say you are right; Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me."

Job knew he was righteous and he was not going to change. He said God hasn't treated me justly. Was that true? It was true. This is going to shock you but it was true.

Turn to Job 2:3 for a moment:

> "Then 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, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you [Satan] incited me against him, to destroy him without cause.'"

That's unjust. Yes or no? So you see there's a problem. But at least I've got you thinking.

The next thing, Job longed for a mediator. Job 9:32–35:

> "He [God] is not a man as I am, that I may answer Him, And that we should go to court together. Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both. Let Him take away His rod from me, and do not let dread of Him terrify me. Then I would speak and not fear Him, but it is not so with me."

One of Job's frustrations was he could not get into the presence of God. He couldn't have a direct interview with God. He said if only we had a mediator.

Do you know the difference between Job and us? We have a mediator. I wonder if we appreciate that.

Job viewed God as vindictive and unconcerned. Job 9:14–20:

> "How then can I answer Him, and choose my words to reason with Him? For though I were righteous, I could not answer Him. I would beg mercy of my judge. If I called and He answered me, I would not believe that He was listening to my voice. For He crushes me with a tempest, and multiplies my wounds without cause. He will not allow me to catch my breath, but fills me with

> bitterness."

And then at the end of that chapter, verses 30–31:

> "If I wash myself with snow water, and cleanse my hands with soap, Yet you [that's God] will plunge me into the pit, and my own clothes will abhor me."

That's strong language, isn't it?

He complains that God used him for target practice. That's remarkable but you see it there in Job 7:20:

> "Have I sinned? What have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you set me as your target, so that I am a burden to myself?"

"God, you're using me as target practice. All your arrows are sticking in me. Now, if you talk to God like that, you better be pretty careful what kind of a person you are.

And then a Scripture which has absolutely changed our attitude for Ruth and me, something we had never seen, Job 7:17–18. Job is speaking:

> "What is man that you should magnify him, that you should set your heart on him, That you should visit him every morning, and test him every moment?"

And it came as a startling revelation to Ruth and me that God visits us every morning. Let me ask you, will you be ready for His visit tomorrow morning? Because, He'll be there. You may not be aware of it but He checks on you every morning and it says He tests us every moment. There's not a moment that God is not testing you. Everything that we do is undergoing a test. Now you could say that's awful but I think what the Bible reveals is God tests us because He's proud of us. He wants to bring the best out of us. He has a much higher goal for us than we have for ourselves and He will not lower His standards.

Many time we could say to God, "God, please lift, take the pressure off." God won't do it because He says in essence, "I've got a purpose in your life and I am going to work it out." You can absolutely turn your back on God and cancel the process but I trust most of us would not wish to do that. But if you want God's purpose fulfilled in your life then you've got to be prepared to be visited every morning and tested every moment. I can see that you're somewhat shocked. We were shocked when we realized it. But, it's true.

Job says there's no justice on earth, Job 9:24.

> "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked. He covers the faces of its judges [He is God]. If it is not he, who else could it be?"

Now, is that true? Is there a lot of unjust judgment here in the United States today in our courts? There certainly is.

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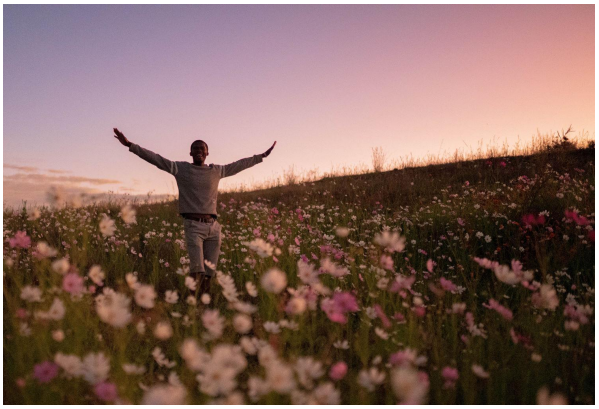

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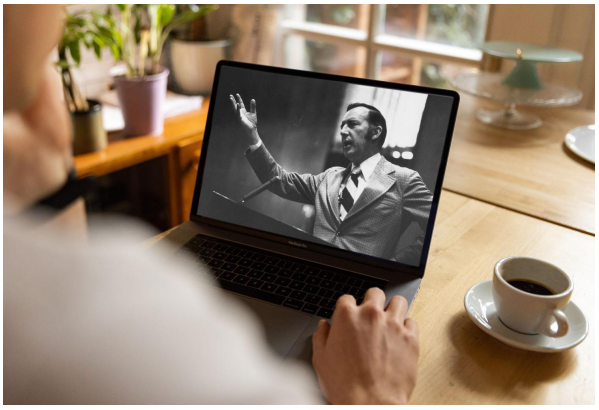

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