



WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER?

Three Old Testament Examples of Suffering: Job, Jonah, & Joseph (*Attitude is Important!*)

(Scripture plus narration.)

-In the first 5 verses of Job we see how righteous and blessed Job is.

-And then we see the sons of God (angels) present themselves before the Lord, and Satan among them, and then the Lord asks him a question, so let's read about Job's suffering:

Job 1:8-12

“⁸And 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? ⁹Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? ¹⁰Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. ¹¹But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. ¹²And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.”

v.1:13-19

-“Round 1”, we see that Job's livestock were stolen or killed, his servants killed, and his sons and daughters killed. ☹

Job's response v.20-22,

“²⁰Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, ²¹And 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. ²²In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”

v.2:3-6

“³And 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. ⁴And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. ⁵But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. ⁶And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he *is* in thine hand; but save his life.“ (Ref. also Revel. 12:9-10 future demotion of Satan so that he's unable to accuse us.)

v.2:7-8

-So in “Round 2” we see that Job has been smitten with boils all over his body.

Job's response v.2:9-10,

“⁹Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. ¹⁰But 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.” (Did the wife stand by her man?)

v.2:11-13

-Job's 3 friends show up for moral support, and sit on the ground with him 7 days/nights without speaking.

(Gal. 6:2 “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” >John 13:34 a new commandment)

v.3:1-3

-Job finally speaks and says “³Let the day perish wherein I was born...” Uh oh, is Job having some doubts?



Ch.3-37

- Then his friends answer, then Job answers, then they answer, then he answers, and so forth... for 35 chapters.
- Until Ch. 38, then God answers Job!

v. 38:1-4

“¹Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ²Who *is* this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? ³Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. ⁴Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.”

- Then Job repents (v.42:6 “...I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.”),
- And prays for his friends’ repentance,
- And then Job gets twice blessed in the end!

v.42:10, 13

“¹⁰And 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.

¹³He had also seven sons and three daughters.” (With the same wife?! Repentance is a gift.)

Now a look at Jonah’s suffering:

Jonah 1:1-3

“¹Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. ³But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD...”

- Jonah boards a ship, it almost sinks in a storm, until he recommended that the crew throw him overboard.
- The Lord prepared a large fish to swallow him and he was in there suffering 3 days & 3 nights (Matt. 12:40).

v.2:1-7

“¹Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish’s belly, ²And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice. ³For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. ⁴Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. ⁵The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. ⁶I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. ⁷When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.”

- Did Jonah have a Near-Death-Experience by suffocation and was he actually in hell?
- So the whale vomits Jonah out onto dry land (if only he had obeyed the FIRST time, hearing the Lord’s voice, then maybe he would not have had the appearance of a leper after a 3-day stomach acid bath).

v.3:1-4

- God tells Jonah to get up off the beach and go tell Ninevah what God wants him to say.
- He appears to be more than willing now, after going through his suffering experience (1 Peter 4:1-2).

We see Jonah’s obedience in verse 3:4,

“⁴And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”



- Was that so hard for Jonah to do? God's commandments are not grievous! (1 John 5:3)
- So Ninevah heard, the king proclaimed a fast of repentance, and God repented of bringing the evil upon them.
- Was there a blessing because of Jonah's obedience? Yes! (Repentance is a gift.)

v.4:1-4

- It appears that Jonah got upset with their repentance and wondered if he may have wasted his time, if God was going to be merciful anyway to Ninevah.
- Jonah acknowledges that the Lord is slow to anger but Jonah doesn't seem to acknowledge his own anger issue, as we read in v.4:1-4,

"¹But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. ²And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, *was* not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. ³Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for *it is* better for me to die than to live. ⁴Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?"

v.4:5-11

- Then Jonah camps out east of the city to see what might happen to it.
- Jonah's lean-to shelter had a gourd plant providing shade until it died from a worm that God had prepared.
- So Jonah lost his cool again, but Ecclesiastes 7:9 says that "anger rests in the bosom of fools".
- Jonah just had a near-death-experience in v.2:1-7, and now he's said twice that he'd rather die, really? Has he forgotten his first experience already? Let's read about it in v.4:8-11,

"⁸And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, *It is* better for me to die than to live. ⁹And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, *even* unto death. ¹⁰Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: ¹¹And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and *also* much cattle?"

Finally, let's look at the trials and suffering of Joseph:

Gen. 37:1-4 (Joseph)

"¹And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. ²These *are* the generations of Jacob. Joseph, *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. ³Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* colours. ⁴And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him."

- So we see that there was not a close relationship yet between Joseph and his brothers (parallel with Jesus).

v. 37:5-36

- Joseph has two dreams and it offends his brothers and also his dad Jacob (a.k.a. Israel) because they were subservient to Joseph in the dreams.
- Jacob tells Joseph to go check on his brothers and when he does they take his coat, throw him in a pit, then sell him off to some merchants on camels for 20 pieces of silver (parallel with Jesus).
- His brothers tell a lie to Jacob and so his father thinks Joseph was killed by an animal.
- In all of this activity there is no mention of Joseph complaining about his treatment or suffering (parallel with Jesus).



Gen. 38

-We are going to skip Chapter 38 right now because we're focusing on Joseph.

v. 39:1

-The merchants on camels have since sold off Joseph to an Egyptian named Potipher, so now he is a "house boy".

v. 39:2-5

"²And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. ³And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. ⁴And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all *that* he had he put into his hand. ⁵And it came to pass from the time *that* he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field."

-And so we see that the Lord is blessing Joseph and those that are associated with him, as Joseph goes through his trial with the right perspective or attitude, and yes through the trials there are blessings for obedience.

v. 39:6-20

-So we are familiar with the story of Potipher's wife making a pass at Joseph and falsely accusing him which got him thrown in prison.

-Again, there is no record of complaining by Joseph of how he was being treated.

v. 39:21-23

"²¹But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. ²²And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that *were* in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer *of it*. ²³The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing *that was* under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and *that* which he did, the LORD made *it* to prosper."

-Is it possible to prosper while we're going through a trial?! (Obviously, as long as we are obedient.)

-A side note: confession of faith in God's promises are good to say aloud as we go through trials (speak those things which be not as though they are.....Romans 4:17) (James 3:2 do not offend, nor be offended, attitude is important).

Ch. 40

-In this chapter Joseph is still in prison and he interprets the butler's and baker's dreams, and the butler leaves prison.

v. 41:1-39

-So Joseph has been in prison at least two years and then Pharaoh has dreams about skinny cows and bad corn.

-Then the butler remembers how Joseph interpreted his dream so Joseph is summoned, cleaned up, and brought before Pharaoh and he interprets his dream with God's help. PTL

-Joseph says that 7 good years of harvest are going to be followed by 7 years of a bad famine and to start storing up grain now, so Pharaoh promotes him to manage the whole operation.

v. 41:40-42, Let's see what Pharaoh says to Joseph,

"⁴⁰Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. ⁴¹And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. ⁴²And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;"



-Was Joseph still getting blessed and prospering? Does it look like his trial is finally over and that now he has a new beginning?

v. 41:43-57

-So at age 30 Joseph is a project manager over something very important (he also has a wife –Potipherah’s daughter).
 -Seven years later the famine has begun and various people and nations are standing in line for help.

Ch. 42-47

-Jacob finds out there’s corn in Egypt, so...

-He sends his 10 sons and they meet Joseph and don’t recognize him and we know the rest of the story how Joseph came up with a plan, inspired of the Lord, to get his whole family into Egypt’s land of Goshen in order to survive the famine.

-And Joseph got to be reunited and reconciled with his brothers and father, 20 years after they sold him off. (Future parallel with Jesus and His reconciliation with the 12 Tribes of Israel, Revel. 7 & Revel. 14.)

v. 45:1, 7

“¹Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

⁷And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.”

Now let’s do a survey to see who thinks which one had a better attitude: Job, Jonah, or Joseph?

But first a few questions,

How come Job and Jonah had Bible books named after them but not Joseph? (let’s skip that question)

1. First, did they all suffer? How?
2. How did they handle their suffering? Mature or immature way?
3. Which of the 3 got the biggest blessing at the end?
4. Which of the 3 had their family blessed in the end?
5. Was it God’s will for them to suffer?
6. Was their suffering in proportion to their assignment?
7. Okay so let’s vote, which one had the best attitude?

So by these three stories from the Old Testament, we see that there are two reasons for suffering,

- Sin or disobedience.
- Or because it is God’s will for His glory (because it may be a strategic mission) and of course for our benefit.
- 20 years after Joseph was sold off, he rescued his entire clan from death by severe famine, per God’s plan.
- Moses is another example, God appeared and told him to confront Pharaoh with the Word and with a rod, so within 3 weeks Egypt was in ruins, and the children of Israel were free after 400+ years of slavery bondage.

Jesus learned obedience:

“⁸Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;” Hebrews 5:8

“¹⁹For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Romans 5:19

Jesus was without sin and He suffered for God’s glory and for our benefit, and also His benefit:

“²¹For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21



Sin can break the hedge:

Individual protection:

Recall Job 1:10 “¹⁰Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?”

Ecclesiastes 10:8,

“⁸He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.”

(Ref. also Psalm 91 protection.)

Group protection, i.e. church or government:

We're supposed to pray for our leadership so they don't do the wrong thing and break the hedge, or else we have to make up the gap (intercessory prayer).*

Ezekiel 22:30-31,

“³⁰And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. ³¹Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them...” (called an intercessor) (*ref. 1 Timothy 2:1-2) (Isaiah 53:12 “He was numbered with the transgressors”.) (How many times did Moses intercede for his rebellious stiff-necked people?)

John 5 New Testament example of suffering because of sin:

John 5:14 Jesus heals the man who was lame and could not walk (individual sin),

“¹⁴Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, **Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.**”

Exodus 34:6-7 Generational sin,

“⁶And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ⁷Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.”

(*^Research spiritual/emotional roots of disease from the book: “A More Excellent Way” by Henry Wright.*)

John 9 New Testament example of suffering because of God's will:

John 9:3 Jesus heals the man who was blind,

“³Jesus answered, **Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.**”

1 Peter 4:19 Suffering according to the will of God,

“¹⁹Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.” (There's a blessing at the end of it!)

1 Peter 2:20-21 Jesus and Joseph our examples:

“²⁰For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God. ²¹For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”

-God is always trying to put us in a position to be blessed. Quite often, the path from point A to point B does not look like a blessing, it looks like a trial. The result is CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT in order to prepare us to receive the blessing. The gold is tried in the fire so it can be pure enough to use for glorious things!



Now we are going to take a look at the blessings that we can receive, because of suffering:

1 Peter 4:12-13 Partakers of Christ's sufferings,

"¹²Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: ¹³But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Philippians 3:10-11, 21 Paul's fellowship of His sufferings,

"¹⁰That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

"²¹Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

2 Corinthians 4:17 Our light affliction,

"¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;"

Romans 8:18 Glory revealed,

"¹⁸For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 Paul's mature insight after asking the Lord for deliverance from a spiritual thorn in his flesh,

"⁹And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

-Paul had a hopeful expectation that Jesus would heal him and so he relaxed. He believed that he was suffering according to the will of God and there would be a blessing waiting for him at the end of his trial, and so he was learning how to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might", Ephesians 6:10.

PRAYER TIME, individual and corporate:

- We must spend time in personal prayer, so we can hear the Lord's voice both from the Word and by the Holy Spirit, and we can know His will daily.
- Prayer meetings are also important so we can pray for each other and for corporate needs, both church and nation.

CONFESSION OF FAITH, "Rhema Word" example verses to confess out loud for victory in these areas:

- "³¹But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:31
- "²³The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil." Proverbs 19:23
- "¹Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. ²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: ³Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; ⁴Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; ⁵Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. ⁶The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed." Psalm 103:1-6



- “¹⁴The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become my salvation... ¹⁷I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.” Psalm 118:14, 17
- “¹⁰There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling... ¹⁶With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.” Psalm 91:10, 16
- “¹¹But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Romans 8:11

BREAKING CURSES:

- There is unnecessary suffering because of generational curses that can be broken, so there can be more freedom through Jesus.
- Research the book “*Stripes, Nails, Thorns, & the Blood*” by Dr. Bree Keyton.
- Research also Bill Schnoebelen’s website: With One Accord Ministries.

REWARDS (It is more than worth it in the end!):

- “¹⁶The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.” Romans 8:16-17
- “²Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” 1 John 3:2
- “⁶Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:6

JESUS LOVES YOU!

