

The Ultimate Test The Perplexing Pain Test

We Accept Purposeful Pain, We Abhor Perplexing Pain

Perplexing Pain: IRS audit, termination from work, marriage failure, miscarriage, terminal diagnosis, death of a child, natural disaster...

The most prominent example of perplexing pain in the Bible is the story of Job, and today we read about him in message #2 of our Ultimate Test series...

*“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, ‘From where have you come?’ Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.’ And 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, who fears God and turns away from evil?’ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘Does Job fear God for no reason?’ Have you not put a hedge around 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. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.’ And the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.’ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, and there came a messenger to Job and said, ‘The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you. While he was yet speaking, there came another 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.’ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, ‘The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.’ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, ‘Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you.’ Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshipped. And he said, ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.’ In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong. 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. And the LORD said to Satan, ‘From where have you come?’ Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.’ And 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, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast to his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason.’ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and flesh, and he will curse you to your face.’ And the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life.’ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes. Then his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die.’ But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips.” **Job 1:6-2:10***

Main Idea: The Test of Perplexing Pain Calls for Absolute Trust in God

Three Parts to Perplexing Pain from the Book of Job

I. What We Know – 1:13-19, 2:7-8

*“And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him.” **Job 2:12a***

II. What We Don’t Know – 1:6-12, 2:1-6

*“Job represents an early & uncomplicated theology...you get what you deserve, you reap what you sow, and you succeed or fail on the basis of your behavior. Sin will be punished, and trust and obedience will be rewarded...The patriarch from Uz, however, did not fit that pattern. He was a righteous man who suffered as if he were guilty of great wickedness. Neither he nor his friends could explain his condition because their watertight systems allowed for no exceptions.” **R.L. Alden***

*“Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them.” **Ecclesiastes 9:11-12***

III. How Will We Respond – 1:20-22, 2:9-10

*“Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshipped. And he said, ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.’ In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.” **Job 1:20-22***

*“Then his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die.’ But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips.” **Job 2:9-10***

Job’s Response to Perplexing Pain:

- **Look Back** – at God’s past goodness
- **Look Around** – at God’s present dealing
- **Look Up** – Trust God

*“As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.” **James 5:10-11***

The only way to see Job as a story of the Lord’s compassion and mercy is to see it from heaven’s perspective. Trust God when you don’t know the answer. Depend on his goodness (proven by the cross) and his power (proven by the resurrection) to get you through!

Sources & Further Reading Opportunities

- *New American Commentary: Job* – R.L. Alden (1993)
- *Be Patient* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *Wiersbe Expository Outlines on the OT* – Warren Wiersbe (1993)
- *Notes from My Bible* – D.L. Moody (1895)
- *The Spurgeon Study Bible* – C.H. Spurgeon (2017)
- *Tony Evans Study Bible* – Tony Evans (2019)
- *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary* – Hughes & Laney (2001)
- *The Wisdom Books: Job* – Chuck Swindoll (2023)
- *The Book of Job* – Ray Ortlund (2014)
- *CSB Study Bible* – Trevin Wax (2017)

