

I. Intro

A. Text: **Job 1:13-22**

¹³ Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house; ¹⁴ and a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ when the Sabeans raided them and took them away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another also came 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!"

¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

¹⁸ While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ and suddenly a great wind came from across^[d] the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

²⁰ Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. ²¹ And he said:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb,
And naked shall I return there.
The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away;
Blessed be the name of the LORD."

²² In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong. (**Job 1:13-22**)

B. Background

There was a man from the land of Uz named Job. This man, Job, was a wealthy, prosperous man. He had all the sheep, camels, cattle, and donkeys that a man could possibly want. Not only did Job have good possessions. But he had a good

family. The psalmist (Solomon) said this about big families, “...Children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward. ⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one’s youth. ⁵ Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them...” (**Psalm 127:3-5a**). Job had 7 boys and 3 girls. His quiver was good and full. Job had good possessions, a good family and he was a good man. **Job 1:1** describes Job as “*blameless and upright; one who feared God and shunned evil*” (v. 1) Job was a good man (by our standards), good family, good life. But I came by here to remind you that bad things do happen to good people!

In one day Job’s good life came crashing down on him. He lost all of his worldly treasures and wealth (oxen, donkeys, sheep, camels, servants). Not only did he lose his wealth, but in those losses he lost his ability to gain wealth. It’s one thing to lose your job, your bank account and your home. But to add insult to injury, it’s almost like he also lost his work tools, his work truck and the knowledge of his trade. He lost not only his wealth, but the ability to get wealth. And to top it all off, Job lost and his children. Correction: Job lost ALL his children in the same accident. Job lost everything, in one day! Ever had a day, that was beyond all days? Ever had a day that was so catastrophic that you couldn’t smile it away, couldn’t pray it away, couldn’t bind the day and cast it out? In one day, Job lost everything that mattered to him.

And if that one day wasn’t enough, the second Chapter of Job opens up by stating, “Again, there was a day...” Job had already lost his wealth, his ability to get wealth, and all of his children. And on this other day, he lost his health. He developed an embarrassing, debilitating, humbling disease that riddled his body with pain, open sores, sleepless nights, chills, fever, difficulty breathing. Job’s sores were so invasive that he wouldn’t even utilize his own fingernails to scratch his pus-filled sores. **Job 2:8** says that Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself all over.

If God is such a good God, how could he allow such heartbreak and pain? Someone might add, how could a good God allow a good, blameless man like Job to suffer? “How”? I believe that looking at Job’s story will provide some answers to that question.

II. Body

A. When Calamity Hits, Who’s Fault Is It?

1. Chance

Some would say that it was just a coincidence... that the catastrophe, the hurt was mere chance. It was the luck of the draw. But I beg to differ. If God is omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign... If he is God, than that means that He is all that. He is on the throne and He rules over everything! And nothing just happens! Nothing just happens by just chance.

Here's what the Bible says about chance. *"We may throw the dice, but the LORD determines how they fall."* (**Prov. 16:33- NLT**). In other words, there is nothing outside of the sovereignty of God. There is nothing outside of the rule of God. There is nothing that happens outside of the knowledge of God. And if calamity came driving down your street and knocks on your door, please know that it had to submit a permission slip with the Ruler of the Universe first. Because nothing just happens.

2. God's Fault: Blame God

If the evil that occurs in the world cannot be chalked up to chance, then the natural inclination is to do what Job's wife did: Blame God. Not only did she blame God, but she encouraged her husband to.

⁹Then his wife said to him, *"Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"* (**Job 2:9**).

Just curse God and jump off a bridge. Blame God and just get away. When we read this story, we usually look at Job's wife as a foolish woman. In fact, Job told rebuked her and told her how foolish she sounded. But before we pass judgment, may I remind you that this is a mother talking. A mother who just lost, not one child, but all of her children in one day. We know that a mother's life is knit to the lives of her children. And if anyone had the right to be hurt, to be looking for someone to blame, it was Job's wife.

If you've ever been hurt... I mean, really hurt. If you've been knocked down, abused and molested... If you've ever been diagnosed with a terminal illness... If you've had parents who passed away when you were a child... If you've lost a young family member (suddenly), then you can probably relate that there is at least a moment where you are faced with the option of blaming God. "Curse God and die"!

3. Victim's Fault: Blame the Person Suffering

And if blaming God for tragedy and natural catastrophe doesn't provide any satisfaction, then it's very common to blame the victim. For several days Job's 3 friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) listened while Job complained about his predicament and his loss, and then they did what people always do: They pointed their bony little fingers at the victim. *"Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off?" (Job 4:7- NKNV)*. Think about it, when do innocent people ever suffer from catastrophes? Admit it Job, the reason that tragedy knocked on your door is that you must have had some hidden sin.

For 37 chapters, God sat by in silence on the sidelines as Job pleaded his case, and his friends pointed their fingers at the victim. But when God did speak, He had plenty of rebuke. Some of that rebuke was directed toward Job's 3 friends. You see, when people are suffering, God often uses those times as phenomenal opportunities to display genuine compassion. And if He is ready to show compassion during suffering, you better know that He expects us to show compassion in times of calamity.

B. Does God Sometimes Use Calamity To Bring About Justice?

This may not make you feel very comfortable, but God is a just God. He is a just God who alone meters out right justice. One day my daughter was hurt badly by an act of violence. She got hurt by someone VERY close to her, very close to me. While I sat with her in the hospital with her, she kept crying out "Who is going to exact revenge for me?" It was tearing at my heart, because this is my daughter. And I could be the one who attempted to get justice for her, but it would only bring about more pain for our family. You know who is better at exacting justice than me, or any other father? God!

His judgment is for sure. Ain't nobody getting away with nothing! And can use pain, suffering and natural catastrophe to bring about a right judgment.

C. Why Didn't God Just Create a Perfect World Without Suffering?

1. He Did!

On day one of Creation God created light, dividing Day and Night. Day 2, He created the atmosphere and stratosphere. Day 3, He designated the great seas and caused dry land to emerge from the waters (with plant life and fruit trees). At the end of **Day 3, Genesis 1:10** describes that God sat back and declared *"It is good"* (**Gen. 1:31**). **Day 4**, God stretched the stars across the canvas of the heavens. He established the sun and the earth's moon, before He leaned back and said, *"It was good"* (**Gen. 1:12**). **Day 5**, God spoke the sea creatures and flying creatures into existence. And at the end of that day, He inspected His work and declared, *"It is good"* (**Gen. 1:18**). And on **Day 6**, God created every land creature. It was on this day that God created his greatest handiwork, from dirt He handcrafted man in His image. And at the end of the 6th day, God looked at everything He had created, He leaned back and declared *"It is VERY good"* (**Gen. 1:31**)

When God created this world, He created a world without suffering. It was without death, sickness, earthquakes, hurricanes, murders, hunger, lying baby mommas, or dead-beat baby daddy's. When God created the earth, it was VERY good. It was perfect and flawless. So God didn't create a world with evil, suffering and pain.

But God did create a world whose blessing was tied to Him, communion with Him, peace with Him. And He created the world to be tended by the one He created in His image and blew His spirit in. And He gave the tender of the garden something that He gave no other of his earth creations: Free will. God gave man free will to stay under the perfect blessing, leadership, and lordship of God Himself. Of course, Adam rejected God's leadership, lordship and blessing. In his choice, Adam willfully rejected God and all of His goodness. And the result: Death, sickness, murders, promiscuity, lying... (moral evil). And it didn't stop there. Every plant, animal, the seas, and stars experienced this genetic breakdown and decay (natural evil). **Romans 8:19** explains that,

"¹⁹ For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. ²⁰ Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, ²¹ the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. ²² For we know that all creation has

been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Rom. 8:19-22).

So because of Adam’s rebellion from God, God threw up His hands and allowed man to have it his way. “There is a way...” This way not only results in death, but it also brought about floods, tornados, earthquakes, tsunamis, etc. If you’re looking for someone to blame, you need look no further than Adam.

D. If God Is Omniscient, Couldn’t He Have Seen that Man Would Use “Free Will” to Reject Him and Bring About Evil?

Absolutely. He saw the end from the beginning. And He still chose us for love. Anyone of us who considered getting married were wise enough to foresee that if we married this woman/ man, they are going to one day use their free choice to hurt us, disappoint us, embarrass us, etc. Many of us considered the certain hurt and rejection, but concluded that the prospect of hurt and rejection is worth the benefits of relationship and intimacy. You cut covenant anyway, because of love.

So did God. God did not create evil, suffering and catastrophe. He did, however create man with the free will to love Him exclusively or not (free will). God knew that man would choose to one day reject Him, and the results would be hurtful and tragic. Knowing all of this, He chose to create man anyway... because of love.

E. Can God Bring Good Out of a World full of Pain and Suffering?

Because God loves us so much, His love overpowers and outshines the suffering and pain that mankind inflicted on this world. In fact, God loves us so much that He refuses to waist our pain and suffering. God actually uses pain and suffering.

1. God Uses Pain To Instruct Me

Hebrews 12:7, explains that every child is disciplined and chastened by the Father who loves them. One of the marks of sonship, is that we are corrected when wrong. Not for punishment’s sake. But for love’s sake. David said, *“Before I was afflicted, I went astray. But now, I keep your word” (Ps. 119:67)*. Pain has a way of leading us to repentance like nothing else.

Pain and suffering makes us aware of God’s Presence. Can I get an Amen, right there? It’s in the trouble-free times that we are most likely to forget about God

because we don't feel like we need Him. But when we suffer, when we experience heartache and pain, that we're more likely to turn to Him.



C.S. Lewis, the Oxford Professor and well-known Christian author said this about suffering in his book, **“The Problem of Pain”**. He said, *“Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. [Pain] is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”*

2. God Uses Pain To Draw Me

Suffering brings repentance. The apostle Paul said that *“godly sorrow produces repentance that leads to salvation” (2 Cor. 7:10)*. It's one of the beautiful characteristics of God: That He redeems something as ugly as pain and sorrow. That He can redeem through pain and suffering. God uses pain to give you an awareness of Him, which is the most valuable thing you could ever receive.

So God can use suffering to attract us to the greatest joy in life, which is an intimate relationship with Him that will continue into eternity. And the truth is, pain is well worth it if it means coming to know God intimately.

3. God Uses Pain to Inspect Me

1. **James 1:2-4:** ² *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,* ³ *knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.* ⁴ *But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (James 1:2-4).*

Can I get this out right now? I hate pain. If I have the slightest of headaches, I'm prone to do something about it. I'm prone to avoid pain at all. But the writer James said that we can actually get joyful in the middle of pain and trials... because the trial tests (or inspects) our faith and produces something we didn't

necessarily have before: Patience. Let the trial work in you so much that you'll be complete, perfect and lacking nothing. God can use a trial to inspect you and me. Show us where we're at and how much further we have to go.

4. God Uses Pain To Perfect Me

The psalm writer, David, penned these famous words in **Psalms 138:8**: *"The Lord will perfect that which concerns me"*. It's a position of bragging that what we are right now, is not what we shall be. It's an assurance that God is working things out in me, despite the circumstances. *"The Lord will perfect that which concerns me"*.

Paul said the same thing like this: *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"* (**Rom. 8:18**). Imagine that: God is working on me in the middle of trouble. And He is working in me to produce something in me that far outweighs and eclipses what I'm going through. I praise God for that. In **Romans 5:2**, Paul exhorted that, "... we glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope" (**Romans 5:2**). God can use pain and suffering to perfect that which concerns me.

Listen, Paul went through hell and high water, beaten to within an inch of his life (5 times), beaten with rods (3 times), shipwrecked (3 times), stoned and left for dead (to name a few). But you know what Paul called all the pain, humiliation and suffering that he'd suffered? He called it "Light Affliction".

"¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (**2 Cor. 4:17**).

God often uses pain and suffering to perfect you! And I repeat, *"The sufferings of this present time cannot compare to the glory that shall be revealed in us"* (**Rom. 8:18**) God's glory will be revealed. It's for sure. And the magnitude of the pain I'm feeling right now, ain't even in the same stratosphere as the magnitude of the glory that shall be.

III. Conclusion

You see, one day God will end all suffering. There'll be no more pain. There'll be no more dying. There'll be no more cancer. There'll be no more murder. There'll be no more tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes. There'll be no more babies dying.

There'll be no more molestations. There'll be no more hunger. There'll be no more depression and anxiety. And I'm looking for that day.

So you may be asking, *"If God has the power to eliminate suffering, to eliminate pain, and to wipe out all evil... **Why doesn't He just do it now?** Why would he wait?"* The short answer is, you! I'm talking to you, or the one sitting next to you, or your family member at home. If God wiped out all evil from the earth, He'd have to wipe you out too. Because when God comes back to judge the earth, He will declare a final judgment on all sickness, all death and all evil.

And the truth is that some of the evil in this world would be found in you, or the one sitting next to you, or one of your loved ones. In His infinite wisdom, God is delaying His return so that some would repent and turn to Him. The Apostle Peter wrote, *"The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent"* (2 Pet. 3:9). The reason that God doesn't just wipe out evil now, is because His heart is set on you (or somebody just like you). His affections and His heart is drawing on you. In fact, all of creation is waiting for you, the revealing of the Sons of God