

## “I Will See God!” (Job 1-42)

Happy Resurrection Day! I know you came to church today to hear a positive and uplifting Easter message. However, you may hear something different than what you expected. Today, you are about to experience a story that will resonate with many of you. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Job.<sup>1</sup> That’s right, Job...as in “the patience of Job.”<sup>2</sup> When people’s eyes scan my name, they immediately want to say “job” because my name is spelled J-O-B. Providentially, I guess you could say that Job was indeed given a “job” in the course of his life—a job entitled “suffering.” Ironically, my name in Hebrew means “hated” or “much persecuted,” which was indeed true of my life. But I prefer my Arabic name, which means “repentant one.” This also became true of my life.<sup>3</sup>

As I share my story,<sup>4</sup> my hope is that you will learn about my life, my faith, and most importantly about my God. Since your pastor has not given me much time, I’m going to have to be brief...and that will be difficult since the book that bears my name is 42 long chapters.<sup>5</sup> But I will give it my best shot. As I begin, there are a few things you should know about me.

**1. I was a godly man (Job 1:1).** Job 1:1 records that I was “blameless” and “upright.” Ezekiel 14 declares me to be one of the three most morally upright humans who ever lived, along with Noah and Daniel (14:14, 20). These testimonies both humble and astonish me. Please understand these words do not indicate that I was perfect. Far from it! Like you, I was a sinful person (10:6; 13:23). However, I did seek to live an above-reproach life. I “feared God” and “turned away from evil” (1:1). I experienced the same temptations that you do, but I learned to push them off. Yet, despite my moral fortitude, I discovered that bad things happen to godly people. If you are a person of morality, integrity, and godly character please recognize that you are not exempt from suffering. Often, the godly suffer more than the ungodly. So don’t be surprised when trials come your way (1 Pet 4:12-13). Prepare for them in advance so when (not “if”) they come, you’ll be ready.

**2. I was a rich man (Job 1:3).** During my lifetime, God granted me tremendous success. In my days, wealth was measured in livestock. I had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 donkeys (1:3). My total net worth was pretty impressive. As a result, I was labeled “the greatest of all the men of the east” (1:3). Although I never trusted in my riches, I confess it was nice to have such wealth. Yet, even with all my wealth, I came to realize that there are some things that money can’t buy. Today, if you are putting your hope in your wealth—beware! Regardless of how much money you have, there will come a time when you will find yourself in a crisis that money can’t solve. Take it from one of the wealthiest men that has ever lived...don’t put your confidence in wealth (1 Tim 6:17). Enjoy what God has given you, but be generous and place your faith in Him.

**3. I was a family man (Job 1:2, 4-5).** I had seven sons and three daughters (1:2). But I must tell you, my children represented the one shadow on my horizon. I’m embarrassed to say that their lives were an endless round of parties (1:4). Their whole lifestyle seems to have been built around the pursuit of pleasure. If you had asked them what they were living for, they would have said, “We live for the weekend. We get our work done, and then we all party.”

I did not like what my children were doing. In fact, after the parties were over, I used to offer a sacrifice for each of my ten children. That’s not an easy task, mind you. But I did this thinking perhaps my children had sinned and cursed God in their hearts (1:5). So here I was, a man who was wonderfully blessed, but I had one fear that haunted me. I sensed that what was going on in my family was not pleasing to God.<sup>6</sup> Yes, I was the head of my house, but I had trouble keeping my kids under control. As some of you parents know, this is not an easy task. Even the best of kids can give their parents some grief. Being a “God-fearer,” I took my role as a father very seriously.

**4. I was a marked man (Job 1:9f).** Then one day everything in my life changed. The day was like any other—until a terrified servant broke through the door of my house with desperate news. My servant told me that all my oxen and donkeys had been stolen and my servants who were tending them had been killed (1:14-15). I didn't even have time to take in this appalling news, because while my servant was still speaking, another servant came with news that my sheep and other servants had been killed by "fire from heaven" (1:16). Again, while the second servant was still speaking, a different servant arrived and told me that my camels had been stolen and my servants who were tending them had been killed (1:17). While this third servant was still speaking, a fourth servant arrived with some gut-wrenching news. He told me that my children had been partying at my oldest son's house when a great wind collapsed the house and killed my seven sons and three daughters (1:18-19). This was more than I could bear. My children were a part of me. It would hurt to lose one...but all ten? This was beyond what any parent could take.

In my first series of tests, I lost my possessions. In my second test, I lost my children. So what did I do? Did I shake my fist at heaven and curse God? No, I didn't. I simply arose, tore my robe, shaved my head, and fell to the ground and worshipped. Then I said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." Through all of my loss, I did not sin or blame God (1:20-22).

But the tests were not over yet. Before I knew it, I was stricken with boils from head to toe (2:7). I was in a state of suffering too great for words (2:13). I was devastated. I felt as if my world had been turned inside out. So I just sat down on an ash heap and began scraping the boils that covered my body (2:8). While I was minding my own business and busy at work scraping, my wife came up to me and said, "Things couldn't get any worse for you. You're living out a real-life nightmare. Why do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" (2:9) I must tell you when she uttered those words it was as if Satan himself was speaking through her. It seemed as if he was whispering in my ear, "Do it! Do it!"<sup>7</sup> I was so tempted to just end it all. At the time, I felt I could have justified taking myself out of my misery. Instead, I rebuked my wife and said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish [godless] women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" Again, in all of this I did not sin with my lips (2:12; cf. 1:22).

Just when I figured things couldn't get worse...they did! Three of my friends came alongside me and began telling me that I had offended God with my sin and arrogance and that God was punishing me. Whew! With friends like that...well, you get the picture. I felt as if my friends were pouring lemon juice into my festering boils. Their words stung and caused great pain within me. I honestly felt like I had been sucker punched.

Please hear these words from me. When people are suffering, the last thing they need is criticism. What they need is a friend who hurts with them, and who will help them get through it. This is also true of providing spiritual answers and clichés. In a time of trial or tragedy, it is best to just sit and listen. My friends did this for seven straight days and I felt loved and cared for. But then...they opened their mouths. Thus, the book that bears my name is filled with plenty of bad counsel (Job 3-37). Although the book of Job is Scripture, much of its contents are not endorsed by God. Even I, Job, provided some awful theological content. I'm embarrassed to say that in my moments of deepest despair, I lashed out at God. I criticized Him unfairly. I told God that

- He wasn't listening to me (9:16);
- He hurt me for no reason (9:17);
- He was unjust, making the innocent appear guilty (9:20);
- He laughs when a good person dies (9:23);
- He causes injustice in the world (9:24).

In the beginning, I endured my suffering with grace and patience, but in the course of my suffering, and under the influence of my “friends,” I became consumed with myself and unanswered questions. Some people sin by thinking too highly of themselves, others sin by thinking too lowly of themselves, but all of us sin by thinking too much about ourselves. That’s where I was when God broke through.<sup>8</sup> Fortunately, in the midst of all of my complaining, God knew that this wasn’t what I really believed. It was just the pain talking. I liken it to a pregnant woman in the crisis of delivery, blaming her husband for wanting children. In the end, I adjusted to the tragedy and returned to trusting God, even though God never explained the reason behind my suffering.<sup>9</sup>

**5. I was a humbled man (Job 38-42).** After immense suffering and loss, God finally did speak to me. In the course of four chapters (Job 38-41), God verbally laid me out and exposed my sin. He did so by asking me more than 70 questions. In His barrage of questions, He silenced me and put me to shame. I was unable to answer even one question! Just listen to a few of God’s snappy one-liners:

- “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?” (38:4)
- “Did you ever tell the sun to rise?” (38:12)
- “Where is the home of the light?” (38:19)
- “Did you teach hawks to fly south for the winter?” (38:26)
- “Did you set in place the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper?” (38:32)

Rather quickly, I realized that I was way out of my depth. I used to think that I should be able to understand the “whys” of my life, but now I knew that this knowledge was out of my league. So I told God I was unworthy to even reply to Him and I put my hand over my mouth (40:4). But He would not let me go. Instead, God said, “Now gird up your loins like a man; I will ask you, and you instruct Me” (40:7). All through my suffering, I thought about what I would ask God. Perhaps you have thought that when you see God, you would ask Him some pretty tough questions. But when I was in the presence of God, it was altogether different from what I expected. I could not think of one single question to ask. I was speechless in His presence. I was in awe! I had come face to face with the glory of God! And I was a changed man.

My story comes to a close with an ironic twist: Throughout my suffering I longed for a mediator (9:33) with God. Yet, in the end God Himself asks me to be a mediator for my three friends. In fact, God told my three friends to make a sacrifice for their sin of misrepresenting Him and then God asked me to pray for them. After I prayed for my friends the Lord made me prosperous again and gave me twice as much as I had before, including seven sons and three daughters (42:10-13).

While Job appears to be a book about suffering the surprise ending clearly shows it is a book about the sovereignty of God. What I learned in the midst of my suffering, no other circumstances could have taught me. I learned that God is not only all powerful, all wise, all righteous, but He is good. Why do the righteous suffer? The righteous suffer because sin and Satan are both real. What good does suffering do?

- Suffering strengthens our endurance.
- Suffering silences the enemy’s accusations.
- Suffering gives God glory.
- Suffering makes us more like Jesus.
- Suffering teaches us true dependence.
- Suffering purifies our lives.
- Suffering rebukes our sin.
- Suffering enlarges our heart towards others.

**6. I was a confident man (19:23-27).** But you're still probably wondering how I survived all of my suffering. After all, I had no idea that there was a heavenly "gentleman's agreement" between God and Satan (2:1-6). You are fortunate enough to know that there was a purpose behind my suffering. You have read the first two chapters of Job. I didn't have that luxury. The only way I was able to make it through my severe suffering was utter confidence in God. Job 19:23-27 records my convictions.<sup>10</sup>

In the midst of my anguish, I cried out, "Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! That with an iron stylus [chisel] and lead they were engraved in the rock forever!" (19:23-24) In God's providence, He honored my wish by recording these words as Scripture and making them some of the most well known in the entire Old Testament.

I then confidently said, "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives" (19:25a). A "redeemer" rescues another person by paying a debt.<sup>11</sup> I believed God would rescue me by paying my debt. In the midst of despair, loss, and personal pain I spoke with hope and assurance. I did not look at the past, nor at the present but to the future. My Redeemer lives!

I also expressed belief that at the end of time, my Redeemer would take His stand on the earth (19:25b). I had confidence in God. I knew He was a powerful and sovereign King that would rule over all the earth. But that's not all, I also declared, "Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!" (19:26-27) I acknowledged that I was going to die and my body would face decay, yet I also knew that I would see God with my own eyes.<sup>12</sup> I was counting on being resurrected on the last day because my Redeemer lives. This was my comfort and assurance in the midst of total despair, loss, and grief.

You may be able to relate to my words. If you are honest, you know that one day you will die and your body will see decay. But here is the real question: Do you know that your Redeemer lives and that one day you shall see Him with your own eyes? I could only speak with the eye of faith. Yet, you can speak as someone with a fuller revelation. The New Testament informs us that approximately 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ came as our Redeemer and rescued us from our sins by paying a debt, on the cross, that we could not pay (1 Pet 1:18-19). He then demonstrated that He was God by rising from the dead (Rom 1:4) so that you and I could have eternal life.

Today, you have the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ as your Redeemer. Will you do so? In the midst of all my despair, I had hope in God. Do you? I was discouraged, but I was not defeated. I knew where I was going and I was ready to go. Do you? Take it from someone who knows, you cannot live this life with confidence or hope apart from a relationship with Jesus Christ. Will you trust Him as your Redeemer today? If so, He will freely give you eternal life. He will also provide you with His resurrection power so that you can walk through this life of suffering.

Copyright © 2006 Keith R. Krell. All rights reserved. All Scripture quotations, unless indicated, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, and 1995 by The Lockman Foundation, and are used by permission.

Permissions: Feel free to reproduce and distribute any articles written by Keith Krell, in part or in whole, in any format, provided that you do not alter the wording in any way or charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. It is our desire to spread this information, not protect or restrict it. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: by Keith Krell, Timeless Word Ministries, 2508 State Ave NE Olympia, WA 98506, 360-352-9044, [www.timelessword.com](http://www.timelessword.com)

## Study Questions

1. Job's purpose in life was to experience and endure suffering (James 5:9-10). What purpose does suffering serve in a believer's life? Read Romans 8:17-25; 1 Peter 2:18-25; and 5:9-10. How has suffering served to mature me? What purpose did suffering accomplish in Jesus' life (Hebrews 2:9)?
2. Satan boldly declared that Job served God only because of God's blessings and goodness. Satan assured God that if Job lost his health and material wealth he would turn against God (Job 1-2). How would I respond if I lost all my material wealth and health? What if I lost one of my children or my spouse? Would I be angry with God? Or would I worship God and refuse to blame Him for the tragedies and tests that He permitted (Job 1:21-22)? Reflect on this quote from John Bunyan, "Faith does the same against the devil as unbelief does against God." Do I agree or disagree?
3. While Job never questioned the sovereignty of God (Job 23:13-17), he did wrestle with the justice of God. This was Job's struggle throughout the book. Is this a struggle for me? How would I answer the following question: Where is the rule of God in a universe plagued with evil? Note: Answer this question first to a believer and then to an unbeliever.
4. The reason that Job persevered in his suffering was he feared God (Job 1:1, 8, 20-22; 2:3, 9-10; 28:28; cf. Proverbs 9:10). Do I fear God? If so, how do I know that I fear God? Would those who know me acknowledge I fear God? What does this look like in my life?
5. Job's faith rested in the certainty of his future resurrection (Job 19:23-27). Do I believe in a future physical resurrection? What is my view based upon? Do I believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ? If so, how has my settled confidence in this historical event shaped my life (i.e., attitudes, actions, priorities, commitments)?

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Job is the title of the book in the Hebrew, Greek (Septuagint), Latin (Vulgate), and English Old Testaments.

<sup>2</sup> This expression is based upon James 5:10-11: “As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.”

<sup>3</sup> Wilkinson & Boa acknowledge that both meanings apply to the book. Bruce Wilkinson & Kenneth Boa, *The Wilkinson & Boa Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 144.

<sup>4</sup> For an excellent devotional resource on the life of Job, see the work by Henry Gaiepy, *Portraits of Perseverance: 100 Meditations from the Book of Job* (Wheaton: Victor, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> Most scholars suppose Job lived slightly before or during the days of Abraham, in roughly 2,000 B.C.

<sup>6</sup> Colin S. Smith, *Unlocking the Bible Story* Vol. 2 (Chicago: Moody, 2002), 20.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 123.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, *Unlocking the Bible Story*, 50.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen M. Miller, *How to Get the Bible into My Life* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 137-138.

<sup>10</sup> Job 19:25-27 is a passage notoriously difficult to translate. The term “Redeemer” (*gaal*) is debated. Consequently, many scholars do not believe that Job was speaking of the Messiah. Yet, one point on which everyone can agree is that Job expected to “see God,” for he made the point three times. His references to his skin, flesh, and eyes make that abundantly plain. He even used the emphatic pronoun “I” three times in Job 19:27. It is clear that he expected personally to see God. For arguments pro and con see Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 1998), 433-34. See also Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 240-214; Walter C. Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), Electronic ed.

<sup>11</sup> The one who would stand up to defend Job was called his *goel*, his “kinsman-redeemer” or “vindicator.” This kinsman-redeemer basically functioned as the avenger of the blood of someone unjustly killed (2 Sam 14:11). He had the right to preempt all others in redeeming property left by a kinsman (Ruth 4:4-6). He also recovered stolen items (Num 5:8) or vindicated the rights of the oppressed (Prov 23:10-11). He was one who redeemed, delivered, and liberated. In the Psalms, God was cast into this role of kinsman-redeemer (see Ps 19:14). God was that vindicator or redeemer for Job as well. Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, Electronic ed.

<sup>12</sup> In the NT book of 1 John, the apostle John tells us that when Jesus appears...we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). In the final chapter of Bible, Revelation 22, again John predicts that one day we will see His face (22:4).