

The Book of Job
Part Two
The Pilgrimage through the Valley of Suffering

Psalm 84:5–7 (NKJV)

⁵Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, Whose heart is set on pilgrimage.

⁶As they pass through the Valley of Baca, They make it a spring; The rain also covers it with pools.

⁷They go from strength to strength; Each one appears before God in Zion.

- ***“Blessed is the man whose strength is in You” – The only way we can make it through the valley of suffering is when our strength is in God alone, because all other sources of strength will fail us.***
- ***Whose heart is set on pilgrimage – The Hebrew word for “set on pilgrimage” means “a track or road that is firmed with stones or fill.” When our heart is set on that narrow and firm road, our journey will result in life and victory.***
- ***“As they pass through the Valley of Baca” – The Hebrew word for “the Valley of Baca” means, “the valley of weeping.” Sometimes in our pilgrimage we travel not only through the beautiful mountain ranges of God’s glory, or the lush fields of God’s blessings, but through dry desert valleys of God’s testing.***
- ***“They make it a spring; The rain also covers it with pools.” – As we walk through dry and difficult valleys of suffering something wonderful happens. Those dry and barren places in our lives become filled with springs of water enriched by the rains from Heaven. They become places of riches, life, and abundant fruitfulness.***
- ***“They go from strength to strength” – As we walk with the Lord through the Valley of Baca, the valley of tears, something even more marvelous happens. We grow stronger in our faith and experience a deeper relationship with Christ.***
- ***“Each one appears before God in Zion” – The end of this journey leads us into the very presence of God Himself where we will appear before Him in glory.***
- ***“As they pass through the Valley of Baca, They make it a spring; The rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength” - The word that punctuates this journey through the valley of tears is the word “they.” Although we may walk through times of suffering, we are not alone. God has placed us in***

His Body where we can comfort and encourage each other. It is important that through difficult and painful times we do not isolate ourselves, but reach out to our brothers and sisters to receive comfort, and that we comfort others through their times of difficulty.

- **“Each one appears before God in Zion”** –*At the end of this earthly journey, each of us will stand before Jesus and be held accountable for how we lived our lives.*
- *That is why Galatians 6:2 says “bear one another’s burdens” as we walk together through this life sharing our joys and sorrows. However, Galatians 6:5 says “each one shall bear his own load” since we ultimately will be responsible before Jesus for how we lived our lives.*

Psalm 34:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all. – *This verse beautifully summarizes the Book of Job.*

- *The Book of Job is thought to be the earliest book of the Bible, predating even Abraham.*
- *It is the first of five poetic books of the Bible: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.*
- *The Jews sometimes call these five books “the Wisdom Books,” because they condense the deep wisdom of God into concise, powerful statements.*
- *Poetry is used to convey strong emotions of both joy and sorrow, and in the case of Job, primarily great sorrow.*
- *The introduction and the conclusion of the Book of Job are in prose, but the main body of the book, the dialogue, is in the form of poetry.*
- *The Book of Job deals head on with the question, “Why do the righteous suffer?”*
- *Before we examine the story of Job’s suffering, we need to see suffering in a larger context. We may suffer for many reasons:*

- *Because of our own wrong choices or actions.*
- *Because of the sinful choices or actions of other people.*
- *Because we live in a fallen world.*
- *God wants to do a work in our life, and sometimes He needs to take drastic action to get our attention.*
- *The Book of Job offers another reason for suffering—because of our righteousness. Jesus confirmed this reason in the beatitudes. (Matthew 5:11). Righteousness as a reason for suffering is not restricted to the Old Testament.*
- *While many books in the Bible deal with the question of suffering, the Book of Job is the only book dedicated specifically to this subject. Because of the picture it paints, some have tried to dismiss the relevance of this book in regard to New Testament Believers.*
- *Their main line of reasoning to why they say the Book of Job is no longer relevant to our understanding of suffering is because it is found in the Old Testament. They point to Apostle Paul who clearly taught that we are no longer under the Law.*
- *Apostle Paul was not discounting the value or authority of what we call the Old Testament. He addressed the fact that we are no longer under the Levitical Laws or the Covenant God made with Israel.*
- *The Book of Job transcends far beyond those under the Law, since the story of Job took place before God brought forth the nation of Israel or the Law. This book addresses the universal question of why the righteous suffer.*
- *If one discounts the important or relevance of the truths taught in the Book of Job in regards to suffering, then one must also discount the importance and the truths that the New Testament teaches us from Abraham's life regarding faith.*
- *The New Testament is the key that unlocks the treasures and mysteries found in the Old Testament, and the Old Testament brings clarity and depth to the New Testament.*
- *Without the Book of Job a key understanding of suffering would be woefully lacking.*

Job 1:1 (NKJV)

¹There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.

- *The story begins with a description of Job as a man who is blameless and upright, who seeks God and flees from evil.*
- *When the Bible describes Job as “blameless” the Hebrew word means “complete, perfect, healthy, guiltless, upright, honest.” This does not mean Job never sinned, it means he knew how to deal with sin.*
- *Job was a man who feared God, and dealt with every sin by immediately coming to God for forgiveness and cleansing. He understood the importance of the blood sacrifice which was a prophetic act looking forward to what the Messiah would fulfill.*

Job 1:6–11 (NKJV)

⁶Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

⁷And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” So Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.”

⁸Then 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?”

- **Then the Lord said to Satan. “Have you considered My servant Job” – *The first thing to understand from the Book of Job is that the trial that Job was about to go through was initiated by God and not Satan!***
- ***God drew Job to Satan’s attention—not the other way around.***
- ***God described Job with great accolades and praise, “there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and shuns evil.”***
- ***What was the reason for Job’s suffering?***
- ***“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.” – Suffering is not always caused by sin, sometimes it is the result of righteousness.***
- ***Job’s righteousness is head and shoulders above many in the Bible. He had an uncommon holiness.***

- *The Book of Job shows us that there are deeper reasons for suffering than sin alone.*
- *The source of Job's sufferings were not rooted in the malice of Satan, but because God had a higher purpose for Job.*
- *Job's sufferings encompassed every possible area of his soul and body from emotional, to mental, and physical. Every area of his life was devastated.*
- *He suffered the loss of his wealth and possessions. He suffered the loss of his children.*
- *He suffered the loss of his health and was afflicted with the most painful disease.*
- *He was afflicted by a wife who despised his sufferings and even goaded him on to commit suicide.*
- *He was afflicted by his friends who mercilessly accused him of being an evildoer. He was afflicted by the gossip of those around him who mocked his sufferings.*

Job 3:25 (NKJV)

²⁵For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, And what I dreaded has happened to me.

- *Some have quoted Job 3:25 to explain why Job experienced this terrible suffering and loss, by saying that because of fear and unbelief a door was opened for Satan to attack him.*
- *However, God says that Job was blameless and upright and no one was like him on the earth.*
- *Those who try to find a reason for Job's suffering and sickness have the same theology as Job's three friends. They do not believe that living a righteous life can sometimes result in suffering.*

1 Corinthians 11:29–30 (NKJV)

²⁹For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

³⁰For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

- *We see that sin and disobedience can open the door to sickness, suffering, and even death.*

John 5:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

- *Here is an example of a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years whom Jesus healed. Jesus clearly indicates his sickness was the result of sin.*

John 9:1–3 (NKJV)

¹Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.

²And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

³Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

- *Here is an example of a sickness that was not caused by anyone's personal sin.*
- *Because we live in a fallen world, sickness and suffering are part of this life and not every sickness is caused by personal sin.*
- *God wants to invade those situations to show Himself strong, to bring glory to His name, and draw people to salvation.*
- *Great tragedies occur that are not a result of personal sin, but God is seeking for His people to step in and to be instant in prayer and good works to manifest His glory.*

Job 1:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"

¹⁰Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

¹¹But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

- **“Does Job fear God for nothing?” – *It is interesting that Satan does not understand anything about love or selflessness. Satan is the epitome of selfishness and hate, so he can only conceive that people serve God with a self-seeking attitude.***

Job 1:12 (NKJV)

¹²And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

- *A very important truth is that Satan cannot do anything to Believers unless God grants him permission.*
- *Some Believers mistakenly think that if we begin to seek God or do great things for God, then Satan will become really angry and attack us.*
- *The truth is that Satan is powerless to do anything against us without God’s permission, and if God allows him, then God has a purpose to bring glory to His name.*

Job 1:20–22 (NKJV)

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

²¹And 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.”

²²In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

- **Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped.” - *After Job received the devastating news of the death of his children, the death of his servants, and the loss of all his wealth, he reacted in the most godly way—he fell down and worshiped God.***
- **“Blessed be the name of the LORD.” - *Job’s response to his loss was breathtaking as he blessed God in the midst of the turmoil and pain at the loss of his children and possessions.***
- **“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked shall I return there.” – *In the midst of all his losses, Job recognized that all the benefits of this life are temporary and in the end they will be left behind.***

- **“The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away” – *Although Job’s heart was right and his response amazing, this one statement indicates a misconception of what had just happened. His lack of understanding would later return to ensnare him.***
- ***Job, not out of bitterness or resentment, but simply not understanding the spiritual realm, attributed the calamity that had befallen him as coming directly from God’s hand.***

Job 2:1–6 (NKJV)

¹Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

²And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.”

³Then 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 incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.”

- **“Have you considered My servant Job” – *Again, we see that it was God who brought Job to Satan’s attention, and not Satan bringing Job to God’s attention.***
- ***There is only one reason that Job’s suffering and trial not only continued, but greatly intensified; Job continued to respond with a heart that was blameless and upright. He still feared God and shunned evil.***
- ***If Job had cursed God then he would have failed and there would have been no need for the suffering to intensify.***
- ***Here we see exactly the opposite of what some would think. It was actually Job’s righteous response that caused him to experience more calamities.***
- ***Job’s trial would have ended if he just had turned away from God. Similarly, those who are persecuted for Christ have only to renounce their faith in Christ and they will be set free.***

- *Richard Wurmbrand once said that what held him in the depths of the communist prisons of Romania for more than twelve years were not the steel bars or the concrete walls, but a single sheet of paper. All he had to do was renounce his faith in Christ and reveal the names of Christians in the underground church.*

⁴So Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.

⁵But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!”

⁶And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.”

- *Again, we see that Satan had to ask permission to afflict Job, and again God placed a very precise limitation on what Satan could do.*
- *A very important question we must answer to understand the suffering of the righteous is, “What is the purpose of all of this suffering?”*
- *Some have mistakenly thought that this was a match between God and Satan and God was going to prove that His servant Job would remain faithful even in the face of tremendous suffering.*
- *To think that God was trying to prove something to Satan and that Job was simply a pawn in this game, trivializes suffering and indicates a total misunderstanding of the heart and love of God.*
- *God wasn’t motivated to prove Satan wrong at the expense of Job. He wanted to bless Job and grant Job the desires of his heart.*
- *If this was a contest for God to prove Satan wrong and God right, then at the end of the story we would see God confronting Satan to prove that Job had remained faithful and did not curse God.*
- *However, Satan is never heard from again after the second chapter.*
- *God was using Satan to accomplish a much higher purpose in Job’s life.*
- *God was actually using Satan as a pawn to bring forth His purposes and glory in Job’s life!*

Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

²⁰But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

- *Joseph's brothers' hearts were motivated with envy and hatred, and God allowed them to wrong Joseph. The ultimate result was that God used those very afflictions to do such a deep work in Joseph's heart that God was able to exalt him to be the ruler of Egypt and the saviour of Israel.*
- *God wanted to bless Job and give him the desires of his heart.*
- *What was Job's greatest desire?*
- *I believe the most important thing Job wanted was to know God more intimately and to deepen his love for Him.*
- *God responded to Job's faithfulness and love for Him by taking Him through the necessary process for that to become a reality.*
- *A quote from an imprisoned Chinese pastor, "Before prison, we heard about God. But in prison, we experienced God."*
- *There was something God revealed to Job through his time of trouble that was so precious that it transformed Job's relationship with God to such an extent that at the end of the book Job said, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You." Job 42:5 (NKJV)*
- *Even in the midst of Job's sufferings and agony come amazing statements of faith, insight, and hope. "But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold." Job 23:10 (NKJV)*

Ezekiel 14:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness," says the Lord GOD.

- *Job's righteousness and his relationship with God stand out in Scripture as a beacon of light for us to guide our relationship with God.*

James 5:10–11 (NKJV)

¹⁰My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

¹¹Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

- “Take the prophets ... as an example of suffering and patience” – *Another purpose of the prophets who experienced suffering was that they are an example to us. When we encounter times of testing and suffering, we will not lose heart, but press into Christ.*
- “Indeed we count them blessed who endure” – *There is a great blessing in enduring hardship.*
- *Job is the earliest recorded book in the Bible dealing with suffering for righteousness sake. His suffering was not just for his benefit, but for ours as he becomes our example.*
- “You have heard of the perseverance of Job” - *Job was a pioneer of faith. He had no example to follow and God used him to reveal to us a greater purpose for encountering adversity so we can have hope.*
- *Abraham would have had the example of Job’s life to help him through his times of testing and disappointments.*
- *As David fled from King Saul, he would have the example of Job and Abraham to build up his faith and understanding.*
- *We have all of Scripture to draw from as we encounter different experiences in this life—whether sweet or painful.*
- “that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful” – *From the story of Job we can learn that even in our darkest times when we feel we are failing, God is extending His compassion and mercy.*

Romans 8:28–29 (NKJV)

²⁸And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

- *If we follow the principle of Romans 8:28 we will experience the fulfillment of Romans 8:29.*
- *“we know that all things work together for good” – This doesn’t mean all things are good. Some things in our lives are painful and terrible. God is able to take every element in our lives, both the joyful ones and the tragic ones, and weave them together into the most glorious tapestry.*
- *“for those who are loving God and called according to His purpose” – However, for the promise of verse 28 to be activated in our lives we must fulfill the two requirements which are to love God and to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit into His purposes.*
- *What is the fulfillment of Romans 8:29? That we would “be conformed to the image of His Son.”*
- *There is no greater glory for God, or joy for us, than for us to become just like Jesus Christ, our Saviour.*
- *There was only one person on the face of the earth at that time that God could find who loved Him enough, and had sufficient faith to go through the process for God’s glory to be revealed, and that was Job.*
- *2 Chronicles 16:9 (NKJV) paints a beautiful picture of how the heart of God yearns to find those who are so committed to Him that He can reveal His glory through them, “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.”*
- *Job was such a man whose heart was right before God and God could show Himself strong.*
- *In the midst of studying Job’s sufferings we can lose perspective of the big picture of Job’s life.*

- *Some see Job's life as one of continual suffering, but in reality during most of his life he experienced the blessings of God, and after the trial God poured out a double portion of His blessings.*
- *Job's suffering lasted perhaps a few weeks or possibly a couple of months at the most.*
- *Let us see Job not as "the suffering Job," but what his life became "the blessed Job."*

2 Corinthians 4:17 (NKJV)

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

- *Let not the devil rob us of our joy and faith in Christ by focusing on things in our lives that maybe unpleasant or painful, but on Christ and His glory.*
- *Next week we are going to look at the very specific purposes God accomplished through Job's pilgrimage through the valley of suffering.*