
MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

No. 16

September 12, 2024

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A Lesson from Job

The book of Job addresses the uncertainties of why God allows bad things to happen to good people and raises the question of why God would allow Satan to have his way. Job is a man that becomes an example of faith from a duel between God and Satan. In a meeting of the heavenly beings, God bragged about Job being the finest person on earth. Satan argued that Job's righteousness was only due to God's blessings. If you transplant Job into a barren wasteland you will see a different kind of man. God gave Satan permission to do anything to Job that he wanted to do as long as he did not kill him. In one day, raiders stole all of Job's oxen and donkeys, and killed his farmhands. Fire destroyed all of his sheep and shepherds. More raiders stole all of his camels and killed the herders. By the end of the day a windstorm came along blew down his house and killed all of his children.

The question is not whether or not God allows fate, the answer is given to us here in Job, God allows Satan to put Job to the test. There is a whole section of theology called theodicy that addresses why a loving and caring God allows human suffering.

God has been present with humans from the very beginning. Job, his wife, and his friends would have all been familiar with the famous biblical lessons about God's divine interaction with humanity. They know about the Garden of Eden, the tower of Babel, the great Flood, deliverance from Egypt, guidance in the wilderness, and the conquest of Canaan. It was a common belief in ancient times that people were blessed because God rewarded them for living a good life and suffered because God was punishing them for some sin. If you suffered any kind of setback in life it was thought to be due to sin. If you received some kind of benefit it was thought as a blessing from God for good behavior. This is skewed theology that is based on pre-existing assumptions instead of existing facts. The whole point of Job's story is to refute the skewed theology that assumes all suffering is punishment from God.

The overall lesson is of Job is the problem of assuming that all suffering is a punishment from God. Job has to go through suffering to understand why God would allow it. He eventually realizes that is foolish to question God instead of trusting in God's infinite wisdom. God can actually use suffering to help the one that is suffering and others. Let's take Jesus for example. He endured the absolute worst of human suffering. Now when we suffer, we can look at God as being one with us. God came to give us the word, God came to get us back on track, and God came to suffer with us. Instead of questioning why God's way isn't more satisfactory to us, we are to accept God's way of handling suffering.

Job realizes his own self righteousness, anger, resentment and repents. God then turns attention toward the friends of Job and accuses them of spreading lies about God's nature which was due to their own self righteous indignation. The Lord then orders punitive damages for emotional distress and they are ordered to give Job a gold ring and some money. Then God blesses rest of Job's life.

Thank you,

George