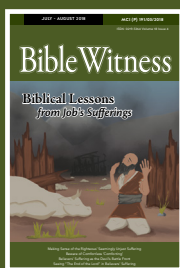


# Bible Witness

## **Biblical Lessons** *from Job's Sufferings*



Making Sense of the Righteous' Seemingly Unjust Suffering  
Beware of Comfortless 'Comforting'  
Believers' Suffering as the Devil's Battle Front  
Seeing "The End of the Lord" in Believers' Suffering



**Editor**

Prabhudas Koshy

**Assistant Editor**

Ho Kee How

**Publishing & Circulation**

**Co-ordinator**

Lok Kwok Wah

**Technical Editors**

Jenny Lok, Lok Kwok Wah,  
Mah Lean Choo

**Layout & Illustrations**

Matthew Peh

**Children's Page Illustration**

Andronicus Koshy

**Publisher**

Bible Witness Media Ministry of  
Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church  
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**Printer**

Ee Tai Press Pte Ltd

**Temporary Mailing Address**

Singapore Post Centre P.O. Box 1124  
Singapore 914038

**E-mail:** [bwmm.gbpc@gmail.com](mailto:bwmm.gbpc@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.biblewitness.com](http://www.biblewitness.com)



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# EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

Many preachers and churches offer prosperity and healing to those who would put their trust in Jesus. They claim that those who have genuine, strong faith in Christ will be free of all sufferings. Who does not know that such a claim is contrary to the reality experienced by genuine Christians?

Did Jesus promise to all His followers that they will have a trouble-free life? Consider the following Scriptural admonitions concerning believers and their suffering:

- “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake” (Matthew 10:22).
- “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24; cf. Luke 14:27).
- “I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19).
- “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33).
- “... that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).
- “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).
- “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5).
- “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings” (1 Peter 4:13).

These are but just a few of the many Scripture portions which overwhelmingly advise Christians that they must endure their sufferings in this hostile world. This world is a battleground for Christians. However, God will use their hardships for His purposes concerning their sanctification, the verification of their faith, the accomplishment of divine purposes through their hardships, etc.

Are you wrestling with suffering? Job, the ancient saint of God who suffered much, can provide you with very helpful perspectives concerning your suffering. The articles in this issue of Bible Witness are based on the book of Job. We humbly pray that they will provide the biblical understanding that you need concerning the suffering of God's saints. May the Lord be pleased to use the counsels within this magazine to comfort and strengthen you.

Finally, I would like to express heartfelt thanks to those who have sent financial support for the Building Fund of Gethsemane B-P Church. Presently, we are awaiting the necessary permits before we finalise the procurement of the new building. Please continue to remember us in your prayers.

Heartily in Christ's service,  
Editor

# Making Sense of the Righteous' Seemingly Unjust Suffering

*Ho Kee How*

## **The Universality of Suffering**

Since time immemorial, finite men have tried to understand the reasons for suffering and grief. The universality of suffering, which is inflicted upon both the righteous and the unrighteous, drives home to us the stark truth that we live in a fallen world. The moment sin entered into the picture (via Adam's original sin, he being the federal head of the human race), what was originally created as "very good" by God (Genesis 1:31) has since been turned into a cursed arena of "thorns and thistles", subject to the bondage of corruption and a wretched existence of "sorrow and sweat" (cf. Genesis 3:17-19), mingled with infirmities and death. So much so that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans 8:22). And clearly intimated in that phrase "groaneth and travaileth in pain" is the indisputable fact that part of the "package" of consequences, which comes with a fallen and corrupt world, is that oft-observed and ever-present phenomenon called "human suffering".

The biblically instructed Christian knows that suffering is the direct result of man's fall into sin. He also knows in the light of Scripture that God allows natural disasters (such as earthquakes, floods, hailstorms), and biological afflictions (like plagues and sicknesses), as well as manifestations of man's wrath (like wars) to run their course, thereby inflicting untold suffering, as punishment of men's rebellion and evil ways. This is God's punitive will at work. He even accepts that God's people on this side of heaven do get tempted and can become drawn away of their own lusts, and get enticed and fall into sin. And since "for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6), God's children will have to suffer and "endure chastening", as part of God's chastitive will for His children.

Undeniably, and justly so, suffering has to be an immutable part and parcel of this fallen universe, or else "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, ... the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

## Coming to Terms with the Righteous Suffering

But what the conscientious Christian may have difficulty grappling with is this: How can a perfect God who is “infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His ... justice (and) goodness ...” (Westminster Shorter Catechism question 4), among His other attributes, allow the righteous to suffer so much, and sometimes unfathomably more so than the unrighteous? To use a modern cliché, “why does the good and just God allow evil things to happen to good people while many wicked seem to have it good in life?” It makes “no judicial sense” for the righteous to suffer in spite of their fear of God and departure from evil. Neither does it seem to pay to walk in the paths of righteousness, having denied the indulgence of their flesh and mind, and even deferring the gratification of their wants.

### Beware of Cold Logic

Alas, often this suffering may go beyond the immediate physical and emotional pain or loss, with the accompanying hurt “descending” into the inner recesses of our hearts, where uneasy questions lurk. The resultant anguish and disquiet can be rather disconcerting. Needless to say, the inner theological turmoil reaches its most acute when the truly righteous suffer horrendously and most undeservedly. And here we have to be careful not to become unwitting victims of our humanistic cold logic in trying to put a name to every dilemma and fit any perplexity into our so-called “theological mould”. Or else we would end up like those agnostics,

who think of God as a “hands-off” God with limited power who could only watch helplessly when evil things happen.

Now, when we think of good men suffering, one of the classic examples and most ready characters that spring to mind is that enduring and endearing fatherly figure, whom the biblical reader has come to know as the proverbially patient Job. Job, as we read from the biblical account, was a “perfect and upright” man who “feared God, and eschewed evil” (Job 1:1), and over time became “the greatest of all the men of the east” (Job 1:3). Thus, what a horrendous shock and trauma it must have been to the uninitiated when Job not only suffered immense physical, material and familial loss, but was also struck down with oozing boils, causing him excruciating pain (cf. Job 1-2). It is doubtful whether any other human being (other than the Lord Jesus Christ) had suffered more than this patriarch. From a dignified-looking noble to an unrecognisably emaciated vagabond-like man lying among the ashes! No wonder his three friends were so revulsed that they called into question his integrity and made a thinly-veiled reference to him living a double life – putting up a respectable religious front in the eyes of men but regarding iniquity in the heart and harbouring secret sins which God was judging. In all these, he sinned not with his mouth. What patience!

### God's Permissive Will

This seemingly unjust suffering of the righteous Job should be seen in the light of the permissive will of God. “Since

Satan's accusation insinuated that God's servant loved Him because of material gains, God permitted Satan to take away all his possessions ... Job underwent the test and came out with flying colours ... Now, when God permitted Satan to bring misery to Job, He purposely permitted from His omnipotence. He did not permit because He was too weak" (Timothy Tow). Through it all, Job could still utter that sublime declaration of faith: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25-26). That shows his confidence in God's "future vindication of his cause" (Roy Zuck). Thus, in God's permissive will, Satan accused and challenged, but was defeated by Job's refusal to renounce his faith.

Dear suffering Christian, are you in the midst of some inexplicable trial though you know in your heart you are walking right with God? Look no further than Job. By "holding fast your integrity" like Job in the face of seemingly unjust sufferings, not only are you saying God knows what He is doing, you are actually holding high the name and honour of the sovereign God (cf. Job 2:3).

## **Suffering Peculiar to God's People**

Thus, contrary to the agnostics' irreverent charge of a helpless God, God is not only infinitely, eternally and unchangeably just and good, but He is also "infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His ... power"

(Westminster Shorter Catechism question 4). In other words, He is omnipotent. God is sovereign in all circumstances, even in the area of suffering peculiar to God's people. In fact, "The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Proverbs 16:4). And inherent in "the day of evil" are unwelcome and unprovoked troubles and sufferings for God's people.

### *Suffering as Spiritual Exercise and Discipline*

Of course, the first kind of suffering, which has been mentioned earlier, is for chastening purposes. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:11). Such chastitive suffering is designed to help God's children combat sin. Closely related to this is the suffering that God Himself metes out, which has to do with our being exercised and disciplined. Suffering worketh patience. The perseverance of our faith is developed (and simultaneously demonstrated) by the testing of suffering, and in the process, spiritual character is moulded. Very often, resilient spiritual character is forged in the "crucible" of suffering. Remember how Jesus, as a man, humbled Himself and "learned ... obedience by the things which he suffered"? Thus, "being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). If Jesus, the perfect Man, had to go through suffering peculiar to God's people, we should not expect to be exempted.

Indeed, Scripture makes it clear that is the lot of His righteous people on earth: “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Philippians 1:29). We must brace ourselves also for the suffering that stems from opposition and persecution just because we are God’s people. “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; ... if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (1 Peter 4:14, 16). Knowing that we live in a godless (oftentimes anti-God) world, where there is a constant spiritual war going on (cf. Ephesians 6:10-13), let us learn what it means to be “more than conquerors” (Romans 8:37) in the context of suffering. A settled and biblical perspective of suffering peculiar to God’s people will enable the suffering righteous to “commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (1 Peter 4:19). Such peculiar sufferings are also the precursor to wonderful experiences of the Lord’s grace. Did not Paul exhort us: “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him (Christ)” (2 Timothy 2:12a)?

### *Christian Leadership Forged in Suffering*

Suffering not only toughens God’s people, it is also a good gauge of the calibre of leaders of God’s people. In many secular societies, the leaders are so high above and removed from the people they lead, that efforts are made to shield them from the troubles of the people in the lower rung. The opposite is true of God’s servants, as reflected in Apostle Paul’s injunction to

young Pastor Timothy: “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions” (2 Timothy 4:5a). Here it is often the leaders who are called to endure and suffer the most. “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes” (2 Timothy 2:10a), Paul affirmed. A servant cannot be higher than his master. And we serve a Master who “also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21). The pattern is thus already established, and a path of sacrifice and (yes, you guess it) suffering is intimated.

Besides, it is a well-known fact that under dictatorial regimes, pastors and church leaders are the ones most frequently imprisoned and harmed bodily. Genuinely-called Christian leaders desire rather to endure sufferings on behalf of their flocks, rejoicing like Paul “in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church” (Colossians 1:24). The link is obvious. The more the leaders are afflicted for the ministry and kingdom’s sake, the more Christ’s life flows through them to the church. There is simply no substitute. Authentic Christian leadership cannot be taught in any theological seminary or bible college; it is usually moulded in the “school of tears” and in the “fires of suffering”. Such is the suffering peculiar to leaders of God’s people.

## **Conclusion**

Now, in trying to make sense of the seemingly unjust suffering of the righteous,

we must not presume upon ourselves the right to know all the answers to all the questions that life's problems throw at us. Often it is a reflection of our spiritual calibre to admit that "we are perplexed, but not in despair" (2 Corinthians 4:8b). We must learn to be content with having to live with life's anomalies and paradoxes, and accept the fact that in God's sovereignty, sometimes there are things we cannot comprehend – the "secret things" still "belong unto the LORD our God" (cf. Deuteronomy 29:29a). Often we have to be content merely to realise what the answers are not; that's faith. Faith is trusting God even when we cannot see. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). So, let the sovereign God be God, and when we are willing not to understand, then perhaps we will begin to understand, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

This writer can do no better, in conclusion, than to quote from the infallible and inerrant words of Scripture: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). "For our light affliction (which is the case when viewed from eternity's perspective), which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17). In the meantime while on this side of heaven, may the suffering righteous (like Job before them) bow to the sovereign will of God, and be able to say (come what may): "But he (God) knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10; cf. 1 Peter 1:6-7). Amen.



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God willing, we will have a new broadcast schedule before 2019. Please continue to pray for the BWWR ministry as we endeavour to improve our broadcast.





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# Beware of Comfortless 'Comforting'

(Job 2:11-13)

*Ho Kee How*

It probably didn't take us long to realise that even after becoming a Christian, we are not exempt from troubles and sufferings. Indeed, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1), as the wise saint Job had observed. Even Jesus Himself said that "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33b). Interestingly, the Greek word for "tribulation" denotes being squeezed, pressured, compressed. This implies that Christians will have to endure troubles from "outside agents", even though that is through no fault of theirs nor a consequence arising from their sin. As saints of God, we are further exhorted to "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15), intimating that there will be moments of ups and downs in a believer's life.

The aforementioned Scripture verses, among other things, point to the fact that there will be times when fellow Christians, in their dire afflictions, will be in need of comforting. When such a situation arises, it is our Christian duty to avail ourselves to minister in such a way as to bring real comfort to such. "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). It goes without

saying that to be a good comforter, one cannot be too self-righteous and unfeeling (however well-intentioned one may be), like the three friends of Job. Rather, as fellow partakers of "the fellowship of his (Christ's) sufferings" (cf. Philippians 3:10), we must be able to empathise and sympathise with the suffering, especially them who "are in heaviness through manifold temptations", their faith being, as it were, "tried with fire" (cf. 1 Peter 1:6-7). Truly, it takes more than just good intentions and a strong resolve to be a good comforter. With Job's afflictions and sufferings as backdrop, we shall draw some observations and instructions from the passage in Job 2:11-13, regarding pitfalls to avoid in comforting one another.

## **Admirable Resolution to Comfort [v. 11]**

In this verse, Job 2:11, we are impressed by the prompt journeying of three good friends from afar upon hearing news of the heart-rending plight of their highly-regarded friend Job. They had heard of how all of Job's thousands of sheep and camels, and hundreds of oxen and asses had been forcibly stolen by merciless bandits, or slain as a result of natural disaster (cf. Job 1:14-17); of how all his ten children had

been crushed to death in a collapsed house caused by a whirlwind (cf. Job 1:18-19); and above all, of how he had been afflicted with a terrible skin disease, resulting in him being in excruciating pain and agony, and (in the eyes of all and sundry) dying a slow painful death, as it were (cf. Job 2:7-8). So, “when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place”.

While these three friends must be residing in close proximity to one another for them to be able to communicate, confer and concur upon an appointed course of action (given the lack of advanced technology in those days), they were nonetheless members of different, distinct communities living in separate districts. This we can infer from the racial identity attached to each of their names – the Temanite (referring to Eliphaz), the Shuhite (that is, Bildad), and the Naamathite (namely Zophar). This speaks volumes of Job’s immense influence and stature in the land of Uz. Though he was a very wealthy and prominent man in society, being “the greatest of all the men of the east” (Job 1:3b), Job’s graciousness was manifested in his interactions with all and sundry. He could count among his close friends, people of different tribes and people-groups. Hence, it was not surprising to see the affinity and high regard these three friends had for the man Job.

The next thing that strikes us was the three friends’ unanimous, express resolve and commendable, single-minded intent to comfort their suffering good

old friend – itself a rarity in these days of “sunshine acquaintance” and “fair-weather friendship”. They appeared to be men of action, men of decisiveness, “for they had made an appointment together”. They seemed to know their mission. Job had been a kind, magnanimous man, with many having been beneficiaries of his love and generosity (cf. Job 29:12-16; 31:16-21). Now that he had suffered a reverse in fortune, these three friends felt it their duty to come alongside him “to mourn with him” (in his bereavement, for he had lost all his ten children in a single day) and “to comfort him” (in his loss, for his abundant possessions had all been taken away). They were pretty sure their presence and company would be appreciated by Job, and quietly confident that their words could somehow lift up the distraught man’s spirits. It should be no problem – all in a day’s work, they thought. After all, between the three of them (who were likely leaders of their respective communities), they probably would have had many years of experience counselling the “down-and-outs”!

## **Aghast Revulsion from Comforting [v. 12]**

But nothing in their experience could have prepared them for the unimaginable sight that met their eyes. They had the shock of their lives! We read in the verse, Job 2:12, that they were still some distance away from Job’s house when they caught sight of a dirty-looking vagabond-like man lying amidst a heap of ashes, who looked so disfigured and emaciated that they

could hardly recognise him. What a far cry from the properly-groomed, well-dressed and dignified-looking Job when they last saw him! They had never seen Job in this pathetic, pitiful state before. To these well-cultured friends, it must have been a most revolting sight!

Their strong feelings of revulsion were manifested by their “dramatic” reactions. Upon seeing Job from “afar off”, they let loose a string of intense consecutive actions:

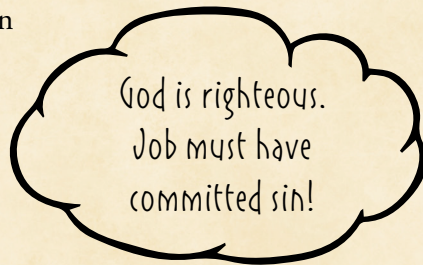
- “They lifted up their voice” – This speaks of an uncontrollable surge of emotion prodding them to raise their voice to a higher decibel and pitch.
- “And (they) wept” – The verb used here is that of a loud, anguished bawling to express deep sorrow or grief.
- “And they rent every one his mantle” – This signifies a sharp and forceful tearing of their outer garment in distress, usually accompanied by gnashing of teeth.
- “And (they) sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven” – This is akin to an ultimate gesture of utter despair and helplessness.

Their reactions seemed to suggest that these so-called comforters were in need of comfort themselves! Perhaps they were offended by what they saw; in any case, they could not accept the reality before their eyes. To them, no righteous man would

suffer such an undignified fate, unless he was condemned by God and facing divine judgment. Undeniably, their friend’s predicament could not square with their preconceived theological specifications and their self-opinionated perception of respectable spirituality. Such open shame and disgraceful scene caused them to revolt from doing any comforting!

## Appalling Refusal to Comfort [v. 13]

As if that wasn’t bad enough, the three friends’ inability (or more likely, unwillingness) to speak a single word of comfort for an unnerving long stretch of time (one whole week!), must have been excruciatingly torturous for Job. The verse, Job 2:13, tells us that “they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him”. It looks like their unspoken rigid conviction that “God (being the Judge of all the earth) will always punish an evil man and bless a good man” would not



allow their conscience to permit them to speak words of comfort to an “apparently sinning” soul. Their resultant prolonged silence was contradictory and intolerable, to say the least, given the original objective of their visit. Their non-action and non-speech belied their innermost suspicion of Job living a double life – one of apparent righteousness in the eyes of men, but a hidden sinful life which was being dealt with by God’s retribution. This became an added pain to Job’s already traumatic plight and no small inner turmoil!

These three friends had known Job long enough in earlier days to be sufficiently aware of his integrity and total commitment to God and His righteous ways. Their problem was that they had become victims of their “textbook theology” and cold logic in writing Job off. They were unfeeling in their self-righteous and over-confident decisiveness to put a name to every dilemma. They showed a lack of discernment and compassion in their compulsive adherence to fitting any perplexity into their preconceived “theological mould”. To these “three wise men”, there is no such thing as “an innocent who suffers unjustly”. They couldn’t believe that Job did not (to some degree) deserve this torment of his, essentially revealing their undisguised refusal to comfort a (in their misguided minds) still sinning, unrepentant soul!

## Conclusion

Oh, what a comedy (or rather, tragedy) of errors! From concerned counsellors to

bigoted, narrow-minded critics! Ironically, these zealous, well-intentioned counsellors, instead of fulfilling their original purpose of ministering true comfort to an acutely suffering saint, ended up acting like “devouring lions” picking at their helpless prey. They became unwitting tools of that “roaring lion, (called Satan, who) walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Beware of comfortless “comforting”, nay heartless berating! Oh, what “miserable comforters” (cf. Job 16:2) we all can end up to be, if we be too quick to judge, and fail to empathise and sympathise with the suffering!

Contrast these “miserable comforters” with “what a Friend we have in Jesus, (who takes) all our sins and griefs to bear”. The Son of God became a man to suffer as a man, being “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3a). He not only qualifies as our Saviour, but also as “a merciful and faithful high priest” who can “be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; ... (being) in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). May God deliver us from the folly of misjudging our suffering, needy fellow Christians and failing to assuage their grief with our lack of tenderness of spirit. Rather, look to the example of our true Comforter, who “in that he himself hath suffered being tempted (or tried), ... is able to succour (i.e. bring relief to and comfort) them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18), and is therefore able to empathise with suffering saints perfectly. Amen.



# Believers' Suffering as the Devil's Battle Front

*Prabhudas Koshy*

Apart from God and Job, the one major character in the first two chapters of the Book of Job is, undeniably, Satan. In these first two chapters alone, Satan is referred to some 13 times. Thus, Christians cannot just pass over this character. We need to take a good look at this character and the way he functions.

The name “Satan” in Hebrew means “adversary”. He is God’s enemy, as well as the enemy of God’s people. He is the unceasing, untiring adversary of both God and man. His hatred towards God knows no bounds. He has no regard for God and would throw any challenge at Him, as demonstrated in his temptation of Christ in the wilderness (cf. Matthew 4:1-11). That is how cunning and wicked this adversary is. He would go against God to the very end, as is clearly seen even at the end of Christ’s millennial reign on earth, when the Lord would chain him and cast him into the eternal lake of fire (Revelation 20:7-10). Meanwhile, there is a cosmic battle (of cosmic proportions) being waged by Satan against God, whereby believers often get “caught in the crossfire” (cf. Job 1:8-19)!

So, whether we understand it or not, we are all caught up in this great battle that the devil is waging against God. Yet God is not a helpless onlooker who could only stand idly by and watch as events unfold. He is actively involved in defending, protecting and guiding us in the midst of this terrible battle. No evil (whether natural or man-made or satanic) may encroach upon us outside of His jurisdiction (cf. Job 1:12).

## **Be Not Ignorant of the Devil's Devices**

Be that as it may, the devil is constantly trying his level best to deal a “knockout blow” to believers that would keep them downcast and in deep despair, and ultimately instigate them to deny God’s sovereignty (cf. Job 1:11b; 2:5b). As the apostle Paul warns us, we must not be “ignorant of his devices”, lest “Satan should get an advantage of us” (2 Corinthians 2:11). From the episode of Job’s sufferings, we see in a very clear manner how the devil uses us as his “arena” in his battle against God. One of his most diabolical and favourite tactics is to turn the ones whom

God has created in His own image (even mankind) against Him. Oh, we must not be ignorant of this cunning device of the devil, which he tried viciously against Job! From our biblical understanding of the Book of Job, the devil is trying to challenge the sovereignty of God over Job's life. This should not surprise us as he has always been a "challenger" and usurper since time immemorial, soon after he was created. He had been an angelic being of heaven, one of God's created angels; in fact, he was the chief of the cherubims.

In Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-17, we read of the condemnation and downfall of the devil. When he, being lifted up with pride, rebelled against God and tried to usurp God's authority, he was cast down to this earth (cf. Revelation 12:9). Since the day he was cast out of heaven, he has been constantly trying to usurp God's glory. According to his warped and malicious mind, the best possible way to usurp God's glory is through mankind by instigating their defiance of God's authority. That's disobedience, which was the first sin of mankind! Having succeeded with Adam and Eve, the devil is still trying to do the same with their descendants – but in different ways. He uses different things in different people's lives to bring about defiance of God's sovereignty.

In a myriad of ways, the devil is trying to captivate believers' souls to love things other than God. Whether it be our studies and scholastic pursuits, our job, profession and career prospects, our children, our house, or even our physical appearance,

the devil wants to take our allegiance away from God through all these distractions. His is a twisted theology – "worship God in order to get the things that you love". That is precisely the "prosperity theology" promoted in Charismatic circles. Worship God to be rich, powerful, famous, prominent. That's false religion! Rather, true religion is coming to God as our true wealth, He being the greatest Lover of our infinitely precious souls. We cannot love anything more than God if we put God as the object of our heart's devotion. Didn't Jesus say, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mark 12:30)? In getting believers to love material things, possessions, position, status, relationships, etc. more than God, Satan's ultimate objective is to usurp God's sovereignty over believers' lives. Oh, be not ignorant of the devil's devices!

## **The Devil's Malicious Disdain of Believers' Submission to God's Sovereignty**

Now, it must be categorically stated that God has no problem giving material prosperity and abundance to His children, if He so chooses. This is reflected in Job's possession of great substance and his prominent status in the society of his time (Job 1:3). But that is not what God is most happy about with His children – not wealth and health. There is something else that He is more concerned with. In commending Job before the devil, God

said, “Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?” (Job 1:8). God specifically mentioned four outstanding spiritual virtues of Job, namely his blameless life (“perfect”), his righteous character (“upright”), his reverence of God (“feareth God”), and his careful shunning of sin (“escheweth evil”) which reflects his purity of heart. Instructively, God did not commend Job regarding his material abundance, house and animals, or his efficiency in managing wealth. But look who’s talking about all these? “Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land” (Job 1:9-10).

In his reply, the devil blatantly sidestepped God’s focus of His discussion. God is talking about Job’s spiritual maturity, well-being, wholeness, integrity. But the devil wanted to draw attention away towards material things – “his house”, “all that he hath”, “work of his hands”, “his substance”. The devil was saying that everything was going well for Job – his business was good, his family was flourishing, he was in good health. His insinuation was that Job’s piety was all because God had put a protective “fence” around him. Malicious as he is, the devil then put forward a challenge to God. He sadistically added that if God were to “touch” (i.e. to destroy, to cause maximum

damage to) all that Job had, Job will defy, rebel against and “curse” God, not fear and worship Him (Job 1:11)!

Herein is the intense and fierce conflict between God and Satan. God is watching over His servant and rejoices in His servant’s recognition of His sovereignty over his life, as well as his complete surrender to God as his Master. This harmonious and perfectly maintained “Master-servant” relationship provokes Satan. How vicious Satan is! He cannot stand the sight of God’s servant being at peace with his heavenly Master. He is full of jealousy, wrath and hatred. “Sovereign God and submissive servant” – this is the relationship that is under attack! Satan regards it with contempt and disdain: “Doth Job fear God for nought?” He could not – and will never – accept that anyone could love God so intrinsically without thinking of getting any external benefit in return. He wanted to prove God wrong.

## **The Devil’s Diabolical Instigation of Believers’ Distrust of God**

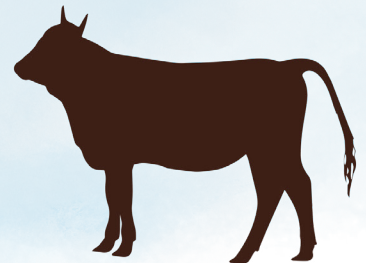
In this battle of Satan against God’s sovereignty, he often targets God’s dear servants. In the case of Job, he schemed to “touch all that he hath” (Job 1:11), and later to “touch his bone and his flesh” (Job 2:5). His intent of “touching Job” in order to cause trouble in his life was that he may turn Job against God by causing him to curse God! Usually, with most believers, he would try to “take them out” through sinful temptations. He does this relentlessly through the allurements of sensual living



and the unholy pursuit of creature comforts through affluent lifestyles, which many – even godly people – find so hard to resist. However, sometimes the devil may find it difficult to trap believers by temptation alone, as in the case of godly and spiritually well-exercised saints (like Job). When he can't get a foothold in their spiritual lives to cause damage to their testimony, he would unleash his second ploy, i.e. through unimaginable pain and sorrow. The ultimate intent of such fiery trial was to turn people against God. In one way or the other, the devil is constantly trying to instigate believers' distrust of God's sovereignty.

In the case of Job, the cruelty and sadism of the devil was clearly seen when he challenged God to grant him permission to attack Job concerning his possessions and his body. In one day, all his vast numbers of sheep, camels, oxen and asses were wiped off, and all his ten children were crushed to death in a collapsed house caused by a whirlwind (Job 1:13-19). In another day, his whole body was wrecked with sore boils, resulting in excruciating pain and agony, so much so that his abode became next to a heap of ashes outside as he could not stay in the house due to his disease (Job 2:7-8). Through all these, the devil

was instigating Job to curse God "to thy face" (Job 2:5b) and bring dishonour to His name!



Thank God Job endured – in all this Job neither “charged God foolishly” nor did he “sin with his lips” (Job 1:22b; 2:10c).

Dear Christians, truly there are times when we struggle to explain the cause of our sufferings. Frankly, so many types of trials and calamities befall God’s people that we can’t fathom the exact cause(s). But would there ever be a trial upon God’s people if God does not permit it? It is important to understand that God always has a hand in the troubles we experience. In God’s sovereignty, He “opens the floodgates” of trials for you to suffer. You become, as it were, the “battle front” being engaged by the merciless devil. This is not because God has abandoned you, but rather, He counts you worthy to suffer to prove His supreme point that His arch-enemy cannot do anything to completely usurp His authority.

Oh, this is a most formidable “battlefield”! But beloved believer, persevere and stand firm. Knowing that God allows your trials, may you “watch thou in all things, endure afflictions” (2 Timothy 4:5a) and “greatly rejoice ... through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:6-7). So, if you are in the midst of some unexplainable trouble, be assured that God’s sovereign hand is there. It is not that He has turned against you, but He has only taken away your “fence” which has protected you all this while. By

God’s sovereign will, “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us”, being “persuaded, that neither death, nor life ... nor principalities, nor powers ... nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39)!

## **The Devil’s Subversive Undermining of Believers’ “Integrity”**

Unfortunately, the reality is that many who suffer horrendously or see the righteous suffer undeservedly may conclude in their heart that there is no God; or if God exists, He is one with limited power. Their initial enthusiastic faith in a loving God quickly “vaporises” in the fiery furnace of sufferings. Many such professing believers end up as agnostics. They fail to “hold fast their integrity”, unlike Job (cf. Job 2:3), and lose trust in a sovereign God. That is exactly Satan’s diabolical objective – to prod believers to defy God’s sovereignty.

To thwart the devil’s undermining of our “integrity” (through the use of intense sufferings upon believers), we do well to consider Job’s reaction. Job’s horrendous trials did not distract him from the sovereignty of God; God was still the object of his heart’s love. He cherished and worshipped God even in his abject poverty and suffering. Take note of his heart’s confession in Job 1:21, “the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” He didn’t utter these words out of bitterness that God did

not care for him, but out of worship and deference to – not in defiance of – God's sovereignty (cf. Job 1:20). Scripture says "he holdeth fast his integrity".

What is Job's "integrity"? It is his firm belief that God is sovereign, even in his troubles. Things had not spun out of control; nor had God difficulty in keeping chaotic situations in check. He refused to react according to his downcast emotions. Job's integrity is that he had always ordered his life by subjecting it to God's sovereignty. His was not a mere intellectual faith; his was a faith with works (cf. James 2:17-18). He had experiential faith, hence he spoke with experiential knowledge that God is sovereign. His unshakeable conviction of God's absolute sovereignty in all aspects of his life and the world around him, helped him to have proper behaviour in his doings and dealings. That is the believers' integrity, which the devil is constantly trying to undermine.

## Conclusion

The apostle Peter hits the nail on the head when he warns Christians in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour". The devil is constantly on the prowl. He is not going to stop his attack just because his wicked ploys were thwarted from time to time by godly saints who, like Job, hold fast to their integrity amidst their suffering. He is going to take this battle till the end of time; in the meantime, you and I are his targets. The way to continue

to fight the battle when the devil, by God's permission, comes to "touch" or trouble us, is to stay in submission to God. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). That's where our safety is. Even if he would tear us apart, stay under the mighty hand of God in total submission to Him, knowing that God will not allow the devil to utterly destroy us.

Thank God, there is ultimate victory for us, for God is still in control. We cannot be subdued because our sovereign God is watching over us! Remember, Satan is already a defeated foe. The devil can battle against God's dear child, but not beyond what God allows (cf. Job 1:12; Job 2:6). May we then, by faith, continually trust in and uphold God's sovereignty over our lives, come what may – that is how we glorify God in this formidable but conquerable "battle front".



What is Job's "integrity"? It is his firm belief that God is sovereign, even in his troubles. ... His unshakeable conviction of God's absolute sovereignty in all aspects of his life and the world around him helped him to have proper behaviour in his doings and dealings.



# Seeing “The End of the Lord” in Believers’ Suffering

*Prabhudas Koshy*

God works all things after the counsel of His sovereign will. He governs all events in the universe, including the evil devices of the wicked (cf. Proverbs 16:4) – except that He has no part in instigating or initiating sin. But He allows Satan and sinners to work against His people and Him. He takes their defiance as a challenge, only to thrash His enemies at the end. In fact, He can even bring up “the wrath of man” to praise Him, yet “the remainder of wrath shalt (he) restrain” (Psalm 76:10).

But in that great battle that the devil is waging against God, God’s children are often caught up in it, whether we like it or not. There is no sitting on the fence. Being on the Lord’s side, we have to face the challenge that is raised against God, embracing it with joy. We must be happy “fighters”, not in the sense of being belligerent and aggressive (looking for a fight), but in the sense of fighting “the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12) and enduring “hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3).

## **God Has Purpose in Believers’ Suffering**

In this respect, the Holy Spirit’s comment of Job’s reaction to his sufferings is instructive: “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:11). Job was described by James as one who happily endured.

The Greek word (*makarizo*) rendered as “count them happy” comes from the same root word which gives rise to the adjective that is translated as “blessed” in the Beatitudes, like “Blessed are the poor in spirit”, “Blessed are they that mourn”, and so on (Matthew 5:3-11). Truly, we (biblically instructed) believers think of those who endure their sufferings as blessed people. We believe Job was a blessed man because he endured his suffering, for the resultant trying of his faith worketh patience (cf. James 1:3). James is bringing to the readers’ attention, the blessedness

of Job's patience, which is an honourable thing. In God's sovereign scheme of things, patience and endurance are blessed traits which God wants His children to possess.

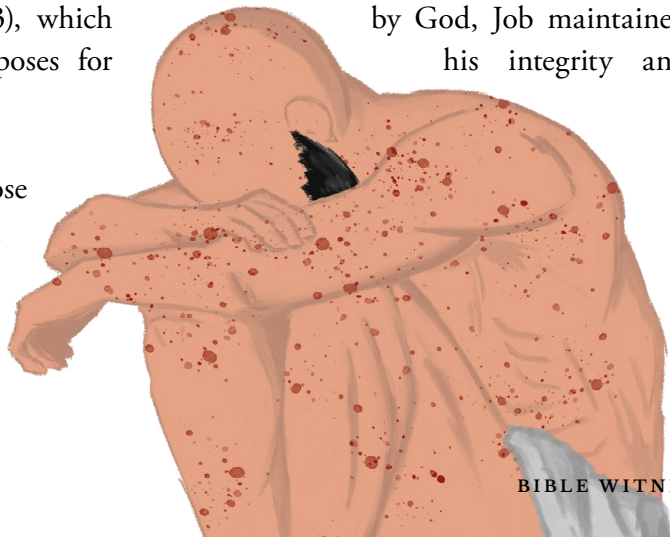
Having established his heart in the Lord, though Job did question God's will, he kept faith with the Lord and endured to the end. In the whole process, God was glorified and Job purified. Hence James highlighted "the end of the Lord". Now, the Greek word (*telos*) for "end" here has the idea of end-result or objective. It is not referring to some sort of termination, for being the eternal Lord, God has no beginning or end. Rather, "the end of the Lord" is referring to the ultimate completion and fulfilment of God's intent and purpose. So dear Christians, whatever trial you may be presently undergoing is never purposeless. And it is comforting to infer that it is not endless either! You may be having a difficult family life, or great financial problems, or debilitating health troubles, or a host of distressing issues, but please remember, that is what God has purposed. God will work out His purposes in His time and for His glory. In the meantime, "we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience" (Romans 5:3), which is certainly one of God's purposes for our Christian lives.

Indeed, the Lord has purpose in our lives. Our sovereign God is not a capricious God who does things according to His whim and fancy. He has a plan. He works out everything

according to His plan; nothing happens by chance. He has decreed all things, including our lives and our works. In fact, "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

## Suffering as Part of Believers' Preordained "Good Works"

It should not surprise us that as God's children living in a hostile world, part of the "package" of our "good works in Christ Jesus" inevitably includes sufferings for Christ's sake. Unbeknown to Job, his sufferings would constitute a very important spiritual work that God committed to him. God was very pleased with His servant's spiritual maturity and complete surrender to Him as his Master (cf. Job 1:8), but Satan cynically insinuated that it was because of all the beneficial things God had given in his life. To prove His arch-enemy wrong, God then allowed Satan's attacks on Job, but within certain limits (Job 1:12; 2:6). In this "good spiritual work" (of enduring under suffering) committed to Job by God, Job maintained his integrity and



uttered sublime statements of faith; these are his “good works”. In fact, his several rounds of speech and counter-speech, in response to his friends’ absurd provocations, were beautifully poetic in Hebrew. They constitute a masterly piece of literary work in themselves! He used all his literary power, ability and skill to express his thoughts, and refute misguided theological clichés.

Above all, Job’s patience amidst suffering was used by God to defeat Satan’s mockery, whereby God’s name and honour were exalted. But note that Job’s patience didn’t mean he was quiet all the time. Some people think patience means silent stoicism, without realising that God is a loving Father upon whom we can pour out our woes (cf. 1 Peter 5:7). Actually, Job was talking from chapter 3 all the way to chapter 31 (interrupted from time to time only by his three friends’ baseless accusations and rebuke)! Indeed, his speech recorded in these chapters of the Book of Job had left behind a rich legacy, benefitting Bible-readers and, particularly, suffering Christians, throughout the Old and New Testament ages. Job was truly God’s “workmanship”, earmarked for a deep “work” of sufferings.

Dear Christians, if you believe that God is sovereign, then you have to believe that God has appointed whatever troubles that come into your life. Accept your trouble as God-ordained. The rightful response to such an acceptance of God’s sovereignty is worship, like how Job worshipped: “the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken

away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21b). Don’t resist! Don’t say, “I quit!” Accept your peculiar circumstance as what God had already determined even before the foundation of the world, “that we should walk in them”. And acceptance entails the worshipful confession that “The Lord is with me even in this.”

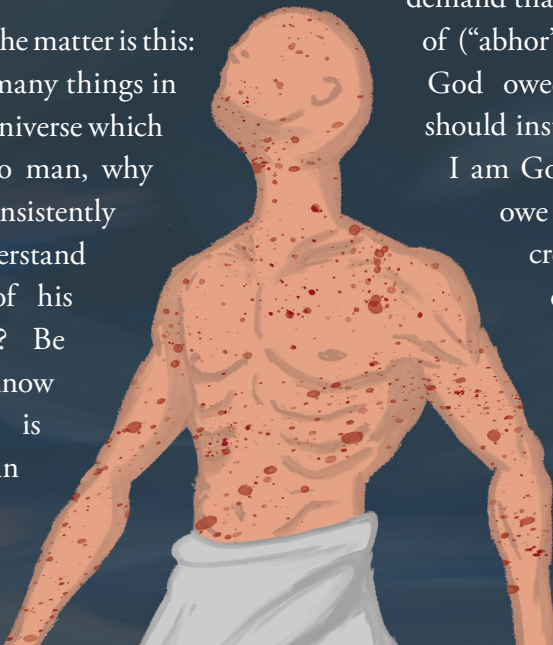
## Be Still and Know that God is God

Only when we reach that point of acceptance will we be able to say with Job, “I know that thou (the LORD) canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee” (Job 42:2). The beginnings of peace will come when we let the sovereign God be God, and are willing not to understand everything “at one go”. There are some things we cannot with our finite minds understand (though they can be revealed to us through God’s Word). Job showed profound wisdom when he conceded that “therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not” (Job 42:3b). Though Job never rebelled or resisted against God in his insistent request for God to give him a reason for his horrendous sufferings, he nonetheless realised that he had talked too much. He had asked too many irrelevant (and irreverent!) questions that “hideth (God’s) counsel without (accurate) knowledge” (Job 42:3a). His demand for God’s explanation was not for him to demand. If God decides to be quiet, that’s His prerogative as a sovereign God. Believers must rather admonish their souls: “Why art thou cast down, O my

soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God” (Psalm 42:11a). Likewise, they must teach their hearts to “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10a). God has not lost control.

We see in Job 38-41 how God, speaking “out of the whirlwind”, confronts Job’s thinking. Through a series of rhetorical questions posed to Job, the Lord affirms that He is the Creator and the Lord of heaven and earth. His creative and providential acts in the nature are a great theatre of His wisdom, power and goodness. They give evidence to why man ought to have unswerving confidence in Him. God was also impressing upon Job his inability to comprehend even those works in His created order and everyday occurrences that are familiar to man and yet vividly manifest the Creator’s wisdom and power. It was therefore to be expected that it would be far beyond man’s power to explain how God governs the world and the affairs of man. God’s address was meant to instil in Job’s heart great admiration, awe and submission to His sovereign rule.

The crux of the matter is this: If there are so many things in God’s orderly universe which are mysteries to man, why should man insistently demand to understand the mystery of his own suffering? Be content to know that God is sovereign and in control of all



events in the universe. God’s sovereignty can be likened to a bottomless, borderless sea. It is unsearchable, immeasurable, past finding out. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?” (Romans 11:33-34). Our response should be one of admiration for His sovereignty. Dear believers, are you sick? Are you deserted by dear ones? Are you falsely accused? Be still, and know that the LORD is God.

Hence Job’s humble, chastened response was most instructive: “Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6). What was Job repenting of? He had not spoken a word that God was displeased with; he consistently said the right things about God, but none of his three friends did (Job 42:7). He was repenting of the fact that he didn’t understand that in God’s silence during his sufferings, God was actually working out His sovereign plan. He meant not to speak, so nobody should demand that He speak. Job was ashamed of (“abhor”) himself for assuming that God owed him an explanation; he should instead “Be still, and know that I am God”. Likewise, God does not owe us an explanation. We – His creatures who are beneficiaries of His loving and caring providence – should be more concerned about worshipping Him than in expecting Him to give us explanations.

## God's Gracious "End" in Believers' Suffering

Nonetheless, Job's "happy ending" speaks of God's gracious "end" in believers' trials. From Job 42:12-17, we see that Job's latter days were blessed more than his beginning. His livestock was doubled (14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, 1,000 female donkeys [cf. Job 1:3]); he was further blessed with 7 sons and 3 beautiful daughters. He lived another 140 years, and saw his descendants to the fourth generation! Truly, Job's afflictions were only "for a season", just like what the apostle Peter reminded the suffering Christians: "though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (1 Peter 1:6). A season has a beginning and an end, like the 4 seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter) of the year experienced in temperate regions of the earth. Every child of God will have his "evil day" (cf. Ephesians 6:13) "for a season", and only "if need be". God will not allow any trial that is unnecessary into our life. God wants our heart to know (experientially) more of His greatness through a season of manifold trials, which are not purposeless or endless!

Job's vindication was complete when God chided the three friends and spoke in defence of Job (Job 42:7). Four times He referred to Job as "my servant" (a high honour), to whom the three erring friends must humbly go to offer sacrifice to God, to appease God's wrath against them. God required them to entreat Job (whom they had mercilessly wronged) to pray for them,

for God would only accept Job's prayers (Job 42:8). "So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job" (Job 42:9). This moving scene of a despised, suffering man being "elevated" to a priestly intercessor (as it were), pleading for God's favour on behalf of those very friends who had maligned him, would be seen as the "crown" of Job's deliverance and restoration. Truly, how tender and how gracious God deals with His submissive servant!

In a nutshell, as far as God's challenge to Satan regarding Job's integrity is concerned, Job passed the test with flying colours! He sought / worshipped God for who He is, not for the things he could get out of God. Job was shown to be a worshipper of God, not of things. His faith was tested – he came forth as gold (cf. Job 23:10)!

No wonder the apostle James commented that when believers perceive the "end (i.e. purpose) of the Lord" pertaining to the righteous' sufferings, they cannot but see how "pitiful" and "of tender mercy" the Lord is. Indeed, the Lord "that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:4), and is perfectly "able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). To God be the glory. Amen.





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# Charles Haddon Spurgeon

## (1834-1892)

### The "Prince of Preachers" - Part 4

*(Retold from "Spurgeon – Prince of Preachers" by Lewis Drummond, published by Kregel Publications; "Trial and Triumph: Stories from Church History" by Richard M. Hannula, published by Canon Press; "The Suffering Letters of C. H. Spurgeon" by Hannah Wyncall, published by Wakeman Trust, London; "The Forgotten Spurgeon" by Iain H. Murray, published by The Banner of Truth Trust.)*

Retold by Jenny Lok

Illustrated by Andronicus Koshy

Before the end of the year 1856, on 20 September, Susie Spurgeon gave birth to their twin boys. Both husband and wife were overjoyed! Not only had God brought an increase to Spurgeon's household, He had also been adding many more people to the church over the past months. The need for a much larger church building of their own had become increasingly urgent as the New Park Street Chapel was certainly unable to hold the huge crowds on Sundays. Besides, the Exeter Hall which they rented would not be available to them on a permanent basis. Thus began (some months ago) the project to build a "tabernacle" that could accommodate the growing church. A building committee was thereby appointed in June 1856 to see to the building project. However, a few in the committee doubted the possibility of such a major project and left the group.

Spurgeon did not give up but trusted God, the Almighty, to do the impossible. It was decided that the new church building be named "Metropolitan Tabernacle". Right from the start, Spurgeon was very determined to stay true to his belief that the church should be debt-free in their building project, for he had said, "We will not go into debt for this house of God".

In the interim, the congregation worshipped in the rented Surrey Gardens Music Hall (which could hold more than 10,000 people). However, tragedy struck on the first day of service in this



spacious hall. When Spurgeon was into his usual prayer after the singing of a hymn, there were shouts of “Fire! Fire! Fire! The galleries are giving way! The place is falling! The place is falling!” Instantly, the entire hall was in chaos as the panic-stricken crowd started to run for their lives from all directions. In the ensuing hysteria, people stepped on one other, pushing and tearing at one other violently. Many were crushed amid the frenzy. Spurgeon jumped to his feet and in his deep, clear voice, attempted to calm the people as he noticed that actually, nothing was happening to the building. Unfortunately, damage had been done, for by then (though still unknown to him), 7 people had died and 28 were badly injured!

When the truth of the matter was finally revealed to him, he was so heartbroken that for weeks, he could not bring himself to go back to the Surrey Gardens Music Hall. On top of that, he had to face harsh criticisms from the press, which held him responsible for the unfortunate event on 19 October 1856. Nonetheless, God spoke to him through Philippians 2:9-11, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Spurgeon realised that as long as Christ is exalted in his life, it did not matter whether he would live

or die. His "one prayer shall be that I may die to self and live wholly for Him and for His honour." Though the crisis had weakened him physically, Spurgeon bounced back and started his preaching ministry again. His determination to build the "Metropolitan Tabernacle" also remained unchanged.

In line with the plan to build the "Metropolitan Tabernacle", Spurgeon and the leadership in the church prayed that God would supply all the funds for the construction of the building. To set the ball rolling, Spurgeon was among the first to contribute to the building project. Church members soon followed his fine example and started giving generously towards the building fund. Contributions also came from those whom he had ministered to all over England and beyond. Even strangers came up to him and donated various sums of money to the church for the building project. How thankful Spurgeon was for God's providential provision! Truly, He had provided "... exceeding abundantly above all that [they] ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). Apart from this, he was also grateful that not a single workman was injured during the construction of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. How wonderful God had been to the church.



For the next 30 years or so, Spurgeon preached in the Metropolitan Tabernacle (completed in March 1861), a simple but elegant building that could seat close to 6,000 people. Besides his regular preaching engagements, Spurgeon continued to write a tremendous number of sermons, magazines, commentaries and devotional books, many of which are still widely read. The better known ones include "Lectures to My Students", and "The Sword and Trowel". In his later years, though often plagued by sickness which made him very frail and in need of rest, Spurgeon continued to minister God's Word. During times when he was absent from the church, he kept in touch with his congregation through letters (many of which were written from Menton on the south coast of France, a place he frequented, due to his ill health, until his death). In his letters, he would express his longing to be with them and exhort them to stay fervent in their love and service for God. Nearing the end of his life, Spurgeon remarked to his secretary Harrald, "My work is done." Eventually, on 31 January 1892, Charles Spurgeon was called home to be with the Lord, to dwell in the heavenly mansion that was prepared for him. The "pilgrim" had finally reached the "Celestial City"! At his grave, the hymn "There is a Fountain" was sung. The 3rd stanza of that hymn fittingly reflects Spurgeon's mission as a minister of God's Word:

"Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood  
 Shall never lose its power,  
 Till all the ransomed Church of God  
 Be saved to sin no more."

Towards the end of his life, Spurgeon remained ever so faithful to His Heavenly Master as he fought against false teachings and attacks on the Bible being the perfect Word of God. How boldly he preached the sound doctrines of God's Word – in simple yet poetic language, coupled with his typical sense of humour! It certainly helped that he had a deep and clear voice that could be heard in the huge halls of England, not to mention his wonderful grasp of the English language. Deeply convicted that he was called to preach, Spurgeon spoke with an authority that could only come from God Himself. Beyond any doubt, his main motivation stemmed

from his love for God and his desire to glorify Him. Besides his preaching ministry, he was glad to help prepare many for the Gospel ministry through the setting up of a pastors' college, for he was convinced that "To preach the Gospel and to train others to do it is my life's object and aim."

Truly, we thank God for Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who not only had been mightily used by God in his lifetime, but has till this day been one of the greatest preachers in the Christian world. His ability to preach the Word of God with such skill and clarity had earned him the title "Prince of Preachers", an apt description for such an outstanding servant of God. Like Spurgeon, may we follow Christ all the days of our life and declare His glory wherever we go.

"So then faith cometh by hearing,  
and hearing by the word of God."

(Romans 10:17)



# Bible Trivia - Leviticus 8 A Lesson about Consecration

**Sarah Yong**

- 1. Read the Bible passage in Leviticus 8:1-30, and then fill in the blanks below.**

The priests, 1) A\_\_\_\_\_ and his sons, had to go through a special process of cleansing before they could serve the LORD in the 2) T\_\_\_\_\_. They had to be washed with 3) w\_\_\_\_\_, and put on priestly 4) c\_\_\_\_\_ and be girded with girdles, to set them apart as sacred. Animal sacrifices also had to be made – a bullock as a 5) s\_\_\_\_\_ offering, a ram as a 6) b\_\_\_\_\_ offering, and another ram as a 7) w\_\_\_\_\_ offering unto the LORD. The blood would be sprinkled upon the 8) a\_\_\_\_\_ and upon the priests. This symbolically 9) s\_\_\_\_\_ them and made them holy. All these were done, as the LORD had commanded 10) M\_\_\_\_\_.

- 2. Animal sacrifices no longer need to be offered today because Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb of God, has died as a perfect sacrifice to cleanse us from our sins. Thus, as saints of God, we are to be holy, for the LORD is holy (cf. Leviticus 11:44). Read the following Bible verses (which teach about consecration), and complete the statements below.**

Psalm 24:3-5

Believers must serve God with c\_\_\_\_\_ hands and a p\_\_\_\_\_ heart.

Romans 12:1

We must present our b\_\_\_\_\_ as a living sacrifice, h\_\_\_\_\_, acceptable unto God.

2 Timothy 2:19-21

As Christians we must d\_\_\_\_\_ from iniquity and p\_\_\_\_\_ ourselves from sin so that we can be s\_\_\_\_\_, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every g\_\_\_\_\_ work.

## **ANSWERS TO BIBLE TRIVIA - EXODUS 39 & 40 (VOLUME 18, ISSUE 3, P. 31)**

1) COURTyard; 2) GATE; 3) BURNT; 4) LAVER; 5) BREAD;  
6) GOLDEN; 7) HANGING; 8) CANDLESTICK; 9) VAIL; 10) TESTIMONY



## GETHSEMANE B-P CHURCH **BUILDING PROJECT**

We would like to express heartfelt thanks to those who have sent financial support for the Building Fund of Gethsemane B-P Church. Presently, we are awaiting the necessary permits before we finalise the procurement of the new building. Please continue to remember us in your prayers.

While we have enough funds to purchase the new building, we would still need some additional funds for the renovation works. If you are moved by the LORD, you may send us your love-gift. Cheque may be made payable to **"Gethsemane B-P Church"**. (Please indicate **"Building Fund"** on the reverse of the cheque and send your love-gift to **Gethsemane B-P Church, Singapore Post Centre, P.O. Box 1124, Singapore 914038.**)

Alternatively, you may call us at **6741 1910** for internet banking arrangements.

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE!**

After operating for 15 years from our office at Sunflower Building (510 Geylang Road), we have moved out in preparation for the new premises. In this interim period, all correspondence should be directed to:

Singapore Post Centre  
P.O. Box 1124, Singapore 914038