



Questions for God

Part 1 – When God Doesn't Make Sense

Job 1:1-22 – November 1, 2009

*Has there ever been a time in your life when things that happened in your life didn't make sense? Quietly, almost secretly, you begin to question God as to why these things were happening to you: whether it is dealing with a senseless tragedy, the death of a loved one, a financial catastrophe, loss of a job, emotional pain cause by a relationship that went south, or any other disappointment. Questions begin to swirl in our heads. We secretly wonder... why did God allow this? Especially since the Bible says He loves me. Doesn't he have more control over this stuff? Should I really expect a life of misery as a Christ-follower? If it doesn't make sense to me, is there something, I need to do make it better? I can tell you, these are the wrong questions. God has a better way. We see a great example in the life of Job. His response to a life shattering, string of events is as instructive as it is remarkable. We can learn from his example and his experience. **Proposition: How are we to respond when Life (God) doesn't make sense?***

I. The Background...Who is this guy? (v. 1-5)

A. Job is a **real** man... who reflects a godly character!

¹There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.

1. Notice this is the land of Uz, not OZ. He is a real man not a mythical character. This is not fiction! According to the opening part of the book Job lived in the land of Uz, and he was probably one of the most prominent citizens of that land. He was a likely a contemporary of Abraham, so this book goes back to the very beginnings of biblical history.
2. He is classified as one of the three great men of the Old Testament, along with Noah and Daniel, (Ezekiel 14:14, 14:20). He is mentioned also in the New Testament by James, who refers to Job's patience and steadfast endurance (James 5:11).

3. 4 words describe his character... (v. 1, 8...says it 2x)

- **Blameless**: without moral blemish; Heb. root word for integrity. A better translation might be “a complete man”. He was well balanced, consistent. Why? He feared God and realized that God’s hand was on his life. This doesn’t mean sinless. He wasn’t perfect. He had his doubts, human frailties, etc.
- **Upright**: to go straight....not crooked.
- **Fear God**: reverence and submission to God’s rightful lordship over your life. Oswald Chambers, “When you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else.”
- **Turned away from evil**: Aloof; a wholesale rejection of those things that would take him away from God. [Read Psalm 1](#)
- Reminds me of Noah (Gen. 6:9)

B. Job is a **rich** man... who isn’t defined by his wealth. (v. 2-3)

1. It is reflected not in his land holdings, but his livestock. Job’s wealth is measured in livestock (1:3; 42:12), the same way Abraham and Jacob’s wealth is measured (Gen. 12:16; 13:2; 30:43; 32:5). Like a rich Texas cattleman.
2. Each animal provides a basic need – Sheep: clothing. Camels: transportation. Oxen: implies farming; he wasn’t just a nomadic wanderer. Female donkeys: Milk
3. His reputation rivals that of Solomon’s in later Jewish history. He is wealthy, but his riches didn’t own him. [Money is great servant, but a horrible master.](#) “The trouble is that too many people are spending money they haven't yet earned for things they don't need to impress people they don't like!”

C. Job is **religious** man... who loves his family! (v. 4-5)

1. What Job did was the equivalent of our holding a special time of prayer for each son perhaps on their birthdays... all 7. Note the sisters: The *sisters* are specified, as these feasts were not for revelry, which would be inconsistent with the presence of sisters.
2. Job offered burnt offerings on their behalf, because he recognized that his children needed spiritual help most when things were going well, not during times of stress. This indicates a great deal of spiritual insight on the part of Job. He knew that the pressure to deny God, to forsake God, comes most strongly when things are going well or when you have a lot of money. Money and wealth can easily become a distraction.
3. A burnt offering is always a symbol of total dedication to God, an awareness of God's rightful ownership of us. When Job made this offering he was expressing the burden of his heart for his children, that they might be wholly God's. He was praying for them by means of this burnt offering.
4. *Cursed*: “may have dismissed God from their hearts”; namely, amid the intoxication of pleasure (Pr 20:1)
5. So we have this picture of Job: a godly man, a great landowner, and a good father.

II. The Bet... Why does Job honor God? (v. 6-12)

- A. These “*sons of God*” (fallen angels) are the same ones described in Ezekiel and Isaiah. When the angels appear before God, Satan is among them, even as there was a Judas among the apostles.
- B. *Satan*, “one who lies in wait”; an “adversary” in a court of justice one who opposes the law.” (1Chron. 21:1; Ps 109:6; Zec. 3:1); “accuser” (Rev 12:10). This is a courtroom scene, and God and Satan each deliver different verdicts about Job. God said “Not guilty!” (1:8; 2:3; 42:7) There was nothing in Job’s life that compelled God to cause him to suffer. But Satan

said “Guilty!” because he is the accuser of God’s people and finds nothing good in them (Zech. 3; Rev. 12:10).

- C. In *Arabic*, Satan is often applied to a serpent (Gen. 3:1). He is called prince of this world (John 12:31); the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4); prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2).
- D. Once the greatest of the angels, now lifted up by pride, Satan has become the enemy of God. You can see him sauntering about among the angels, hands in his pockets, or picking his teeth, disdainful of everything... looking for an opportunity to accuse us as believers.
- E. **He still has access to God.** He is not bound in hell or kept in some kind of heavenly furnace! Thanks to John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, many people have the mistaken idea that Satan is ruling this world from hell!
1. But he needs divine permission to operate in the natural realm. Satan is not the equivalent of God. We do not have two gods, a good god and a bad god... struggling against each other. This chapter helps us to understand right from the start that **God is in control of all things**. Everything is at His command, and nothing ever takes Him by surprise – nothing goes beyond His word and His will, including Satan!
 2. **Illustration:** It would be like Hitler asking permission to bomb US troops. Satan comes to God and asks permission to do something against Job. Now that is not a battle; it is not warfare; it is a test.
 3. **God initiates the test.** He sets the challenge! Does Job serve God with pure motives, or is he “in it” only as long as the blessings flow?
 - Now the rules of the test are clear. Job is going to be stripped of his possessions and his family. Satan's argument is that when they are taken away, Job will deny God right to His face. You've protected Job, and that's why he serves you. In other words, Job serves

you because he is blessed by you. Take it all away and then see what happens!

- So God says to Satan, "All right, we'll see. Devotion is possible without dollars received in return! Go after him, but don't touch his body....yet! God says, "Bring it!"

4. Satan's philosophy and activity are seen here.

- He seeks to **destroy** us (I Peter 5:8... *like a roaring lion seeking who he many devour*). He goes about seeking those he can get at, to twist and distort and ruin, if he can.
- He wants to **distract** us (Eph. 4:26... *an opportunity for the devil*). When we do certain things, it gives Satan a foothold in our lives.

III. The Battle... So you think you've had a bad day? (v. 13-19)

The last part of chapter one gives us the terrible results. Job gets hit hard 4 different times one right after the other. In the end he loses his livestock and his family... and that is just the beginning. Satan alternates between natural enemies and natural disasters in trying to destroy Job's confidence in God. From prosperity to poverty!

- A. He loses his oxen, donkeys and almost all of his servants (v. 13-15)... From the south near Sheba.
- B. A severe lightning strike or volcanic eruption kills his sheep and some more of his servants (v. 16). From the storms that sweep in from the Mediterranean in the west.
- C. The Chaldeans steal his camels, the most prized possessions in the Arab world in terms of servitude (v. 17). 3rd loss comes from a strategic raid by another enemy. It looks like they triangulate their attack and overwhelm them. Marauders from the north.
- D. At tornado kills his family during a gathering at the oldest brother's house (v.18-19). 4th loss comes from another natural

disaster. It comes from the desert in the east. The east winds in Jonah.

- E. Summary: The disasters came from every direction. This was to overwhelm Job, and leave him no time to recover from the rapid succession of calamities. One servant in each case escapes (Job 1:16, 17, 19), and brings bad news to Job. Job knew *what* had happened, but he did not know *why* it had happened.
- F. Application: That is how it feels sometimes. The Perfect Storm!

IV. The Blame... How did Job respond? (v. 20-22)

A. His actions

1. His first response is **worship** and blessing, not complaining and questioning.

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

- Tearing his robe and shaving his head was an appropriate grieving response. He had just lost his family... entirely!
 - Falling **to the ground**, not in despair, but in obedience to God, Job worshiped.
 - **Illustration: My mom**
 - Job did not complain, he did not blame God, he did not get all angry and upset and say, "Why should this happen to me? What have I done that all these things should suddenly come upon me?"
 - **As C. S. Lewis once remarked when asked the question, "Why should the righteous suffer?" "Why not?" he replied; "they're the only ones that can handle it."**
 - Job's initial response disproves Satan's accusations!
2. He **acknowledges** God's sovereignty.

²¹He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

- He has a realistic image of who he is. He knows where he fits on the food chain of life! He knew where he was from (back at his birth) where he was going (forward to his death) and upward in blessing to God. cf. [Ecc. 5:15](#)
- He realizes everything he has is a gift from God. His wealth was God's not his. **Job** followed adversity with adoration, woe with worship.
- "Thank you God for the times when I did have these things and the enjoyment they gave me; the times with my children, and the blessings they brought into my life. I recognize your sovereign right to do with me as you will. If you give me things you have the right to take them away. All I can do is say 'Thank you!'"

3. He doesn't sin or **blame** God!

²²Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

- **Blame**: charge God wrong!
- We sin when we blame God for those things that happen in life that are clearly part of His refining process in our lives.
- His friends get it wrong I later chapters in accusing him of sinning. It is a God's providence not His punishment that is at stake.
- We ask **why** God instead of **what** can I learn God. Easier said than done!

B. Our response: When God/life doesn't make sense, realize that...

1. Thankfulness comes from trusting God no matter what happens to us!
 - Are we quick to thank God or curse God when things don't go as we planned? Should we only accept the

good and not the bad? Is our first response to tough times to thank God and bless Him?

- Remember ask **what not why!** *Rom. 8:28*
 - When we bristle at Scriptural platitudes, it reveals something about our view of God!
2. **Look for an eternal perspective not just an earthly one.**
- God doesn't always make sense in the earthly, but He always does in the eternal perspective.
 - There may be something going on behind the scenes. Don't worry God is in charge.
 - **God's timetable is seen in light of eternity not expedience.** You may never have answers here on earth!
3. **God won't give you more than you can handle.**
(**I Cor. 10:13**) *no temptation taken you...*
- Have you been beaten down this past month?
 - Wondering if this thing will ever end? Worried about something?
 - Good news, Christian: God is in the middle of it all. He has the plan even when we panic!

Table Talk:

1. What were the 4 spiritual qualities that Job exhibited?
2. What was Satan's view as to why Job trusted God?
3. Do you love God because of your material blessings or regardless of your blessings?
4. When bad times hit you, whom do you blame?
5. Do you struggle with God's sovereignty in your life? Why or why not?