

The Calamity of Job

Martyn Shenstone

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***Special thanks to all my faithful partners
who have supported this ministry.***

***Every life that is changed by reading this
book, has been changed by you and
I working together.***

*And my God shall supply all your need according to
His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

*Now to our God and Father be glory forever and
ever. Amen.*

Philippians 4:19-20

Chapter 1

Job's Words

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

Then 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?"

So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have 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. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person."

Job 1:6-12

In this unusual scenario, Satan (literally in the Hebrew *the Accuser*) appears to come and visit God. Some people have said Satan couldn't possibly come into God's presence because He would 'zap' him and quickly bind him in hell. This is flawed logic. If God was chasing the devil He would have caught him a long time ago. God would not have needed the devil to accidentally visit Him, in order to locate him and catch him.

Ezekiel 28:16 tells us that God cast Satan out of heaven after

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his rebellion there, *'therefore I cast you out as a profane thing, out of the mountain of God.'* A further study of this whole subject reveals that the devil subsequently either got Adam to allow him into the Garden of Eden, or he already had access to it (Ezekiel 28:13). Adam then committed treason against God and effectively gave the devil perpetual diplomatic immunity on the Earth by giving him all of his rights as a man, including the right to live on the Earth (Hosea 6:7 NKJV).

When he fell, Adam gave the rulership of the kingdoms of mankind to the devil. This is why the devil could roam about freely on the earth. When the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness he offered him all the kingdoms of the world if he would bow down and worship him instead of God.

Then the devil taking him up on a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to him, "All this authority I will give to you, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whoever I wish. Therefore, if you will worship before me, all will be yours."

Luke 4:5-7

Thankfully Jesus said, No! OK then, so how did the devil go up to heaven and appear before God in Job Chapter 1? Simple, he didn't. He went and appeared before God on the earth. A place where God still frequented, for example God even appeared to Abraham and Sarah in human form in Genesis 18:1-2.

The devil went to God, possibly along with other men, perhaps appearing in human form, or most likely with other angels appearing in his natural form as an angel, albeit a fallen one. It really doesn't matter what physical form they all took, the point is that the devil had good reason to publicly visit God. Why? Because he saw a way he could bring down Job, God's favourite and he had come to boast about it in front of the other angels.

God challenges Satan, He says in Job 1:6 *'where have you come from?'* The devil replies *'from going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.'* Of course Satan

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can do this with impunity because Adam gave him his authority in Eden. The devil really likes to boast about this so he repeats himself unnecessarily, just to rub it in before God and show off in front of the other angels present.

God then says, *'have you considered my servant Job?'* It looks at first sight as though God is actually bringing Job to the devil's attention. The word *considered* is a translation of two Hebrew words: *sum*, sometimes also transliterated as *sym* (Strong's H7760) and *labe* (Strong's H3820). According to the famous Strong's lexicon the first given meanings to these words are *put* and *heart* (*heart being used figuratively to mean the will and intellect*). Without any fancy footwork with the Hebrew it is very safe to say that this verse has been poorly translated and should read:

Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you set your heart on my servant Job..."

Job 1:8

In other words, God clearly saw and challenged Satan's intent, which was to destroy Job, the most godly man on all the earth.

Satan then tries to goad God into harming Job by suggesting that if He took Job's possessions away that Job would curse Him to His face. Satan boasts that Job doesn't in fact love God at all but only worships him because his life is good.

So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have 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. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

Job 1:9-11

This failed attempt at inciting God to harm Job reveals a great deal about Satan, although nothing new or surprising. Once

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you get to know the devil he is very monotonous. First of all Satan sees men only through the lens of his own pride. He relates to them purely on the basis of who they worship and follow, not for who they are as individuals and therefore quite naturally he also has no respect for their possessions and health.

When Satan fell the Bible records in Isaiah 14:14 that he said, '*I will be like the Most High.*' Satan wanted to rule like God, at least rule but in reality in a way nothing like God at all. In the book of Job Satan wants God to behave like him – to treat Job only as some pawn. Satan also wants to prove that no one really worships God for who He is but only for what He gives. Satan is trying to say that God is not really any different from what he is.

Satan wants God to act like him in this public meeting he has attended so that he can prove to all the persons present that he is like God, by trying to make God fall to his level and act like him.

God doesn't respond to this pointless goading. He simply announces to Satan what he already knows – that Job's possession's and children, because of Job's fear and his children's wild lifestyles (see more about Job's children further on) are in fact already in his hands.

To some people God appears to actually give Satan permission to go and ravage Job's life while drawing a line at Satan harming him personally.

And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person."

Job 1:12

Notice God does not say, 'yes go and get Job' nor does He say, 'OK I will get Job.' God basically brings the conversation to an end and simultaneously straightens things out for the other angels present. This is so that there is no misunderstanding about who is responsible for what is about to befall Job. God

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says, *'Look, all that he has is in your power.'* God also declares that Satan cannot harm Job's physical body because Job has not fallen that far under Satan's power yet.

Satan subsequently goes out and destroys the bulk of Job's possessions and kills all his children. How did all this happen?

The Bible says that Job was a good man, held in high regard by all around and greatly blessed. But then Job's life took a series of terrible downturns, he lost many things including his livelihood, health and even his children.

Job got plastered by the devil and he didn't know why. He wanted to know what on earth was going on. He cries out when he glimpses where he has been going wrong. He has erred with his words, he realises he needs to be taught how to hold his tongue and wishes he had spoken right words all his life.

“Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; Cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forceful are right words!”

Job 6:24-25

Job had spent his entire life living in fear and verbalising it. Nor did he bring his children up the right way and because of their partying lifestyle he was afraid that they were not righteous enough before God. Job had worked hard to try and ensure his children's righteousness before God with an endless series of fear based sacrifices. The result of this constant worrying and fretting over his children was actually the cause of their untimely and tragic deaths.

And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, “It may be that my sons have

sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did regularly.

Job 1:4-5

The Hebrew word here for feasting is *mishteh* (Strong's 4960) it literally means *drinking*. Job's children had cycles of preplanned parties that lasted for days. When was the last time you met someone who had regular parties that actually lasted for days on end?! Job's son's also invited their sisters. Why? Well they couldn't invite a bunch of girls on their own, that would look bad and people would talk. So they invited their sisters who then naturally brought their friends... In a nutshell Job was a very rich man and he had playboy children.

Moreover Job's wife was a complete idiot. When calamity befell Job she just told Job to abandon his integrity (obviously something she had done years ago) and said '*curse God and die,*' Job 2:9. This speaks volumes about how Job's children ended up like they did. Apparently Job married someone with nice features who produced plenty of children but who had no spiritual backbone whatsoever.

Because Job felt guilty as a father about his children's partying lifestyle he also expected something bad to happen to himself too. And it did. The book of Job records that as well as losing his children he lost his possessions and ended up very sick.

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

Job 3:13

Job seemed to be expecting disaster all along. Why? His children's lifestyles were out of control, he allowed his concern for them to drive him to obsessively sacrifice on their behalf regularly. He didn't exercise any faith in God's goodness towards his children, rather he saw his role as protecting them from God's judgement. Job didn't open the door for God to work in his children's life by declaring His promises over them. He didn't thank God daily that they were fulfilling God's plan for their lives. No, the only thing that Job presented to God about his children everyday was their failures. It didn't change God's

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love for them one bit but it did fill Job's heart with fear for his children. Job constantly rehearsed and verbalised his fear for his children and was not able to stop Satan coming in and taking their lives.

When Job saw his children's shortcomings he focused on them instead of on God's goodness. Consequently he moved from faith to fear. He must have also lived in dread that because he wasn't good enough as a father and his children were seriously off beam that all the good things he had acquired would be taken back away from him.

This doesn't mean that Job should have given up and accepted his children living a wild and uncontrolled life. No, on the contrary, he should have approached God boldly in faith fervently declaring the opposite of what he saw his children doing; And where he saw his own failures Job should have also boldly thanked God that the sacrifices that he made provided atonement for him too. Apparently he didn't do either.

God's love has access to our hearts when there is no fear through condemnation blocking the doorway. No one measures up to God but God doesn't want there to be any condemnation in our hearts at all – this is precisely why He provided sacrifices in the Old Testament in the first place. Obviously they were a pointer to Jesus' ultimate sacrifice in the New Testament. Until Jesus came Old Testament believers could still trust in the righteousness that God promised through their faith in the sacrifices of their day.

When God's love and acceptance permeate our being, we actually live a better life than when we are trying to be good enough all the time through our own human effort. Our hearts are more sensitive to God's Spirit and we know what to do and what not to do.

In Job's case it was all as if in his own mind he had failed some kind of giant test and was dreading the consequences. Tragically, it was his fear and dread coupled with wrong speaking that put him right under the devil's control.

Chapter 2

Job's Children

Job's children could not save themselves. His sons thought that they were clever, inviting their sisters to parties to fool their dad into thinking it was all a harmless friendly get together. Their father knew all along what they were doing, which is why he continually made sacrifices for them. In the end the extent of their sin drove him to despair and his sacrifices became full of fear. While Job's children thought they were living life to the full, hiding their immorality, drinking, drug taking and doubtless a few abortions here and there, they were in fact falling ever deeper under the devil's control.

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

Romans 6:16

According to the scriptures when you choose to sin and violate your conscience you present yourself to the devil, as his slave. Of course the devil doesn't freely volunteer this information. Most people think they are simply presenting themselves to their own wants and desires and that just because the roof doesn't fall on their heads within 15 minutes that somehow there are no consequences. Job's children thought the same, they became so delusionally confident that they even pre-planned wild parties that lasted for days. All the while they were under the devils complete control. God Himself said so.

And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has [including Job's children] is in your power..."

Job 1:12

As a result of their sin Job's children had fear in their hearts.

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This is why they hid from their father what they were doing, this is why the devil could kill them whenever it suited him.

At his own convenience the devil killed Job's children without a second thought, they were just a side show on his ego trip before God. On that day all of their delusions ended, their foolishness caught up with them and they discovered that all their choices for so called freedom were in fact snares to slavery and death.

Not many young people like the idea of their choices enslaving them. In fact, they like to believe just the opposite. Perhaps you are one of them? It's not about how much God loves you. It's not about anyone else 'telling you what to do,' it's about keeping your heart right before God – and the simple irrefutable fact is that you can't perpetually do wrong and keep your heart right before God. Sooner or later your heart starts to condemn you and fear creeps in. You can have all the reasons in the world why it's OK to do this that and the other and how everyone else does it too. Sure they do, and they are under the devil's control too. The Bible is very clear, if you sin, you eventually become a slave to sin and its master, the devil.

Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin."

John 8:34

No one is perfect and we all have made poor choices for many different reasons. However when your attitude moves from faith in God's love for you despite your shortcomings, into hiding from God in fear, then you are enslaved.

This is exactly what happened to Adam in the Garden of Eden. He thought he was smarter than God and so started eating the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The next thing we know is that instead of becoming this bold, relaxed, confident, strong wonder that Adam had imagined he would become, soaring to new heights and freeing himself by no longer following God's commands - he loses the anointing around him that covered him, becomes naked and exposed, and like a frightened animal hides in the bushes when God

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comes for a walk – and the devil becomes his new master. Duh!

The world is full of fear and all the wrong choices people make are because of fear. It really doesn't matter what your fear is, the bottom line is that fear is fear and fear is a killer. Fear only gives you a lifetime of bondage and often a shortened one.

Those who through fear...were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Hebrews 2:15

One of the many ways fear gets in our heart is by us disengaging our heart from God's by wilfully violating our conscience. This is what sin is, it's whatever is not from faith (Romans 14:23). Confess it quickly, free yourself from self condemnation. Talk to God naturally, be real with Him, He will always lead you out into true freedom. He loves you!

Remember, every time you *knowingly* make a wrong choice you present yourself to the devil as his slave. 'Yes but we are under grace.' Yes, Job's children were under grace too but they died. Why? Because they didn't exercise faith in God's grace.

Therefore it is of faith so that it might be according to grace.

Romans 4:16

Faith is the way into grace. If you don't exercise faith (or if someone else does not on your behalf in prayer) you won't receive God's grace. It's that simple. And what is faith? Faith is what you know from God's word, what you choose to believe in your heart and what you then speak out of your mouth.

Since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I believe and therefore I spoke,' we also believe and therefore speak.

2 Corinthians 4:13

The word of God contains within it all the power you need for your deliverance. Put it diligently in your heart and speak it

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consistently out of your mouth and you will be free.

For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...

Hebrew 4:12

Fear condemns you and pulls you down, it makes you move further away from God. When you sin you are haemorrhaging hope while at the same time your flesh is telling you that you're getting what you really need. The more you sin the weaker you get.

Countering all of this takes effort, in fact it takes so much effort that it is described as a fight in the New Testament.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession...

1 Timothy 6:12

You have to battle with mental pressure, your body and the natural world around you to make the choice to believe and speak God's word, to keep making a good confession. Just like fighting it takes tremendous effort. Some believers think if something requires effort that means that it must be works. No, no, no! Works is trying to approach God and receive His blessings by being good enough. That's downright impossible. Faith is pressing in by making time to hear the word, choosing to believe it and choosing to speak it out of your mouth. Abandoning a lifestyle of faith is the worst thing you could ever do. This is what Job's children did, they abandoned faith and tried to find fulfilment in the flesh and died.

If Job's children had had parents who declared God's protection and love over them they may have lived long enough to eventually come to their senses. Unfortunately Job was obsessed with his children's failures and couldn't handle the situation by faith, he dreaded that something terrible would happen to them – and it did.

After losing his children and many possessions Job naturally

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must have begun to doubt God's goodness in other areas. His demise began with fear for his family and possessions but his heart probably didn't condemn him enough to leave him living in fear of sickness. However, after the first round of disasters Job's confidence would have begun to wane in new areas. Areas where previously Job was strong he had now become weak and let fear creep in. After all, if, from Job's perspective, God has killed his children and ruined his livelihood, what was there to stop Him from taking away his health?

Job is naturally devastated by his calamity but he still incomprehensibly attributes the whole thing to God. I often wonder: If people think God goes around causing calamities what do they think the devil does all day?

A wrong mindset after one setback often opens the door to another. This goes on until a person no longer knows what to believe about anything. They then invariably end up taking everything the devil throws at them lying down, while delusionally believing that it is all the hand of God.

When something unexpected goes wrong in your life don't sit there and say, 'God, why have you let this happen to me?' Say, 'God how have I let this happen to myself?' or if you are quite young, 'who has let this happen to me?' Sometimes the answer to that last question is tragically all too obvious, but one thing for sure it was never God. Satan is absolutely merciless, he will use a parent's spiritual negligence to enter through any doorway into a child's life that he can. It's always vitally important to hear from God how to pray on your child's behalf.

After Job's first round of disasters Satan sees new doorways of opportunity in Job's life and arrogantly goes a second time to God. This time he is sure he can really make the point that no one loves God for who He is. Incredibly Job does, even when he mistakenly believes that God is the cause of his suffering!

Again 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. And 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."

Then 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."

So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life."

So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Job 2:1-7

God again challenges Satan as to why has he set his heart on Job – especially now that despite all his suffering he still holds fast to his integrity.

But Shenstone! you may exclaim, aren't you overlooking one glaring contradiction? God says he harmed Job because he admits the devil incited Him against him. No, and No again!

He [Job] holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.

Job 2:3

There it is, black and white. There is what? Satan incited God to do something but this doesn't mean God actually did it.

To incite someone to do something does not necessarily mean you actually make them do it. God didn't actually go and do anything to Job, the devil did.

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So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Job 2:7

Unfortunately Job doesn't see the spiritual realm and all these meetings between God and the devil. He sees his whole situation the wrong way round. After the first disaster struck 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.” In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

Job 1:21-22

Job was completely wrong. God wasn't taking anything away from him, the devil was.

The Bible says that Job did not sin or charge God with wrong doing, but Job did wrongly assume that God did things that He never did. Although this was mistaken thinking it was not a sin. It's important to recognise that it was Job who said these things about God taking things away from him, not God.

Chapter 3

Job's Comforters

After these calamities strike Job, three of his friends appear, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. They can only see Job's situation through the eyes of what 'sin' Job must have committed to cause it all.

In Job chapter 4 Eliphaz launches straight into Job.

**“Remember now, who ever perished innocent?
Or where were the upright ever cut off?
Even as I have seen, those who plough iniquity
And sow trouble reap the same.
By the blast of God they perish,
By the breath of His anger they are consumed.”**
Job 4: 7-9

Eliphaz starts with the typical assertion that the reason bad things are happening to Job is because God is punishing him for some wickedness he must have done. Bildad and Zophar come at Job from the same angle, that he must have aroused God's wrath in some way. Job contends with his three friends that he has not committed some terrible hidden sin that he has not knowingly or unknowingly repented of. Job rightly understands that it's impossible to be perfect before God but he also understands that this is the reason for sacrifices in the first place. He wants to know why God apparently isn't forgiving him.

**Why then do you not pardon my transgression,
And take away my iniquity?**
Job 7:21

This is really clear. Job is quite rightly saying even if I have sinned, just like everyone else does, how come I don't get to be forgiven when I sacrifice, how come I get picked on by you

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God? Job is also right in asserting to his friends endless accusations and demands for some special repentance, that he hasn't done anything outstandingly wrong, that isn't covered by his sacrifices. On the other hand Job is completely wrong because he is not being picked on by God at all.

Job didn't commit any particular sin, he simply opened the door to the devil through fear and negative confessions dressed up as sacrifices for his children. You can confess your sins so much that in the end you think about nothing except your sins. Then you end up condemning yourself and living and speaking in fear instead of faith. If God was going to get anyone for their sins we would have all been gotten a long time ago. God had a plan right from the moment of the fall in Eden to deal with humanity's sins. The plan was for Jesus to take them all in our place, and thank God he did.

As the book of Job progresses Job muses many times about why God has allowed bad things to happen to him and where is the justice in it all. Job's three friends keep replying that he surely must have done something really awful and get angry with him because he tells them that he is righteous before God. His friends object saying that no one is righteous before God, but here is their big mistake: if no one is righteous before God and if God is punishing Job for his sins, why isn't the whole world being punished for their sins? In fact why hasn't everyone been blasted to bits long ago? The answer is that in Job's case he is righteous before God because of his faith in God to keep him righteous through the sacrifices he makes. For anyone not putting their faith in God, God is patiently waiting for them to make that choice rather than die in their sins.

Where Job falls down is that he doesn't apply the same faith he has for his righteousness before God to God's goodness in his everyday life. Then when things go badly wrong he starts to question everything, including whether or not God is being consistent and fair, or even loves him at all.

This is the great contradiction in the lives of many believers. They understand enough to know that they are righteous and that God has saved their soul and therefore loves them in some

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wonderful divine way, but strangely they also think that He doesn't treat them with the same amazing love when it comes to their everyday life. People think that God withholds prosperity from them, makes them sick and allows a variety of trials because they are not *good enough* for *all* of His blessings.

Further into the book of Job another younger friend appears called Elihu. His name *Elihu* means *He is God*. It says a lot about his family and upbringing. Elihu says some good things and doesn't get rebuked by God at the end of the book like Job's other three friends. In Job 34 Elihu makes a startling assertion about Job which is often misread. He says:

For Job has said, 'I am righteous, but God has taken away my justice.'

Job 34:5

Many people think, aha, here Job thinks he's perfect and God has had to do all this bad stuff to him to show him he's not. No, not at all. Job correctly asserts that he is righteous because he makes the sacrifices and follows God's prescription for dealing with his failures. Job was never so completely dumb as to think he was perfect. The heart of the problem is revealed when he says, '*God has taken away my justice.*' Job is saying that God is not being faithful to His promises. In other words, he's complaining that the word he believes isn't working.

Elihu goes to great lengths to point out the absurdity of this assumption which would mean that God wasn't keeping His promises. It's one we have all been tempted to make. That because we don't understand the trials we face in our life we start saying that God is letting us down somehow. Nothing is often further from the truth. It's usually our own ignorance that is blowing everything to smithereens.

Elihu laments Job's spiral into depression and negativity:

For you say, 'What advantage will it be to you? What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?'

Job 35:3

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Job has even started asking, what's the point of living a good life, what difference would it have made if I had gone out and sinned everyday.

Then Elihu really starts to hit home.

Surely God will not listen to empty talk, nor will the Almighty regard it. Although you say you do not see Him, yet justice is before Him, and you must wait for Him. And now, because He has not punished in His anger, nor taken much notice of folly. Therefore Job opens his mouth in vain he multiplies words without knowledge.

Job 35:13-16

Elihu lays it on, he warns Job that God is not listening to him walking around his house all day complaining about how unfairly God is supposedly treating him. Elihu says, '*Justice is before Him,*' in other words, if you really want to know where real justice is, it's with God, not elsewhere. Moreover Elihu declares to Job that God hasn't been punishing him in His anger. Job is so wrong that Elihu says he is spouting an ever increasing torrent of words and it's all without knowledge.

Have you ever been there?

Elihu's sermon reaches it's height in Job 36 and 37. He thunders on preaching to Job that there is no way that God is ever unjust:

**I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker...
"Behold, God is mighty, but despises no one;
He is mighty in strength of understanding.
He does not preserve the life of the wicked,
But gives justice to the oppressed, He does
not withdraw His eyes from the righteous"**

Job 36:3-7

Elihu doesn't mince his words, he says '*I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.*' In other words God is in the right here Job, not you! Elihu reminds Job that God does not

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abandon the righteousness or take his eye off them and despises no one.

In verse 6 Elihu declares that it is not God who preserves the life of the wicked. If the wicked live a long and apparently prosperous life, it's because it's in the devil's interests for them to do so, not God's. The wicked man's day is coming, only judgement awaits him after this life. God does not delight in the death of the wicked but rather that they turn from their wicked ways before they die (Ezekiel 33:11).

Elihu points out in Job 36:10 that, '*God opens the ears of the righteous for instruction*' and that if they obey Him they prosper (v 11) but if not, '*they die by the sword and shall die without knowledge*' (v 12).

Elihu does not say that God kills His people. He makes the outstanding point which so many people down the ages don't seem to get – that if you walk in God's ways you prosper but that this requires giving attention to His instruction first; And if you don't walk in His ways you fall. This is nothing in the world to do with God's attitude towards you or you being good enough. No one since Adam has ever been good enough except Jesus, so get that right out of your head. It's about understanding and wisdom. Notice that Elihu says the righteous can, '*die by the sword without knowledge!*'

Elihu goes on to tell Job that God would have brought him out of his distresses, except that by the time he was in them Job was so filled with judgement because of the wicked that God couldn't.

But you are filled with the judgement due the wicked; Judgement and justice take hold of you.
Job 36:17

Quite simply God was unable to step in and deliver Job at any point during his crisis because Job was so full of anger that the wicked seemed better off than him despite his endeavours to live a godly lifestyle. Elihu even puts it to Job objectively that it's ridiculous to go around angry at God because after all, if

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God wanted to, He could wipe him out with one blow. Of course the whole point of what Elihu is saying is that God **is not** like this and that's why Job is so wrong.

Elihu continues on with his message and by the end of Job chapter 36 and into chapter 37 he is declaring the awesomeness of God in creation. By end of chapter 37 Elihu rises to a magnificent crescendo with the great revelation that Job so desperately needed to hear.

**With God is awesome majesty.
As for the Almighty, we cannot find Him;
He is excellent in power,
In judgement and abundant justice;
HE DOES NOT OPPRESS.
Therefore men fear Him;
He shows no partiality to any who are wise
of heart.**

Job 37:22-24

Elihu is right on the ball. He smacks it to Job who is lying there covered in boils, lost his children, lost his possessions and full of bitterness and anger. God is not the oppressor! This is exactly the lie that Job believed all along – that it was God who was oppressing him, but it was not! The oppressor is the devil!

The magnificent faith and anointed preaching of this man Elihu in declaring the awesome goodness of God opens wide a door straight to heaven where up until now in Job's life there had been no way in. Previously where only the devil had been able to enter in, run amok and wreak havoc, now Elihu's words of faith bring none other than God Himself on the scene. Elihu begins to declare the wonders of creation, the miracle of the sky, the mystery of light and warmth and at the very point where Elihu declares...

God does not oppress...He shows no partiality

...the spiritual realm rips open and God actually physically appears (Job 42:5) and begins speaking directly to Job. He takes off where Elihu was going and continues declaring the

Job's Comforters

wonders of creation and asking Job if he even has the slightest idea how these things work.

If you want deliverance, do what Elihu did, declare the goodness of God. Endlessly repeating the injustice of your oppression and or declaring the problem simply keeps the devil on the scene.

Without words of fear the devil has no inroad into your life, with words of fear there is no way you will ever get him out.

Chapter 4

God Speaks

God asks Job a series of questions that leave him speechless.

“Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding.”

Job 38:2-4

As Chapter 38 rolls on into 39, 40 and 41 God repeatedly asks Job how creation works, and reveals to him what a vast amount of things there are that he does not know.

God graphically points out to Job, that in the same way that he has absolutely no idea how many things work in the physical realm, his problem is the same in the spiritual realm. Job cries:

I have uttered what I did not understand...

Job 42:3

Job now recounts the beginnings of his problems. He spoke things that he did not understand and then when things got rough he didn't care what he said, he just let rip.

**Therefore I will not restrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit.**

Job 7:11

But that's just the start, he goes on to say that he said:

...things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

Job 42:3

God Speaks

This gets interesting because in the Hebrew the word for *wonderful* is *pawlaw* (Strong's 6381). The Strong's lexicon's meanings for *pawlaw* are given as: "to be (causatively to make) great, difficult, wonderful: to accomplish, (arise too, be too) hard, hidden, things too high..."

What is Job saying? He is saying that he said things that he didn't understand and that they caused great, difficult, wonderful (in the sense that you wonder at them because they are outside of your understanding) results. His words caused hard things to happen that were outside of his understanding. Job finishes up with a fresh revelation of God.

Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Job 42:1-6

Job finally sees things differently. Previously he says that he had only heard about God but now he has seen Him. The result? Terror? No. Remorse for sin? Not really. A declaration of acceptance of suffering? No. Job says he abhors himself. Why? Because of his complete stupidity in blaming the problems he had brought on himself on God.

Then Job answered the Lord and said: "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You."

Job 42:1-2

Job admits that God can do anything and that His purposes are not thwarted, therefore Job's problems are not God's fault. God was able to deliver Job at any time but Job didn't let Him. This is a big step for Job, previously he was saying, 'where is God in all of this?' He goes on, as mentioned previously, to openly admit that he has been ignorant and said the wrong thing. That he has uttered what he did not understand.

At the end of the book of Job God speaks up and rebukes Job's

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three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar for saying that He had punished Job with the suffering he experienced.

Job's three friends are just a bunch of idiots. Eliphaz had started off first:

**Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects;
Therefore do not despise the chastening of the
Almighty. For He bruises, but He binds up; He
wounds, but His hands make whole.**

Job 5:17-18

Sound familiar? According to Eliphaz God bruises then binds up, He wounds then makes whole. You may have heard such nonsense yourself, well it's not true because God reprimanded Eliphaz for it. He said:

For you have not spoken of Me what is right.

Job 42:7

Bildad is a complete idiot. First he tells Job that God actually killed all his children...

**If your sons have sinned against Him, He has
cast them away for their transgression.**

Job 8:4

Then he blames the whole thing on women and says we are all worms.

**Or how can he be pure who is born of a
woman? If even the moon does not shine, And
the stars are not pure in His sight, How much
less man, who is a maggot, And a son of
man, who is a worm?"**

Job 25:4-6

Finally Zophar proclaims that God is exacting punishment from Job and that he should really be thankful that at least he's not dead, because God really ought to punish him a lot more than He has, although exactly for what he never articulates.

God Speaks

Know therefore that God exacts from you, less than your iniquity deserves.

Job 11:6

And what did God have to say to this bunch of clowns, to Eliphaz and his two friends?

My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right.

Job 42:7

So the next time someone comes round and tells that: God is making you sick to teach you something but that He may heal you again soon, if He doesn't first kill you as you deserve; that God is happily killing your children or making them sick too; and that it's all your fault because you are a woman; and to remember that we are all worms before God anyway, etc, you know what to tell them... you have not spoken what is right!

Notice that God does not condemn Elihu at all.

Job realises that he is profoundly ignorant and apologises and wishes he had never even opened his mouth. God forgives him and Job's confidence is restored. God doesn't attempt to explain all the intricacies of the spiritual realm to Job, He simply reminds him that He is not responsible for evil and to trust Him. For the first time in his life Job starts properly trusting God and ends up more blessed than he ever was.

God sends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar to Job so he can pray for them.

And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends.

Job 42:10

The first step in Job's restoration is him praying for his friends. Job forgives his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, even though they had greatly exasperated him and been completely wrong. Job really has had a change of heart. Job's not quite out

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of the woods yet. After things start to go well for Job suddenly his friends and family appear! Nice, where were they before?

Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the Lord had brought upon him.

Job 42:11

It is very important to understand exactly what this passage is saying. A casual glance at Job 42:11 looks as though it's saying that the Lord brought adversity on Job, it does not. Job 42:11 simply tells us that Job's family showed up, what their frame of mind was and what they believed about the whole calamity. Not what God did. The instigator of Job's calamity was clearly revealed in Job 2:7, it was the devil. The problem was that Job's family hadn't heard Elihu's preaching, they hadn't seen God like Job had. They were still living in the same kind of ignorant mindset Job was before his calamity.

After all that Job has been through the devil has still not given up on him. He immediately begins sending unbelieving relatives to Job as soon as the Lord starts restoring everything Job has lost. Why, because Satan knows that if he can work on your mind with enough negative words and unbelief that eventually it may take root; That you will start believing your life is too good and that soon God will have to come down and take it all away from you – to humble you. Thankfully Job had learned his lesson, he spent the rest of his life blessed. This time round the devil didn't steal anything from him.

Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning.

Job 42:12

Notice that God blessed the beginning of Job's life, the devil tried to wreck the middle and God blessed the end even more. Bear that in mind in your own life – God is out to bless your life: beginning, middle and end. God is not the oppressor!

Psalm 91

- 1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."
- 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler
And from the perilous pestilence.
- 4 He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth shall be your shield and buckler.
- 5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow that flies by day,
6 Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,
Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side,
And ten thousand at your right hand;
But it shall not come near you.
- 8 Only with your eyes shall you look,
And see the reward of the wicked.
- 9 Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place,
10 No evil shall befall you,
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;
- 11 For He shall give His angels charge over you,
To keep you in all your ways.
- 12 In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
- 13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
- 14 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will
deliver him;
I will set him on high, because he has known My name.
- 15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honour him.
- 16 With long life I will satisfy him,
And show him My salvation."

A prayer to come close to God and find His love:

Dear God in Heaven

I am sorry I have been so wrong about you. Now I see from the Bible that you never wanted me, or anyone else to ever be in lack or to shed even a single tear.

I have made many poor choices. Please forgive me.

Thank you that you sent Jesus your Son, to pay for all my sins and that you raised him from the dead to give me new life.

I have decided to believe in Jesus, I now say out loud –

Jesus is my Lord

Help me to always be real with you and myself. Thank you for giving me a new heart of love. Thank you that you have only good things in store for me.

Amen

If you have prayed this prayer, you are now a Christian!

God said in the Bible: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Jesus also said: "Whoever comes to me, I will never cast away." Whatever challenges you may face, always remember that God never rejects you, and that He is not the cause of unfair things in your life. Rise above them.

Ask God to guide you everyday. Read the Bible and ask God to help you understand it. Check out: www.martynshenstone.com

Yours

Martyn Shenstone