Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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Honoring God When Suffering Pain

(Jerry Fite)

James exhorts us to remember Job for his "patience" while suffering, and being blessed in the end by the Lord "*who is full of pity and merciful" (James 5:11).*

Job endured hearing four separate messengers deliver personally devasting news, Job's servants were slain as Job's oxen, donkeys, and camels were stolen away. Another messenger breaks the news that Job's tending servants and sheep were suddenly consumed by a fire of God striking from heaven. No doubt stunned, Job hears a fourth messenger report the sudden loss of Job's ten children who were killed in the eldest brother's house by a tornadic windstorm *(Job 1: 13-19).*

Job responded with a sorrowful and humble heart, honoring God' sovereignty over his life. Job said, *"Naked came out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah" (Job 1:21).*

God then allowed the Devil to test Job with a second trial. This time he was allowed to send pus-filled- boils creating inward pain upon Job's body, from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. Again, Job honored God's righteousness by responding to a doubting wife, " *"What, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* In neither trial did Job *"charge God foolishly," nor "sin with his lips" (Job 1:22, 2:10).*

Job's three friends assumed God was punishing him because of sins. Yet, Job and God knew he was a *"perfect and upright man; one that feareth God, and turneth away from evil" (Job 1:8).* Eliphaz countered: *"Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright cut off?" (Job 4:7).* He tries to help Job come clean by encouraging him to *"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; Therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty" (Job 5:17).* Bildad challenges Job by saying *"If thou wert pure and upright; surely how He* (God -jf) *would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous" (Job 8:6-7).* Zophar, doubling down on what appears to him as a self-righteous Job, says, *"Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth" (Job 11:6).* Dialog ceases when Elphaz, Bildad and Zophar conclude, Job *'was righteous in his own eyes." (Job 32:1).*

Elihu, the concerned observer, expresses his anger with Job's three friends because they *"had found no answer, and yet condemned Job" (Job 32:3).* His anger is also directed toward Job because he felt Job *"justified himself rather than God" (Job. 32:2).* He condemns Job who *"... multiplieth his words against God" (Job 35:37).* Listening to Job speak, Job was not honoring God, but challenging God in his frustration - *"Oh, that I had one to hear me; (Lo, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer me)..." (Job 31:35).*

Job thinks God may be punishing him for the sins of his youth *(Job 13:26).* He knows he fears God and lives righteously before Him. . So, he begins to question the "Justice" of God. Instead of trusting in a just God when suffering, Job challenges God, In the end, Job repents of uttering *"that which I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not" (Job 42:3).*

God is just, righteous, full of pity, and merciful even when we are suffering pain. Trust in God and his faithfulness *"who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear..." (I Corinthians 10:12).* When you find yourself suffering through painful circumstances, continue to do what is right. Honor God's sovereignty and His faithfulness, instead of challenging God's character.