

LESSON 1 . . . When Adversity Comes

(Job 1:1-22)



Nothing confuses us and tries our faith like seeing really bad things happen to really good people. God’s fairness and love sometimes come into question when a young parent is killed, leaving a spouse and small children, or when a young child is diagnosed with terminal cancer. Such suffering and distress leave us asking WHY?

NOTES

Job is the first of the five books of wisdom, or poetry, in the Old Testament. What are the other four books?

The historical setting of the book of *Job* appears to be between the time of Noah and the time of Moses. There is no mention of the Law of Moses in this book, but there appears to be a reference to the Flood when *Job* talks about *wicked men* being *overflowed with a flood* (22:15-16).

No one knows for sure who wrote this book or when it was written. However, it is the oldest book in the Bible, pre-dating the Ten Commandments and the book of *Genesis*. The book of *Job* deals with this age-old question, “Why does a good God let bad things happen to good people?” The first chapter records *Job*’s adversity, beginning with . . .

Job’s Piety (1:1)

This book introduces us to *Job*—*a man in the land of Uz*, which was probably located southeast of the Dead Sea. Not only does this first verse tell us where *Job* lives, but also four things about *Job*’s character. What are they?

The word *perfect*, or blameless, portrays *Job* as being without any outstanding fault. He is also *upright*, which describes a man of integrity, or without deceit. He also *feared God*, which means he revered God and lived obediently and respectfully in awe of Him. In addition, *Job* turned away from *evil*. He did not toy with temptation or sin.

After **Job’s piety**, we read about . . .

Job's Prosperity (1:2-5)

Job is a very prosperous man in every way. He has *seven sons and three daughters* (1:2). He also has 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, plus a large number of servants. Therefore, he is *the greatest*, or richest, person of the region (1:3). In Job's day, wealth was measured in terms of land, livestock, and servants. Job has an abundance of all three.

Job's family was close-knit. Each time one of his seven sons held a feast (probably a birthday party), they invited their sisters to celebrate with them. When the party was over, Job would offer a burnt offering for all of them. Job was not only right with God, but he also wanted his children to be right with God (1:4-5). He practiced what New Testament commandment found in Ephesians 6:4?

After Job's **piety** and **prosperity** comes . . .

Job's Problems (1:6-19)

After a brief introduction of Job, the scene shifts from earth to heaven. *The sons of God* come to present themselves before the Lord (1:6). In this passage, the *sons of God* are angelic hosts, who periodically appear before God, possibly to report on their activities or to receive their next assignments.

Satan also appears before God, and God asks him from where he has come (1:7). Our omniscient God certainly knows where this fallen angel has been, as well as what he has been doing. Satan tells Him he has been roaming the earth. Why has Satan been roaming, according to 1 Peter 5:8b?



The Lord asks Satan if he has noticed His servant Job, who is the finest man on earth—a man of integrity who fears God and turns away from evil. Satan replies Job obeys and worships God only because He has protected him and allowed him to prosper. However, Satan says, if God were to take away everything Job has, he would *curse* God to His *face*. The Lord then

tells Satan that everything Job has is now in Satan's hands, but he is not to lay a finger on Job. Satan then leaves the presence of the Lord (1:8-12). Sometime later, while Job's sons and daughters are having a party at the oldest brother's house, a messenger comes to Job. He tells Job, as the oxen were plowing and the donkeys grazing nearby, the Sabeans attacked and carried off all the animals. The Sabeans are descendants of Seba, son of Cush (Gen. 10:7). The messenger also reports they killed the servants who were tending the livestock, and he is the only one to escape (1:13-15).

While this messenger is still speaking, another messenger comes to tell Job that fire fell from the sky and burned up his sheep along with the servants, and he is the only one to escape. Then, another messenger comes and tells Job that Chaldean raiding parties carried off all of Job's camels. They also killed all the servants, and he is the only one to escape (1:16-17).

As the third messenger is speaking, still another messenger comes to tell Job that, while his sons and daughters were feasting, a mighty wind (probably a tornado) swept down from the desert and destroyed the house (1:18-19a). What does the messenger say happened as a result (1:19b)?

After Job's **piety**, **prosperity**, and **problems** comes . . .

Job's Prayer (1:20-22)

After hearing the devastating reports, Job gets up, tears his robe, and shaves his head—all expressions of grief in the biblical world (1:20). Then, Job falls on the ground in worship and prays: *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither* (1:21a). Job has the proper perspective on his possessions. What does he pray next (1:21b)?

Job is expressing his faith in God's sovereignty. Job grieves, but he also worships the Lord. Our ultimate response to adversity in our lives should always be to rest in faith alone and worship God as our Sovereign Lord.

We learn three things about Job from his prayer. First, Job realizes everything he had came from God. When he came into the world, he had no fortune or family. Second, he knows the Lord who gave it all to him has every right to take it all away. Therefore, Job still believes in God's goodness.

Third, Job’s great faith is revealed when, in the midst of his sorrow and grief, he can say, *blessed be the name of the LORD* (1:21c).

One lesson we must learn from Job is we cannot prepare for adversity **after** it comes. How is this truth expressed in Proverbs 24:10?

The real caliber of our faith is not revealed when we have a flat tire, when we have the 24-hour flu, or when our checkbook doesn’t balance. The real test of our faith is revealed when the vicious “tornadoes” of life hit us.

Years ago, the countertops in banks were made of marble to detect counterfeit coins. A teller could determine if a coin was real or counterfeit by the sound it made when it hit the marble. God allowed Satan to give Job a few hits to see how true Job would “ring.” When the “tornadoes” of adversity hit in your life, how will your faith “ring”?



Peter tells us we can rejoice when we suffer various temporary trials because God is testing the genuineness of our faith, which is more precious than gold refined by fire (1 Pet. 1:6-7b). Then, what does the rest of verse 7 declare?

From learning of Job’s **piety, prosperity, problems, and prayer**, we can discover that, **when adversity comes**, we don’t need to know **why**, we only need to know **Who**.