

# Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal Among You

## An Expositional Journey Through 1Peter 1Peter 4:12-19

### 47 Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal, Part 3

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April 7, 2019

#### 1 Peter 4:12-19

**12** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

**13** but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

**14** If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

**15** Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;

**16** but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

**17** For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

**18** *AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?*

**19** Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

To the Glory of God

Now we are continuing to examine one of the most important Passages in the entire Bible that discusses the Issue of Suffering. And, as we have already discovered, this Passage teaches us several things:

- ✓ Suffering is not a Surprise, but a Plan of God.
- ✓ Suffering is designed to glorify God and benefit us.

- ✓ Suffering is designed and controlled by God.
- ✓ Suffering is the Will of God.
- ✓ Suffering is a Gift from God.

... and we have been going over all of this in the previous Sermons. So, today, I want to try to summarize what we have learned, and then put an exclamation point on this amazing Passage in **1 Peter**.

Now one of the things we need to keep in mind is that the Bible teaches *clearly* and *repeatedly* that God has placed a Divine "Seal", a "Hedge" around all genuine believers so that satan *cannot* possess or inhabit or take control of them, or even touch them, unless he receives Permission from God.

And this is just another example of how the Bible frames the "Absolute Sovereignty of God". Satan is *not* the master of this Universe, God is. And, even though satan may desire to "sift us like wheat", he cannot even touch a genuine believer unless he receives Permission from God. So, satan has to go to God and ask for Divine Permission to touch the possessions or the flesh of a true believer.

And satan's goal in all of this is to prove that whatever affection that a believer has for God is paper thin, that it is based only on the fact that God blesses him and heals him, and does all manner of Good for and to him. But let satan touch that believer and *take away* his blessings or his freedom or his health, and satan's goal will be realized as that so-called believer will "curse God to His Face".

But God is not silly. And so, God is not tricked or fooled by satan's desires. God is Omniscient. And God already knows whether that individual is a genuine believer. And God already knows *exactly* how that believer is going to respond to the Suffering that He is allowing satan to bring into his life.

So, even though it is common to hear people say, "*Well, God did that so He could see how you would handle it*", that statement simply isn't true. God already knows how you were going to handle that situation, way before it ever came your way. But there are at least four entities that did NOT know how you handle the Suffering that God *allowed* to come your way:

1. The individual believer himself
2. Those who know, or who are watching the believer now

3. Those who will either come to know, or who will read about that believer in the future
4. Satan

So, the "testing" that Peter talks about here in verse 12 has *nothing* to do with God's lack of knowing the Future perfectly. That concept is the heresy called "Open Theism" that says that God really has no idea about what will happen in the future (any more than we do), and He has no idea how we will decide or what our choices will be. And so, Open Theism teaches that God has to wait to see which way we go, *hoping* that we will choose the "right" way. Open Theism *exalts* the so-called "free will" of Man, and Man's supposed "autonomy" by *attacking*, and even totally *eliminating* God's Omniscience and Omnipotence.

But the one, true, and living God, Who is revealed in the 66 Books of sacred writ, looks at the Past, Present, and Future all at once. He *knows* the Future *perfectly* precisely because He *controls* the Future, *absolutely*. So, God doesn't test anybody so *He* can see how we will handle it. God tests us so *we* can see how we will handle it, and so *those who are watching us* will see how we will handle it, and *those who will come to know about us (at some future date)* will see how we handled our Suffering when it came to us. And as a result, God will look magnificent. And God also tests us to prove to satan that our Conversion is genuine, and that we love God for Who He is, and *not* merely for what He does for us.

You see, the Bible goes on to teach (equally clear) that if God *does* grant His Permission to satan to "touch" the believer with "Evil", then the Promise of God is that God will *powerfully* and *sovereignly* and *effectually* "work" that "Evil" with all the other things that God has either sovereignly "allowed" or "caused" to come into our lives so that two things will come to pass:

1. God will be glorified
2. Our Joy will be full

In fact, the Bible also teaches (repeatedly) that *without* God sovereignly (and passively) "allowing" that "Evil" to come to the believer, the *greater* "Good" of God receiving Glory, and us receiving the

fullness of Joy, would *not* have occurred. And that means that God was *not* moved by satan's pleas or somehow "goaded" into doing whatever satan wanted. But rather, God was moved by His Own innate Passion to be Glorified, and His ongoing Desire to bring believers into the fullness of Joy in Him. And God will "get Himself Glory" in all four of those entities:

- God alone will be praised and magnified and honored by the individual believer as that individual remains faithful, fruitful, and busy in the Work of the Lord, even as he burns. And that believer will, finally, enter into the fullness of Joy as a direct result of having suffered.
- God's Faithfulness and Purity will be seen and displayed, and God will look magnificent to those who know and watch that believer suffer faithfully now, and by those who will come to know the testimony of his suffering at some future point.
- Satan will be humiliated at the Reality that his best effort at turning that individual against God through Suffering failed.

Now we have already gone over several verses and Passages in this mini-series because we want Scripture itself to interpret Scripture. So, today, I would like us to look at the **Book of Job** which will help us to understand more fully just what Peter was talking about in the Passage before us. So, in the case of this Old Testament believer named Job, we read this:

### **Job 1:6**

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

Now there is a lot of speculation about just who the "sons of God" are, and just how they "present themselves before the Lord", as well as just how satan "comes among them". And many people throughout Church history view the "sons of God" as Angels. And that may well be true. But it may *also* be true that, in some cases, these "sons" are simply saved people, because **Romans 8:14** says:

**For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**

... where the "sons of God" in this Passage are clearly saved people, *not* Angels.

Now, look, I believe in Angels. The Bible clearly teaches that Angels exist. But there is a lot I simply don't know or understand about Angels, so I don't talk about them very much because it is a waste of time to simply speculate. But I absolutely *do* believe in them.

What I *do* know is that Angels are "spiritual creatures" who were created by God, and who abide in Heaven with God. I know that every time that Angels appeared to people in the Bible, they looked like men and they spoke in a language that people could understand. I also know that Angels possess supernatural strength and stamina, and they can fly and appear and disappear. The Bible also *seems* to teach that there are different "kinds" of Angels who have different *assignments*. And whereas I find no decisive verse or passage that overtly teaches that all saved people or children have "Guardian Angels" around them, I *do* see evidence that Angels do *interact* with human beings on occasion and by times, and *some* offer protection and give announcements and warnings.

I'm not really sure what the difference is between "heavenly *beings*" and "heavenly *creatures*" and Angels. But I do know that at *some* point before Adam fell, the Arch-Angel Lucifer rebelled against God and sought to bring about a revolution in Heaven, and God cast him and 1/3 of all Angels into the earth. It was at *this* time that Lucifer *became* the "devil" or satan", and the fallen angels *became* "demons" or "unclean spirits". So, God did *not* "create" satan or demons. God created Lucifer, and God created Angels. and Lucifer *became* satan and Angels *became* demons when they rebelled. Now I have no idea if that means that Angels have a "will" of their own, or if *some* do and others don't, or if God created other Angels to take the place of the ones He cast into the earth.

But we also must understand that Angels do *not* experience Salvation or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit like we do. Now some "big shots" in Church History have taught that God chose some of the Angels to "save", and, so, they would be the "elect angels", and God left the others to themselves and cast them to the earth. But I find *nothing* in the Bible that would teach that *some* Angels are "saved" and others aren't. I find *nothing* to suggest that Angels have "Original Sin" either.

And that means that Angels are not “lost” in the way that we are, and, so, they don’t trust in Jesus and in His finished Work the way we do, and they don’t repent and are “born again”. That just isn’t in the Bible.

And that means that Angels are not “filled” or “led” by God’s Spirit the way that believers are. Angels are simply dispatched by God’s Command, and they come and go according to God’s Will. There is no record of Angels reading the Bible, or preaching or praying, but they do worship! O, how they worship! And the Bible also teaches that Angels *periodically* engage in “warfare” with demons.

Now I said all of that to say this. When most people read **Job 1:6**, they *automatically* assume that the “sons of God” here are Angels, and that this interaction with satan and God happened in Heaven. But I don’t believe that is true, and here’s why. As God the Spirit “moved along” the Apostle John, he wrote this in **The Revelation 12:7&8**:

**And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.**

Now most people see this, and they nod their heads and say, “Amen”, and then they just pass right on by. But I would like for us to look closely again at verse 8:

**and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven**

The Bible says here that since satan and the rebellious Angels have been thrown down into the earth, *there is no longer a place found for them in Heaven!* So, contrary to what some really famous Preachers teach, satan does *not* go back into Heaven to debate with God and demand permission to sift them. The Bible says that satan is not allowed back into Heaven since he fell. Yet the Bible says in **Job 1:6** that satan came among the “sons of God” as they were “presenting themselves before the Lord”.

So, according to **The Revelation 12:8**, this “presenting” does *not* occur in Heaven. And according to **Romans 8:14**, the “sons of God” are saved people, not Angels. So, where do saved people “present themselves” before the Lord? Here on the earth, every time saints gather together to worship God. We assemble *with* each other and *before* the Lord, and God is in our midst. But, as we do that, satan, who is now entombed on earth, also comes among us. And, periodically, he demands Permission from God to sift some of us like wheat.

So, as we are gathering together to read God’s Word, or as we are singing together, or as we are praying or worshipping God through giving or through speaking or teaching or preaching, God is there among us. And as we gather here on earth, satan comes also among us. Now look what happened when the saints of God were gathered and satan came:

### **Job 1:7-12**

**The Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." Then Satan answered the Lord, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face." Then the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord.**

... so satan acknowledges that God has placed a “hedge” about Job and his house and all that he has. And satan also acknowledges that God had blessed Job, and that was *why* his possessions had increased. And so, the Issue then becomes, “*Does Job fear God for nothing?*” In other words, is it true that Job *fears* God, or that he *reverentially respects* God for no other reason than God has obviously *avored* him? In other words, is the *Source* of Job’s respectful relationship with God, based solely on the fact that God has abundantly blessed Job, or does Job truly love God?

I mean, after all, talk is cheap. Who *wouldn’t* think good things about God if they were one of the wealthiest people on earth? Who

wouldn't want a "god" that heals your body every time you get sick, and prospers everything your hand touches?

When the "Prosperity Preachers" from America go to people in other countries, who live on dirt floors and routinely watch their children starve to death, and tell them that praying a prayer, and psyching themselves up with "mantras" about faith, and joining their religious group will result in those people possessing unlimited wealth, and that they will no longer have to bury their children, who wouldn't want a "jesus" like that? Most parents would stand on their heads and scream like a chicken if they thought that it would help their families achieve a higher standard in this life.

But people standing in line all night so they can get something from this "god" to make their lives on earth easier is *not* a true, biblical Revival. Masses of people getting excited about Jesus so they can be healed and fed, and escape earthly suffering, is *not* the spread of Biblical Christianity. Salvation is *not* about emotional excitement brought about by the enlargement of our pocketbook or an end to disease or the promise of a better life. *Everybody* wants that. The most wicked people in the world, who hate God, want a better life down here. *Nobody* wants to suffer or hurt or be disappointed or get sick or be tortured or live in poverty. And they will worship and follow any "god" who can bring them deliverance. But God is *not* truly honored, and Jesus is *not* made to look glorious by any of this.

These charlatans are *not* preaching the Biblical Gospel. All they're doing is appealing to the most *basic* needs of all Humanity, whether lost or saved. And *that* is why they draw such a huge crowd. This *isn't* a genuine Move of God's Spirit, this *isn't* a spiritual awakening; this is nothing more than hirelings *psychologically* motivating people to believe that by doing certain things they can get more out of this life, and to get more temporal benefits for themselves.

As I have told you before, you don't have to be saved to go to Church. You don't have to experience the miracle of the New Birth to want God to heal you or bless you or get you out of trouble. You don't have to be born again to cry out to God for God to help you. You don't have to be regenerate to recognize that God has done great things for you and rejoice over what He has done and thank Him for it. You don't have to be saved to enjoy reading the Bible or singing Hymns. You don't have to be saved to give money, sometimes large amounts of



money, to the church. You don't have to be saved to fast and pray and sacrifice your worldly possessions. You don't even have to be saved to teach your children about how wonderful God is. Lost people do all of these things all the time.

You have to be saved to love Jesus. We need to understand that, because of the Fall, loving Jesus is entirely *unnatural* and not *normal*. Since Adam sinned, for anyone to find the fullness of Joy in God runs completely *counter-intuitive* to the normal function of their brains and hearts. And so, lost people *cannot* love Jesus. They do *not* possess either the *ability* or even the *inclination* to treasure Jesus, the Christ. And, lost people also *cannot* enjoy Jesus. Lost people do not *long* to be near to Jesus. Lost people have no *desire* to draw close and to live their lives for no other reason than for the Glory of God. There is simply no capacity within unregenerate people to desire to display the Worth and Value of Jesus in the way they live their lives.

And so, Salvation is *not* about sitting in Church and getting smart about the Bible so you can win arguments. And so, Job *may* be one of those "fakers". Job *may* be "on God's Side" for no other reason than he senses that it is the "winning side". Or, Job may be a genuine believer who truly loves God. So, how will Job and the people who know Job then, and the people who will come to know Job in the future, ever know the Truth about him?

There is only one way. Through a series of "tests" that will "prove" that Job has experienced the miracle of the New Birth, and that he *genuinely* is saved and loves God. And this "proving" will benefit not only Job himself, but all those who knew him when he lived on the earth. But we need to know that this "proving" will also go way past those people, and some 5,000 years later, we, who read this account, will benefit greatly from the fact that Job's Salvation was genuine.

So, what happened when God gave satan Permission to test Job? Look at the account given in **Job 1:13-19**:

**Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up**

the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

Now look at this: the Sabeans, fire from God, the Chaldeans, and a great wind. Both human and parts of nature; both animate and inanimate sources. The Sabeans were the ancestors of the people of the modern nation of Yemen, while the Chaldeans were the ancient enemies of Israel. And these people had a long-standing *animosity* toward Job and the fact that Job was greatly blessed by God. But up until now, these enemies were sovereignly *prohibited* from hurting Job by the Hedge that God had placed around him. But when God gave all that Job had into the hands of satan to test him, the enemies of Job were empowered to do what they had wanted to do for quite some time.

Now it is very important to understand the dynamic here. Even though it was God's Will for satan to take all that Job had away from him, so that Job's Love for God could shine forth, God did not *force* the Sabeans or the Chaldeans to do what they did. Neither did satan *make* these evil people kill Job's slaves and steal his livestock.

No, all that satan did was to provide an "opportunity" for these two groups to carry out what was *already* in their hearts to do. And that "opportunity" is called "Temptation". Neither God nor satan *create* Evil. Evil *already resides* in the depraved heart of fallen people. Satan goes about to provide people with an *opportunity* to "act out" on the Evil that *already* dwells within them. **James 1:13-15** says:

**Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.**

Notice that James said that the “Lust” that periodically “carries us away”, and that “entices” us, is our “*own* lust”. It belongs *to* us. It resides *in* us. It is not floating around in the air, and it doesn’t come up from the ground, and it isn’t inside houses or buildings. Jesus said that Evil is in the human heart<sup>1</sup>. So, part of what it means to be “fallen” is that inside us resides various “lusts” that exist in our flesh, waiting for an opportunity to manifest themselves. And these lusts vary from one person to the next. Some people lust *sexually*, while others lust for money or power, or they lust for recognition or something else, *anything* else. And these various lusts are in competition with the *affections* of our hearts. And while Salvation awakens an ever-growing Affection for God, it does *not* destroy these fleshly lusts. We battle against these lusts every day, until we either die or Jesus returns.

And the ongoing process called “Sanctification” strengthens and empowers our Affection for God. And by availing ourselves of the various “Means of Grace”<sup>2</sup>, our capacity to act out on the lusts of our flesh are *diminished*, and we are better equipped to resist the temptation of satan when they come.

Both the Sabeans and Chaldeans hated Job and would have attacked him much sooner than they did. But they were divinely *prevented* by the Hedge that God had placed around Job. So, once God gave satan Permission to take all that Job had, satan presented these men with an opportunity to do what was already in their hearts. But notice that, even though they were given Permission to “act out” on the Evil in their hearts, even as they carried out this evil on Job, God was sovereignly allowing only a *portion* of what they wanted to do. So, while they were allowed to steal Job’s livestock and kill Job’s slaves, they could not touch Job.

And this tells us that, even when Evil people are allowed to hurt us, their capacity is still closely *managed* by God. Most of the time, Evil people are *not* allowed to do *everything* they would like to do. So, even when Evil is seemingly flourishing, Evil is never Sovereign. Satan is never Sovereign. Evil men are never Sovereign. God is Sovereign, and God is always Sovereign, and His Goal to purify us so that He will be

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<sup>1</sup> **Matthew 15:19**

<sup>2</sup> The “Means of Grace” are those various Gifts of God designed to strengthen the believer in his ongoing battle against the world; the flesh; and the devil like Bible Study; Prayer Meeting; Fellowship; the Sacraments; and Service. Those who avail themselves of these Means are better equipped to not yield to the various temptations that satan brings.

glorified and we will receive the fullness of Joy, is still in place, even when Evil is allowed to be manifested to some extent. And this is what Peter meant when he said in verse 19:

**Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.**

So, satan tempted both the Sabeans and Chaldeans with the *opportunity* to steal Job's livestock and kill his slaves. And, in their long-standing hatred of Job, these two groups *yielded* themselves to that opportunity and went about to act out on the Evil that was *already* in their hearts. And this means that, even though this was God's Will, and even though satan was involved, both the Sabeans and Chaldeans were "fully culpable" (responsible/accountable) in the actions they took. And so, they *could be* and they *were*, eventually, *damned* by God for what they did.

But notice that satan used more than people here. He also used two parts of God's Creation:

1. Fire from Heaven
2. Great Wind

... to test Job. And both the fire and the wind brought great agony and suffering to Job. The fire, which was an amazing, strange phenomenon, killed Job's slaves and burned up his sheep, while the great wind destroyed a house in which Job's children were throwing a party and killed them all. And the words of Peter ring true here:

**Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;**

Now remember, that Job lived during the time of the Patriarchs as described in the **Book of Genesis**. And so, wealth and prosperity was measured in land and in livestock, and in children, and in long life. And so, in a moment of time, Job went from being prosperous and blessed and comfortable and happy, to being in the agony of his soul and financially ruined.

*Obviously*, God had forsaken him. And now, he was childless and was facing not only financial ruination, but now (as far as he could see) Job himself was no longer protected from his enemies, and soon, Job would be attacked by the pagans, as well.

Now here is the moment of Truth. Job has just lost every Blessing that God had ever given to him. He is now childless and faced with economic disaster. So, this could go either way. Job could turn away from God, or he could use this opportunity as a means to prove that the Love that God had given to Job, for God, was real. So, how did Job respond to the sudden, strange, unbelievable Suffering that God had allowed satan to bring upon him? **Job 1:20&21** says:

**Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. He 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."**

... and here is what Peter said:

**but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

Now we need to realize that Job did not act this way because he was tough, or because he was brave, or because he was able to put up a good front. No, Job acted like this, and Peter taught us to respond like this, because that is what Salvation gives to us. We live for no other reason than to give God Glory. We rejoice and our own Joy is made full when God looks magnificent. And that is true *regardless* of how God chooses to glorify Himself.

So, when God truly transforms our nature, and when God gifts us with an ever-growing Love for God, it has *nothing* to do with any of the Blessings that God may have chosen to give to us. And that is very important because that means that this Love for God, and the Joy that we get from seeing God glorified, *cannot* be diminished when and if those Blessings are taken from us.

Now don't misunderstand what I'm saying here. Job hurt real bad here. He shaved his head and tore his clothes and fell down on the

ground. Job was truly in agony. Job was in unspeakable pain. And, if God's wills, that is what we might go through. We will cry and hurt and sorrow, and we will suffer agony that is hard to even express in words. So, it isn't a test to see if we hurt. We *will* hurt. We aren't robots, we are human, and when things go south, we're *supposed* to hurt.

But that isn't all we do. Because we are truly saved, we also worship God. Even in our pain. Even as we hurt. So, yes, we grieve. But we do not grieve like those who have no Hope. We grieve as those who believe that, even though we might not know what God is doing, we trust that God knows what God is doing. And so, even though we don't know what tomorrow holds, we know Who holds tomorrow, and we know Who holds our hand. Peter said this:

**... those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. (1 Peter 4:19)**

Peter says here that we can trust that *whatever* God is doing in, by, and through our Suffering is right! So, in his agony Job shaved his head and tore his clothes and fell down on the ground. But that's not all he did. This same man also worshipped God! And, obviously, he didn't worship God because everything was going well; he worshipped God because he was saved, and that's what saved people do, even when they hurt! And instead of despair and hopelessness, *this* is what came out of Job's mouth:

**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.**

... which is the language of Faith. It is believing that the Goal that God is accomplishing by blessing us with wonderful blessings and good health, and all the many wonderful things in the first place, is the very *same* Goal that God is working in and through when He takes everything away from us.

Now some very famous, modern Preachers<sup>3</sup> have boldly taught that Job was wrong when he said this. And they have actually mocked the statement of Job here. Others have suggested that Job was merely

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<sup>3</sup> Benny Hinn; Creflo Dollar; and Fred Price have all taught that Job was wrong for what he said here- much to the delight of their followers.

overcome with grief and really didn't understand what he was saying. But is that true? Now we really don't know who wrote the **Book of Job**. It may have been written many years after Job's death by the Prophet Jeremiah. We do know, however that Job *himself* didn't write this Book because the Book contains commentary that Job would not have known anything about. And one statement of commentary comes immediately after Job did and said what verses 20&21 describe, and that verse says:

**Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God. (Job 1:22)**

... so, Job "did not sin" nor "did he blame God" when he assigned the ultimate Source of all the Evil that had come upon him to God.

Now we might want to stop here and catch our breath. I mean this is enough, right? This man has already gone through the ringer, so God is probably going to give him a reprieve right about now, right? Well, look what happened when Job proved himself to be genuine in his Love toward God, even though all that he owned was taken from him.

#### **Job 2:1-6**

**Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause." Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face." So, the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life."**

Now again, this Passage gives us the degree to which God sovereignly controls satan. So, even though God has given him Permission to touch Job's "bone and flesh", God has *forbidden* satan from taking Job's life. But look at what satan was able to do:

## **Job 2:7**

**Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.**

So, not only has Job lost everything God had blessed him with, *including* his own children and was now totally financially ruined, now Job has to contend with boils all over his body. So, what was Job's response?

**And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes. (Job 2:8)**

Now the "ashes" here were literally a pile of burnt wood. And sitting among the ashes was an ancient ceremony that people carried out when they were grieving. And so, Job was already sitting in the ashes when he learned that he had become childless and was now in poverty. And this tells us the depth of Job's grief and agony. And the "potsherd" was a broken piece of pottery. So, when God gave Job Permission to touch Job's body, he continued to sit in the ashes and he then began to scrape the pus and dead skin with the piece of pottery- as he continued to grieve. So, this broken, grieving man, who is now totally ruined and has lost everything, as he is sitting in an ash pile, scraping himself from all the boils that are all over his body, look at the reaction that his wife had to all that God had allowed to come his way:

**Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9)**

O, how this woman failed God here! O, how all godly wives should take inventory as to *how* they respond to their husband's agonies! What an opportunity to reach out and pray and encourage her husband. Instead, all she did was *add* to his load and burden. But look how Job responded to her:

**But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?"... (Job 2:10a)**

... which shows an amazing understanding of what God's Will in Suffering is. Now the word "foolish" here has to do with the unsaved



pagans. So, by speaking out of the agony of her heart instead of trusting God, Job's wife was speaking like the pagans spoke who did not know anything about God.

Dear friends, we must be careful that we act as though we truly belong to Jesus. Part of going to Church and reading the Bible and being saved and loving Jesus is that we learn the "Ways of God". I understand unbelievers talking like this. They have no idea about God or His Word. I even understand new converts acting like this. They haven't had time to be taught. But I do *not* understand people, who have been in Church their whole lives, and who claim to be saved, and who read their Bibles, acting like Job's wife.

We must remember that Job lived during the days of the Patriarchs, so, Job didn't have a single inspired Book to read that would help him form his correct Theology about Suffering, like we do. Job didn't have 6,000 years of human history and 2,000 years of Church history to help him formulate his beliefs, like we do. But, most importantly, Job didn't have Jesus interceding for him at the Right Hand of the Majesty on High, nor did Job have God the Holy Spirit dwelling continually inside him. We do. So, the fact that Job understood Suffering the way he did is utterly amazing. And the fact that many people in the modern Church don't have a clue about this subject is the great scandal of our day. Here is what Peter said:

**Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.**

Now, again, *some* people *might* be tempted to think that Job was simply delirious from all the pain and agony he was going through, and was just speaking off the top of his head. But the writer of this Book settles that Question by adding another comment...

**... In all this Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 2:10b)**

Job *trusted* God. Job *believed* God. Job didn't think that God had abandoned him. Job didn't buy into the notion that Suffering meant that God was against him, or that God had thrown him aside. Somehow Job understood that the Goal of God, in blessing him with all

the things God had given him in the first place was the very *same* Goal of God in taking everything away. And even though he certainly didn't understand all the details, Job was rock solid that through this unbelievable and very strange fiery ordeal, that God would be glorified and that his own Joy would be made full!

Now there are two things we have yet to discover about this:

1. What was Job's final outcome?
2. What was Peter talking about in verses 17&18?

... and the reason I have saved this for last is because they are the same. What God is doing in the lives of everyone of us today when we find ourselves in the sudden and strange fiery ordeal of Suffering is the very *same thing* God was doing with Job long ago. And *how* God is going to "judge" His Own House today is *exactly* how God was "judging" Job back then. In other words, the only reason the account of Job's Suffering is in the Bible is to teach all believers what Peter meant when he wrote this Passage. And the only reason that what Peter wrote down some 2,000 years ago has been divinely preserved for us to be able to read this morning is so that when the sudden and strange fiery ordeal comes upon us, we will understand what God is doing, we will trust that what God does is not only correct, but the very BEST THING God could do for us, and we will also be able to actually obey Peter and Job, and say along with them:

**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**

... and...

**to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you... if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name...**

We must remember what God's Goal is through our Suffering. Because God's Goal is the *same* for every believer, *for all time*. And

God's Goal is two-fold. That through the "Fires of Purification", through the "burning of our ongoing and progressive Sanctification", two things will result that would NOT result if we had not burned:

1. God will be glorified.
2. Our Joy will be made full.

But, *why* in the world did Peter say:

**For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?**

... in a Passage about Suffering? What has any of this got to do with Suffering as a Christian?

Now if you are like me, you have heard these verses taught and preached many times in connection with things like the great Compromise that exists in the modern Church. And most of the time when these two verses are taught, they are taken completely out of context and used to say that God is going to "clean house" and get rid of all the tares and lukewarm and unsaved church members.

Now I believe that God is absolutely going to do all that, but these two verses are not talking about that. These verses have to do with *why* godly and saved people suffer. And they have to do with *how* their Suffering glorifies God. The first word in verse 17 is...

**"For"**

... which means, "Because". So, to understand *why* Peter began verse 17 with the word, "For", or "Because", we have to go back to verse 16, that says:

**but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.**

... if anyone suffers "as a Christian". And this has two different meanings. First, Peter is saying that the reason a person is suffering is *because* he is a Christian. In other words, Peter is teaching here that the Reason this person is suffering is precisely because he is saved, and does not talk or act or live like unbelievers. And living counter-intuitive to the ways of the lost, pagan world has *caused* this person to be disliked and cast out and mocked, and maybe even taken advantage of and physically attacked by those who are, yet, unsaved.

So, the *first* meaning is that this Suffering is caused by being saved and living in a fallen world. And Peter goes on to say that when that happens, we are not to be "ashamed". And, as I have told you, this word has *more* to do with being "condemned" than it does with being "embarrassed". In other words, when Suffering comes to you, that is common to all believers, we are to not think that God has abandoned us, or that He is angry with us, or that we have sinned and God is punishing us. But we are to understand that all genuine believers go through this type of Suffering. And the only reason the unbelievers or Satan is attacking us is precisely because we are saved and all of God's Wrath has been removed from us. So, Peter says that when *this* kind of Suffering comes, instead of thinking we are condemned (ashamed) by God, we are to respond like this:

**but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

But there is *another* meaning to what Peter is saying here. When Peter talks about "Suffering as a Christian", he is also saying that the way we suffer, the way we *respond* to our Suffering, the way we talk, the way we act, the way we think and live, as we suffer, should be the very *same* way that those who truly believe respond. In other words, we should respond to our Suffering the way that Peter tells us here, and the way that Paul did, and the way that Job did, and the way that Jesus did. That is *why* these actions and words were recorded for us, so we would know *how* to act, and *what* we should say, and how we should live, and how we should understand Suffering when it comes.

If we lose Hope in the fire, we are testifying to the world that Jesus is not worth it, that His Glory is not worth what we are going through. And we are testifying that we either don't know or we don't believe what God had revealed in His Word about what is going on with us. By acting and speaking like the fallen world (Job's wife) in our Fiery Test, we are proving that our Love for God is not real and not genuine.

And so, the "fiery Ordeal", the Test, that God has brought to our door, is *adjudicating* the Reality of our situation. It is designed to "judge", or to "determine", or to test, or to "prove" the Real from the Counterfeit, the Tares from the Wheat, those who truly love God for Who He is and those who only love God for what God can do for them on that day.

So, Sanctification, the ongoing fire of purification, should be looked at as God pruning the ranks of the visible Church. We need to understand that this is God's Way of "culling out" the false converts. It is God's Method of determining who has truly *experienced* the Miracle of the New Birth from those who have only heard about it. It is God cleaning the camp.

So, Peter says that those who "Suffer as a Christian" are *not* to be ashamed, we are not to think that God has abandoned us or condemned us, but we are to "glorify God" in this Name... BECAUSE...

***it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God...***

... it is time for the genuine believer to be identified. It is time for real faith to be determined. It is time for genuine belief to be brought forth; it is time for a "Divine Determination" (judgment) to be made as to who is truly the Lord's. And in Job's case, what was the outcome? What did all his Suffering produce?

### **Job 42:12-17**

**The Lord blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys. He had seven sons and three daughters. He named the first Jemimah, and the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. In all the land no women were found so fair as Job's daughters; and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers. After this, Job lived 140 years, and**

**saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. And Job died, an old man and full of days.**

Now remember, Job lived back in the days of the Patriarchs, and God's *Favor*, God's *Grace* was measured *naturally*, in things like real estate, and in livestock, and in many children, and in long life. This tells us two things about Job:

1. God was glorified
2. Job's Joy was made full

... precisely BECAUSE he suffered. So, the Suffering was God's Plan, all along, to bring about those two Goals. And now, in the infinitely *superior* New Covenant, this is even more true. Our Suffering is *not* random or arbitrary or without Purpose and Meaning. All through the New Testament the infallible Word of God teaches that God allows our Suffering:

- ✓ So, we can share in God's Holiness.
- ✓ So, we can "fill up" what is "lacking" in Christ's Suffering<sup>4</sup>.
- ✓ So, we can prove that the Gift of Love that God gave us for Himself is genuine.
- ✓ So, we can testify that Jesus is better than anything this world can offer.
- ✓ So, we can demonstrate that what God saves, God perfects, and He loses nothing.

... and if that Determination, if that Adjudication, if that Judgment begins with us, Peter asks:

**... what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?**

And then Peter proves that what he is teaching here is not new, but is actually in accord with God's Will as revealed in the Old Covenant, the Apostle quotes from the Old Testament, and says:

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<sup>4</sup> For further information about how we can "fill up" that which is lacking in Christ's Sufferings- you may wish to consult with the Sermon Series, "Called to Suffer and Rejoice"- which was preached back in 2013, "Part 3- That We Might Fill What is Lacking in Christ's Sufferings"

**AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED,  
WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?**

And then Peter slams an exclamation point on this amazing Passage when he ends this portion by saying:

**Therefore...**

... because everything I just told you is true, now therefore:

**those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.**

Peter is telling the “scattered aliens” of his day, and ours, that we can trust God, even as we suffer. We can trust that the Goal of God to bring Himself Glory and to give us the fullness of Joy has never changed. We can trust that, what God intends, by giving us our Blessings in the first place, is the very *same* Intention, if and when He takes everything away. And we can trust that when and if satan is allowed to touch our flesh and bones, and we are physically attacked, that what our faithful Creator God is doing is not only “Right”, but it is the very BEST THING God could do for us on that day.

So, let us rise up in faith and let us join in with Peter and say:

**to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.**

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.