

# Studies in Job-02 Job-2

by William MacDonald

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*Job's comforters visited him to mourn and comfort him, but they ended up being judgmental and making blanket statements, and Job maintained his innocence throughout the book.*

**Duration:** 36:33

**Scripture:** Job 2:1-4, Job 38:1

**Topics:** "Studies"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher, Ellie Fad, discusses the topic of suffering and its relationship to sin. He highlights that all three of Job's friends agree that suffering is a result of sin. However, Ellie Fad argues that suffering is not always a direct consequence of sin. He points out that Job's suffering was not due to his own sin, but rather a test permitted by God. The preacher emphasizes that what God permits, He often uses for a purpose, and this understanding can help solve many biblical problems.

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## Transcript

Tonight, we'll turn to the second chapter of Job. Job, chapter two, and we'll read through the chapter. Job, chapter two, verse one.

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. The Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. The Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil, and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him to destroy him without cause? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life, but put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy fate.

The Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand, but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown, and he took a potsherd to scrape himself with all. He sat down among the ashes.

Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity, curse God, and die? But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speakest. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips. Now, when Job's three friends heard

of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, and Gildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

For they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. When they lifted up their eyes afar off and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept, and they rent every one his mantle and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him, for they saw that his grief was very great." Imagine that! Three men come to visit him, and they're speechless.

For seven days and seven nights, he was such a pitiable object, covered head to foot with itching, oozing boils, suffering tremendously. Now, first let's go back over chapter one and think of some of the lessons that we learned last week. First of all, we learned that Satan has access to the presence of God.

It speaks about that. It speaks of Satan and the sons of God who, in this case, are angelic beings, and they actually have access to the very presence of God, and Satan, of course, goes there as the accuser of the brethren. He's at it all the time.

Secondly, we learned last week that Satan has some control over wicked men. You remember the Sabaeans and the Chaldeans? He has some control over supernatural disasters, the fire from heaven, and he has some control over the weather, too. A great win.

Now, don't go out and say that MacDonald believes that all weather is caused by Satan. I don't believe that, but I think he has some control over the weather. And in this chapter, we're going to learn he has some control over disease and sickness as well, because the boils came directly from him.

But a very comforting thing we read in chapter one, and that is that Satan can only get to a child of God with God's permission. He can do it with other people as he pleases, but as far as the believer in the Lord Jesus is concerned, that believer is surrounded by a hedge, and Satan can only get to the believer with the divine permission. He said that to God.

Satan said, Haven't you built a hedge around him? I can't get at him. So the Lord lowered the hedge in the first chapter, and he lowers the hedge again in this chapter. He has lessons to teach.

The fourth lesson we learned last week is that what God permits, he is often said to do. Now, God didn't send all that law on Job directly. God didn't send a fire from heaven.

God didn't send a great wind. God didn't send the Sabaeans and the Chaldeans to do their evil work. He permitted it, and Job attributed it all to God.

He says, The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. What God permits, he's often said to do. This solved an awful lot of problems in the Bible.

We mentioned last week an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul. Can an evil spirit come from the Lord? He can permit it to happen. He doesn't send it directly.

And I think we learned last week, too, that we should take things as from the Lord, by his permission, and not from Satan. Job had learned that lesson. Sure, it's Satan who was attacking him, but Job took it from the Lord.

The Lord has given, or the Lord has taken away. You see that in the New Testament. Paul is writing in his epistles, and he says, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Prisoner of Jesus Christ, Paul. You're a prisoner of Rome. You're a prisoner of forces that are opposed to the gospel.

I wouldn't admit that for a minute, Paul says. A prisoner of Jesus Christ, and so saying, he dignifies his position with great honor. But then last week, we also learned in chapter one that Satan is not omnipotent.

He doesn't have all power. He's not omniscient. He doesn't know everything, and he's not omnipresent.

Satan isn't in all places at one and the same time. In other words, Satan isn't God. He has a tremendous amount of power.

He does have a lot of knowledge, and he's very, very crafty, but it's limited. And we saw that he was limited in what he could do. Now, what lessons do we learn in this chapter that we have before us tonight? First of all, we learn that Job's suffering was inflicted directly by Satan.

I personally believe, as I've said before, that all sickness, suffering, pain comes from Satan. Believe that. You have so many instances of it.

The apostle Paul, in the New Testament, speaks about a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, is the prophet's name. The Lord Jesus, going about healing the sick, comes across a woman who was bowed over but for 18 years by Satan, bowed over 18 years by Satan. And all through the Bible, you have this type of phraseology, and here in this case it's very clear that Satan went forth, verse 7, from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with saw-boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

Something we want to notice here, and this is one of the keys of the whole book, Job's suffering was not a result of sin. This point is emphasized very clearly. It says in verse 3, the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth? It doesn't mean he was sinless.

When it says perfect, it means mature, spiritually mature, an upright man. He wasn't sinless. That comes out before we get to the end of the book, but he was the most righteous man on the face of the earth at that time, and so it would not be right to say that Job's boils were the result of some sin in his life, would it? Wouldn't be right to say that.

And, of course, a third lesson we learn from this chapter is that the righteous are not exempt from suffering. If he, the most righteous man on the face of the earth, suffered, why should any of us think we should be exempt from it? It's often been said that the book of Job deals with the mystery of suffering, and it does, but it doesn't solve it. It adds a lot of light, but you have to go to the word of God in other places to get more light on the subject.

Now, after chapter 2, Job opens up first of all, and he curses his birthday. He curses the day that he was ever born. Don't be too harsh on him.

You and I have never suffered the way he suffered. He really went very, very low. Just look at the first part of chapter 3. It says, After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day.

That means his birthday. It means the day on which he was born. He cursed the fact that he'd ever been born.

Job spake and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There's a man's child conceived. The night after he was born was great rejoicing in the household. It's a boy! And he says here, Let that night perish.

Let that day be darkness. Let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it.

Let a cloud dwell upon it. Let the blackness of the day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it.

Let it not be joined unto the days of the year. Let it not come into the number of the month. Lo, let that night be solitary.

That means barren. Let no joyful voice come therein. Let them curse it that cursed the day who are ready to rouse up Leviathan, or their mourning." So forth.

You know, one thing about Job is, although he was suffering greatly, his vocabulary didn't suffer, and he was very articulate in his suffering. He could express himself as human that I've ever known. And in this chapter, we begin three distinct rounds of conversation with his friends.

First of all, Job speaks. Then Eliphaz comes upon the scene, and he contributes his nickel's worth, if you don't mind my saying so. Job answers him back, and Bildad comes, and they present the best of their knowledge, trying to tell Job why it all happened, and then Job answers Bildad.

Then Zophar comes on the scene, and that ends round number one. Job starts again, Eliphaz, Job, Bildad, Zophar. Round number two.

Again, the third round, Job, Eliphaz, Job, Bildad, and then Job. I think Zophar ran out of steam, because he doesn't come into that third round at all. But anyway, those three rounds occupy chapters three through 31.

Now, what were these comforters talking about, and what were they basing their arguments on? Well, first of all, Eliphaz bases his arguments on human experience. Let me say this first of all. They all three were singing the same song.

They all three were saying, suffering is the result of sin, and you are suffering greatly. Only one conclusion. You've sinned greatly.

You could boil down all that those men said in chapters three through 31, and it all boils down to that. They just come at it from a different direction, that's all. Suffering is the result of sin.

Look at you. Never seen anybody suffer like you. Kept us dumb for seven days.

What you must have done. Now, Eliphaz bases his argument on humor, on personal experience. Just let's look at a few illustrations of that.

Chapter four, and verse eight. Chapter four, verse eight. Even as I have sinned, they that plow iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same.

See, I've seen it. Personal experience. I've gone through life.

I've kept my eyes open, and I see that when a man plows iniquity and sows wickedness, you reap what you sow. That's what's happening to you, oh thanks a lot. That's some comfort for a poor fellow like Jules suffering the way he was.

I want to ask you a question. Was it true? Yes or no? What he said? Okay, well that's good. Both of you are right.

There's a measure of truth to what they said, but it wasn't true until today, and that's the key to the understanding of all of their discussions. Their conclusions were good, but not when they were applied to Job. If it wasn't true in Job's case, we've already seen in chapter two that it wasn't true in Job's case.

Chapter four, verse 15. Then a spirit passed before my faith. The hair of my flesh stood up.

It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof. An image was before my eyes. It was a spook or something.

There was silence, and I heard a voice saying, shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his maker? Behold, he putteth no trust in his servants and his angels he charged with folly. How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust which are crushed before the month? He said, now I had this vision, and I saw this ghost coming before me, and I said the vision was this. What right do you have, Job, to answer God? God has spoken, God is punishing you for your sin, and you have no right to answer him back.

Chapter five, verse three. He's basing his argument on human experience, personal experience. Verse three, I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his habitation, and he's applying that to Job.

I have seen the foolish taking root. Well, I have no doubt he did see the foolish taking root. Did he later on curse his habitation? It wasn't true with Job's case.

Okay, chapter 15, verse 7. We're with Eliphaz again. Chapter 15, verse 7. "...Art thou the first man that was born, or wast thou made before the hills?" Well, I don't see the experience there so much. Maybe we'll try 2219.

Chapter 2219. It says, "...the righteous see it, and are glad, and the innocents laugh them to scorn." Personal or human experience. Now, Bildad came at it from a different direction.

Bildad spoke with a voice of tradition or antiquity. Chapter 8, verse 8. Chapter 8, verse 8, but he came to exactly the same conclusion. It says, "...for inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, prepare thyself to the search of their fathers, for we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow." He says, go back to antiquity.

What does the voice of tradition say to you? Well, the voice of tradition says that nobody suffers without cause, and that the cause of suffering is sin, and iniquity, and transgression, and that explains your predicament, Joe. And then Zophar came, and Zophar was kind of a lawyer. He was kind of a legalist, and he spoke with a voice of law and religiousness.

Chapter 11, verses 14 and 15. Chapter 11, verses 14 and 15, says, "...if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacle, for then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot, yea,

thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear." Saying, you keep the law, and do what's right, and you won't have anything to worry about. They all maintain that Job was suffering as the result of his sin.

Now, there is suffering in life as the result of sin. You think of some illustrations of it in the Bible. First Corinthians chapter 11 speaks about people coming to the Lord's table without having judged sin in their lives.

It says, "...for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and some sleep." Even the extreme of death is incurred. Ananias and Sapphira, they suffered as a result of their sin. Some suffering is the result of sin, but they were wrong in applying it to Job, and Job steadfastly maintained his innocence throughout the book.

That doesn't mean that he was claiming never to have sinned, but Job was saying, you're wrong, this suffering is not the result of sin in my life. What he right in saying this, he's right. He was right.

The suffering was not the result of sin. For instance, turn to chapter 23, verse 10. I'm going to go back to verse 8. He's speaking about God.

He says, "...behold, I go forward, but he, God, is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him. He hideth himself on the right hand, but I cannot see him.

But he knoweth the way that I take. When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Generally, we take that verse of scripture and we use it to prove that God uses suffering to purge the dross out of our lives, right? We use the illustration of the refiner, and the refiner puts the heat under the metal in the crucible, and he gets it red hot, and the metal begins to melt, and he kind of scrapes the scum off the top of it, and he keeps scraping off all the impurities, so he can look in and see his face reflected in the gold. The purging benefit of suffering.

That's about what it means here. Job is saying here, I wish I could have my day in court with God, so that I would. I'm trying to find him, but I can't find him.

I go here, but he isn't there. I go there, but he isn't there. When he hath tried me, that means when I have my day in court, and when I'm able to defend myself, the record will show that I was innocent of all the charges that my friends are making against me.

That's really what that verse means in its context. When he hath tried me, that is in a court of law, I will come forth as gold pure. Sinless? No, he doesn't mean sinless.

It doesn't mean that he didn't have any fault. He did have fault, like all other sons of Adam, but all of the things that his miserable comforters were saying of him, they just weren't true of him. Notice verse 11, My foot hath held his step.

His way have I kept, and not declined, neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips. I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. But he is in one mind, and who can turn him in what is so desirous, even that he says some pretty hard things about God here? For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with him.

Therefore I am troubled at his presence, when I consider I am afraid of him. For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me," and so forth. He really is a bit put out with the Lord that somehow he isn't able to go there.

There isn't some dazed man that will appear before God with him, so that the case can be heard and brought out and justice done. Now, what are some of the lessons we learn from these chapters where Job's comforters are remonstrating with him? Well, one of the first lessons I learned is when you visit sick people, don't be judgmental with them. In fact, it's a good idea not to be judgmental with anybody who's suffering.

You might think you know why they're suffering. Well, keep it to yourself. Don't go into the sick room and say, you know, God is judging you because of something in your life.

It may be true, but it may not be true, because that's what these men were doing with Job. The second lesson I learned from these chapters, chapters 3 through 31, is that when you visit the sick, make your visit brief. These men wear me out.

You know, these chapters should go over their arguments from personal experience and from tradition and law and religiousness and all the rest. They're very tiring, if you don't mind my saying. I don't mean the word of God is tiring, but I mean the prattle of men can be very tiring, as they pull out an awful lot of religious philosophy and serve it up to poor Job without even a sprig of parsley on it, and he's had enough.

He's eating the dust already, and he doesn't need that. So, I would say when you visit the sick, please make your visits brief. People who are sick are oftentimes weary at the end of a visit.

And then, I think the third most important lesson we can learn from these chapters is this. Be careful of making blanket statements in life that do not admit of exception. That's what they were doing.

They were making blanket statements, and they didn't realize that Job was an exception to them. Let me give you some illustrations. In foreign countries, the American is known as the ugly American, the ugly American.

Now, there are some Americans who are ugly when they go to foreign countries. They think their way of doing things is the best, and they don't hesitate to let the people know there are ugly Americans, but not all Americans are ugly, are they? Sometimes we make generalizations about people of other races. We know one or two instances, and we apply it to the whole race.

Silly. That's what they were doing here. Be careful of making blanket statements that do not allow for exceptions, because we only knew the heartache that goes on in the world because of this.

Now, in chapters 32 through 37, another man comes upon the scene. Chapters 32 through 37, we have Elihu, or Elihu, however you prefer, coming upon the scene. He's a younger man, and apparently he was listening.

Aren't you impatient to listen through all of that? And he found a lot of heat without much light. And he says, now I'd just like to have a little say. Some people think that Elihu really brought the discussion to a much higher level.

In fact, some people think he represents the Lord Jesus in what he says here. I'm not so sure. But first thing he did was criticize Job for his self-righteousness, and then he turned on Job's friends and criticized them for their failure to answer Job correctly, in spite of the fact that they were older.

And Elihu does really speak with a great deal of wisdom, a great deal of moderation for a younger man. Seems to me he does very, very well, and he seeks to put them both in their place. But, you know, the interesting thing is, even after Elihu got through, Job wasn't satisfied.

The problem hadn't been solved. His suffering was still there. And then, in chapter 38, the Lord God comes upon the scene.

And I think this is beautiful. When God began to speak, it began to take effect on Job. I'm sure that you've had the experience of being in a time, a patch of sickness or suffering, maybe sorrow, and men and women, Tom, they say things, I mean, they mean well, but they really don't help.

And as the Lord speaks to you, maybe through some verse of scripture, it really solves the problem. I can remember going through such an experience in life, and I can remember how Christian friends were very kind. They came and everyone added his own word of wisdom, but the hurt was still there.

And then I got this verse from Psalm chapter 30, verse 5. It says, Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. But, you know, just that simple verse of scripture did what all the friends wouldn't do. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

I tell you, there's nothing can take the place of the word of God, some words from the Lord. And so, in chapter 38, the Lord answers Job out of the whirlwind. Let's just read some of it.

It's so beautiful. Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by word without knowledge? For as the Indian would say, Keep it wind, no rain. A lot of word, but no enlightenment through them.

Gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hath understanding, who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest, or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, or who laid the cornerstone thereof? When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, or who shut up the sea with doors when it break forth as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud, the garments thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it, he break for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors." What's he doing? Well, first of all, he's speaking to Job about his God part in creation. Where were you then? Did I take counsel with you? Did you advise me as to how to lay out the universe? What he's saying is, Job, this universe is in very good hands.

You might be finding fault with me, the way I do things, but I haven't made my first mistake yet. He's saying, Job, you can trust your Creator. You can trust his dealings with you, even at the time you may not understand what's going on.

You can trust what I'm doing. And so, the Lord speaks to Job. He speaks to him by asking questions about creation, about the secrets of the universe.

And mind you, there are secrets in the universe, aren't there? He asks him questions about the stars, and God's providential care of animals, and the migratory instincts of animals and birds. Isn't that marvelous?

And fish, the salmon. And as he speaks to Job, Job gets smaller and smaller and smaller.

There's all the wind has gotten. Whatever he suffered, he certainly didn't suffer any loss of speech up until now. When he thinks of the greatness of God, and here he was questioning the providence of God.

So, finally Job says in chapter 40 verses 4 verses 3 through 5, chapter 40 verses 3 through 5, then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold, I am vile. The revised version says, Behold, I am a small accountant. What shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.

What have I spoken, but I will not answer. Yea, twice, but I will proceed no further. I never said that when his comforting friends were talking to him.

He never said that when Elihu was talking to him. But God gives him a panorama of his greatness in creation, and Job's mouth is stuck. He has nothing more to say.

And then in the verses that follow, God challenges Job to do a better job running the universe than he, God, is doing. Beautiful. He tells him, Why don't you go and harness the hippopotamus? Why don't you go and control the crocodile? And think of God's wonderful providential care over all the universe.

And once again, Job speaks in chapter 42 verses 5 and 6, he says, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. What it means, of course, is that there's nothing but a sight of the Lord that will ever help us in all the trials and difficulties of life. That's the lesson that Job had to learn.

Our time is gone, so we're just going to look to the Lord in prayer, perhaps gather up the closing thoughts on this book next week or going. Shall we pray? Father, we think of you, the great God of the universe, the universe in which this little planet is just a speck, and we individuals on it are less than specks, atoms. And yet, Lord, you care for us.

It matters to you about us. You care about every detail of our lives, and, Lord, you guide our lives with consummate skill and love and wisdom and power. Forgive us, Lord, for ever questioning your dealings with us.

Forgive us for ever being unthankful for our lot in life. Lord, we can truly say with a sound that the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places. Yea, we have a goodly heritage, and all that we ever suffer is nothing compared to what the Son of God suffered for us on the cross of Calvary.

So, we pray that as we go through this book of Job, that we might have right thoughts of God, great thoughts of thee, small thoughts of ourselves, that we might learn more and more to trust your love and grace in our lives. We ask it in the Savior's name. Amen.

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