

SUFFERING FOR CHRIST

As part of Wisdom literature, we are studying the Book of Job as a seven-act play. We will study selective passages from each of the following seven acts.

- Act 1 – Spiritual testing (Job 1-2)
- **Act 2 – Suffering for Christ (Job 3)**
- Act 3 – First Debate of Suffering (Job 4-14)
- Act 4 – Second Debate of Suffering (Job 15-21)
- Act 5 – Third Debate of Suffering (Job 22-31)
- Act 6 – Special Speeches on Suffering (Job 32-41)
- Act 7 – Spiritual Restoration from Suffering (Job 42)

The cast for Acts 3, 4, 5 are introduced in Job 2:11-13 as three of Job's best friends.

- Eliphaz the Temanite
- Bildad the Shunite
- Zophar the Naamathite

After being informed of Job's situation, they all came to visit Job to offer their sympathy. Upon arriving, they could hardly recognize him. They wept aloud and tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads and sat on the ground for seven days and nights without speaking a word because of the great suffering of Job.

After seven days and nights, Job broke the silence by cursing the day of his birth (Job 3/ Act 2).

We will study Job 3 by the following two homiletical points.

- Job's despair of life (3:1-19).
Job asks three rhetorical questions (3:11, 12, 16). The answer he was looking for is recorded in 3:13.
- Job's despair of suffering (3:20-26).
Job asks two rhetorical questions (3:20-22, 23). The answer Job will need is recorded in 2:3, 9).

This lesson will study Five aspects of Job's Suffering for Christ (undeserved suffering).

1. Job is experiencing the full measure of undeserved suffering (U/S) in the angelic conflict (A/C).

"Skin for skin!" Satan replied, 'a man will give all he has for his own flesh. But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.'" (2:4-5)

Satan has challenged the justice of God in light of human suffering. The argument is this – if God will let Satan tempt Job and remove the grace hedge around him and break the link between righteousness (+R) and blessings, Satan will expose the righteous Job for the sinner he really is.

2. Satan's accusation is to discredit the justice of God that sentenced him to the lake of fire (Matt.25:41; Job 40:8).

Satan's accusation is this – "if the godliness of the righteous man in whom God delights can be shown to be the worst of all sins, then a chasm of alienation stands between them that cannot be bridged." (NIV)

Victory in the A/C silences the accuser and vindicates both the righteousness of the believer under undeserved suffering and the justice of God that sentence those who reject the gospel of grace salvation to the lake of fire (2 Thess.1:8-10; 2 Pet.3:9; Rev.20:11-15) (**Job 19:25-27**).

“Truly, truly, I say to YOU, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life.” (John 5:24)

Job is teaching the spiritual mature believer who is under undeserved suffering that his Perfect Righteousness (+R) has such supreme value that God treasures it more than all – **“Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.”** (Job 42:3)

3. Undeserved suffering (suffering for Christ) is a divinely favored grace in the angelic conflict.

“For to you it has been granted (charizomai / a.p.ind) for (huper / substitution) Christ’s sake, **not only to believe** (pisteuo / p.a.infin) in Him, **but also to suffer (pascho / p.a.infin) for His sake**, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to lie in me.” (Phil.1:29-30)

“The Christian life is to be a ‘not only ... but also’ proposition: not only believe but also suffer.” (NIV, Phil.1:29) Believing and suffering for Christ are both gifts of God’s grace.

“So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.” (Acts 5:41/ Apostles / 33-42)

4. Christ suffered for sake of the sinner while Christian suffers for sake of the Savior (1 Pet.2: 21-24; 3:14-17; 4:19; John 15:18-19; 16:33).

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28)

“Now I rejoice in my suffering for (huper / substitution) your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (the church) in filling up that which is lacking of Christ’s afflictions.” (Col.1:24)

5. The spiritual mature believer must be taught about undeserved suffering so that he maintains spiritual integrity (tummah) during it (Job 2:3, 9; 1 Thess.3: 3-4).

“Beloved, do not be surprised (xenizo / p.m.impv2pl) at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the suffering of Christ, keep on rejoicing (chairō / p.a.impv2pl); so that also at the revelation of his glory, you may rejoice with exultation.” (1 Pet.4:12-13)

“For **just as** the suffering of Christ are ours is abundance, **so also** our comfort is abundant through Christ.” (2 Cor.1:5)