

GREAT TRUTHS FOUND IN THE BOOK OF JOB

1 We don't always understand "why" we have trouble, so we have to wait and trust (**Ps.37**). **Some Possibilities:** part of our spiritual growth (**James 1:2—4**); not the right time; everything in God's plan isn't ready; there may be set times (**Job 14:13**), **Psalm 75:8, 102:13, Exodus 9:5**); Satan's attack (**Luke 22:31,32**); God is testing or proving us (**2 Chronicles 32:31**); God is working out some purpose He can't disclose until later. Consider the lame man at the temple—Jesus must have passed him by many times, but Father God was reserving this miracle for Peter and John. After Jesus ascended to Heaven miracles were needed to authenticate the teachings of the New Testament Church.

2 God is always in control, He knows everything about us (Psalm 139). Even Satan has limitations set by God (**Job**). The turmoil in the world today is permitted, possibly because God has created humanity with the privilege of choice (**Genesis 1—3**). God knows the eventual results from bad choices (the law of consequences) which will lead to the fulfillment of prophecies and judgment—and when the time comes God will bring history to an end with Jesus Christ's return. In the meantime we need to maintain our relationship with God and trust in His grace and faithfulness to meet our individual needs according to Bible promises.

3 Things are going on in the heavens: war between God and Satan; war between people and Satan (**Job 1 & 2; Ephesians 6**).

4 God can put a hedge, fence, angels, rocky cave, His wings—around believers. There are many Bible examples as well as Christian testimonies--(**Job 3:23 and many Psalms**).

5 Satan is limited—he needs God's permission, and people can open or close doors by talk or actions (**Job 1 & 2 & 3:23—25**).

6 It is important to choose carefully what we say. Learn to speak anticipating answers rather than dwell on and speaking about the problem. There is life and/or death in what we say (**Prov.8:21**)

7 There are set times for some events/answers to prayer (**Ps.75:2; 102:13; 119:126**).

8 Sometimes friends don't have answers—we may need to get alone with God to hear His voice.

9 God may not act until all the pieces come together. When the time and setting is right things will happen (see Scriptures for 1 above). Remember—the land was promised to Abraham but not possessed until Moses and Joshua.

10 When counseling be careful not to mis-diagnose. Take time to pray and hear from God; and ask questions rather than speak prematurely, the answers you get may help supply all the information needed to understand the problem and give wise counsel. Try to encourage rather than find fault.

11 God will answer and reward if we maintain integrity and trust in Him (many Psalms).

12 Don't insist on defending yourself lest you appear to be self-righteous. Elihu (the fourth friend) was right—Job should have humbled himself and trusted God with what he didn't understand. Sometimes silence is golden and prevents us from speaking rashly and/or making regrettable mistaken comments. The last words of Job: *"I know that You (God) can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You"* (**42:2**). And the last words of God were to the three friends of Job: *"My wrath is aroused against you...for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as my servant Job has...My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as my servant Job has"* (**Job 42:7—8**).

13 Satan is a loser. He tried and failed to turn Job against God. Satan caused a lot of pain, suffering, heartbreak and confusion—but he failed to destroy Job's faith and worship of his God. And what did God do? He restored Job's possessions double the amount of his losses. Job lived another 140 years, sired 7 sons, 3 daughters and saw four generations of his family. I would say Satan really lost big after making such a boastful claim in the beginning of the Book of Job—(that suffering and pain would cause Job to curse God). Satan has tried from Adam to after Noah, and from Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, numerous prophets and kings to Peter and the early church—to defeat God's purpose by destroying people of faith and destiny. But men have stood unmovable to spread the Word (Gospel) and the Bible has survived. God preserved a witness in the earth for 6000 years. When Satan and his followers are bound and cast into eternal hellfire, God and His kingdom will still be standing. Yes, Satan has deceived and destroyed millions who ignored warnings and chose to live to appease carnal appetites and ambitious dreams. He has wreaked havoc among nations and fractured the church through the centuries, but he is doomed. At the end of the story Satan loses for the last time and forever. The good news is: if we pass the test of faith, trust and endurance, Satan will lose every attempt to turn us against God, and/or defeat us on our journey (**Ephesians 6:10—18; II Thessalonians 2:15; James 4:7; I Peter 5:8—10**).

Do these truths apply to our generation?

You might say: “Yes—God restored Job, but that was thousands of years ago—will He do the same for me?” Do you believe that God is the same yesterday, today and forever (**Hebrews 13:8**)? If we take the time to review our lives most of us will realize that we have experienced some of these biblical truths. Let me share a few of the most memorable experiences I have had.

The power of words. When I was 20 years old I set chokers on logs on a steep hillside. My working partner cracked a rib so I was doing the work of two men but getting the wages of only one. I began to resent that and for days thought about quitting because it just wasn't fair. At lunch a coworker saw my attitude and said: “*What's wrong with you Collins?*” With a sandwich bite in my mouth I mumbled: “*It's going to end soon.*” Two hours later it ended when a log rolled on me and I stopped breathing. I survived the accident or I wouldn't be writing about this experience, and I tell more details elsewhere in these meditations. The point is that there was death in my words (**Proverbs 18:21**) and I didn't even know that what I innocently said during lunch would occur within hours.

A set time. About 1982 a motorcyclist came out of nowhere and crashed into the side of my car; he died the next day and the experience haunted me for years. For some reason the policeman knowingly misreported the details and I was charged with manslaughter. I made a mission trip to Africa and upon my return there was a notice in the mail that my driver's license had been cancelled and another notice that I needed to report to court for the manslaughter charge. It seemed like I was without transportation to continue working, might be facing prison, and my family might be living on the street—like Job.

We prayed. I hired a Christian attorney and we trusted the Lord to work a miracle and save us the cost of going to a trial I couldn't pay for. But God had something else in mind. The judge didn't think I should be tried and asked the prosecuting attorney to cancel the case. He refused, was brutal in his attack on me and when questioned and/or cautioned by the judge he insulted the judge. Well—the trial lasted nine days, and when the young prosecutor insulted the judge again, the judge called him and my attorney into his chambers and when they returned, the judge cancelled the trial and dismissed the jury and all charges against me. My record was cleared and I got my driver's license back— but I was left with a \$20,000 debt and no way to pay it.

Does this sound like Job? This was an undeserved action/attack against me and God allowed the costly trial to go forward. **There was a set time.** Events needed to unfold so God could answer our prayer in a manner He chose, and which blessed us financially beyond our expectations. We had spent a lot of time in prayer and worship prior to the case, during the trial and for several months after the trial before we could clear this debt. We talked about my wife getting a job, me getting a second part-time job, and selling our home. We decided on selling our home. A plunge in the Southern California housing market had been underway, a bad time to sell. But when the trial ended, and in desperation we decided to sell, the market had turned upward. We were able to sell our home for a higher price than any others in our neighborhood, and the buyer allowed us to live there until we could find a replacement.

We were able to buy a home (never lived in before) priced \$20,000 lower than others in the area—did I say \$20,000 lower? — this savings equaled the cost of my trial, so it looked like God was answering our prayer, but there is more blessing to come. From the sale of our home we had cash to pay all our debts including the \$20,000 trial fee, buy new furniture for our new home and pay the moving costs—and our monthly mortgage payment was only slightly higher. About 2 years later the value of our new home increased by \$20,000—so our total benefit was a plus \$40,000.

The set time was when all the events that God knew about us were in place. God was faithful in providing the financial need, guiding us into moving—and how we trusted God, worshiped Him and maintained our peace was a great testimony to family, neighbors and church friends. **Like Job**, we had wondered many times during the ordeal “**Why doesn't God answer our prayers?**” Now we understand that all the while God was in the process of answering, which involved the housing economy as well as walking us through some processes and decisions which eventually brought everything together at **God's set time**—and bless us financially.

Every living soul has a divine purpose, and the promise of the Lord's guidance—**Psalms 20:4; 32:8** & other verses. No matter how severe the problem may be God will do His part, but believers must do theirs (**Psalms 68:1—4** is a good formula for victory). Pray for God to arise and scatter your enemies (include the devil and his demons), and sing and praise the Lord frequently. Extol God for His virtue, faithfulness and mercy. Rejoice before the Lord, never doubting that victory will come to you. Establish the frequent pattern of praying God's promises (keep a list handy). We did all of this until victory came, and then we gave a lot of thanks. Finally, remember that God will complete the work He has begun in you (**Psalms 138:8; with Philippians 1:6**), meaning that if you maintain your trust and faith in God, like Job did, you will please God and He will amply reward you—and **you will fulfill your divine purpose.**

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