

## Moses' Job Theodicy & Job and Jesus

How is inscrutable sovereignty of God demonstrated in Job?

First, God initiates and controls the testing of Job's faith.

Second, God makes the rules regarding sin and suffering.

Third, God is the creator and controller of all things.

IF God took everything away from you, THEN would you know He is enough? If God took one thing from you that you think you cannot live without then would you know He is enough? **At some point or in some incident everyone will be tested like Job to know God is enough.** The incident will be the impetus to say with Job "I had heard about you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you." A 'therefore' may also be necessary; "therefore, I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Our relationship with God is the most important thing in our lives.

We will all or already have experienced a Job-like test. Our faith will be tested due to a loss. We will probably not be the subject of a contest between God and Satan and we may not be tested as severely as Job, but our faith in God's inscrutable, but good sovereignty will be tested.

I did a Google search for "a modern day Job" to find an example.

Testimony Story: I found Kenneth Koh and his blog and book *Letters to a Modern-Day Job*. Watch his *YouTube* video.

Some evil events got me thinking about God and the problem of evil and how to understand the inscrutable sovereignty of God.

The Sutherland Springs Baptist Church massacre 11/2017 (26 killed + 20 wounded). They were martyred while worshiping the Lord by a deranged atheist who wanted to murder his in-laws. How do we justify the ways of God concerning this horrendous evil? When we ask, "Why did God allow this to happen?" we are asking to justify the ways of God. We know God had the power to stop it; why didn't he? There were angels in the church watching it happen and they must have been commanded to stand down. Only God can justify his ways and we see it in Job's testimony.

The sovereignty of God is inscrutable, but we create theodicies.

### **GR theos (God) + dikai (justice)**

A theodicy attempts to “justify the ways of God to man.” The general aim of theodicy is to give positive, plausible reasons for the existence of evil in a theistic universe. How does evil function in a world governed by God?

There is a family of theodicies called Greater-Good Theodicies. God permits evil and suffering to achieve a greater good. God has *morally sufficient reasons* to allow evil and suffering. Job is a theodicy. The story of Job (most likely written by Moses while he was bored in the wilderness for 40 years) functions as a greater-good theodicy.

### **Greater-Good Theodicies:**

- ❑ Augustine’s free will theodicy (354-430 AD): Evil is temporary privation of the good; it’s like rust on a car or bedbugs in a bed or the worm in the apple. Evil became a privation of the good when free rational mutable human beings made in the image of God chose not to obey the command of God who created everything good. God is omniscient so Augustine subsumes the mystery of free will under the mystery of sovereign predestination. All evil serves a greater good. “God judged it better to bring good out of evil than not to permit any evil to exist.” The best example and statement of this is Genesis 50:20 (Joseph to his brothers): “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”
- ❑ Alvin Plantinga uses the Free Will Defense to answer the logical problem of evil. Free will is a morally sufficient reason for God to permit the existence of evil. Free will is a greater good. The only way to eliminate evil is to remove free will.
- ❑ [Free will is a gift from God. The exercise of free will by sinful human beings guarantees the existence of evil. The goal of evil is to eliminate free will. Satan’s goal is to destroy or at least dominate free will. Demon possession destroys free will. Evil Communist totalitarian dictators eliminate freedoms so they can stifle and suppress free will. Without freedoms the exercise of free will is severely restricted. Thank God for our Constitution. Satan hates it. Amendment 1:

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.* The Constitution acknowledges and protects the freedoms given by God. Don't let the Coronavirus be an excuse to take them away.]

- ❑ These are two examples of **Greater-Good Theodicies**. The Greater-Good Theodicy is the parent of many children. It serves as defense and theodicy. There are different ideas about what is "greater good". The greatest good must be the glory of God. Even Job ends with the glory of God! Actually, it ends with the LORD blessing Job more than before (42:12) and his death as an old man. But chapters 38-41 are all about the glory of God. JOB decisively fits into the category of a greater-good theodicy.

### **Moses' Job Theodicy**

Imagine Job wrote a theodicy after his experience. What would he write? What was the benefit he gained from all the evil and suffering? What was the greater good? (His story is in the Bible!) Job told us (42:1-6). God doesn't justify his ways to man! He doesn't have to do it. He is under no obligation to do it. The testimony of Job is *Moses' God is Omnipotent Theodicy*. The faith of the most righteous man on earth is put to the test.

- ❑ Job's friends had their own theodicy and God rejected it in the end. They were trying to justify the ways of God to Job. They believed Job must have committed serious sin to suffer so much and they kept probing and harassing Job trying to get him to confess. Their theodicy was wrong! God rebuked Job's friends and asked Job to pray for them and offer a sacrifice for their sins (42:7-9). According to the theodicy of Job's friends the Christians worshipping at Sutherland Springs Baptist Church must have been secret sinners and God sent terrible judgment. All the people who have died of Coronavirus were worse sinners than those who recovered or are asymptomatic. Wrong!
- ❑ Eliphaz the Temanite: 4:7-8 and the spirit vision 4:15-17, and 22:1-9.

- ❑ Bildad the Shuhite: Bildad feels the same way as Eliphaz, but he has another idea on top of it. What if it was Job's kids or ancestors who had sinned? *Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert the right? If your children sinned against him, he delivered them into the power of their transgression (8:3-4).*
- ❑ Zophar the Naamathite: Zophar follows the same line as his two friends: God is just, and Job must have done something to offend him. If God's power is absolute, and God's law is that the righteous are rewarded and the wicked are punished, then Job's predicament is his own fault.
- ❑ Jesus rejected this theodicy: John 9:1-7 & Luke 13:1-5.
- ❑ Any theodicy that claims God dispenses immediate punishment for bad and immediate reward for good is a false theodicy. It is probably rooted in Deuteronomy's blessings and curses. It is how we think God's justice ought to work, but it doesn't work like that. It is true that obedience is blessed and disobedience is cursed or punished, but it's not always immediate cause and effect. (Read some of David's Psalms!) There is ultimate punishment for evil and ultimate reward for good in the life after death.
- ❑ Satan has free will but can only operate within divine parameters. Satan the Accuser came before God to give an account of his activity wandering around the world. Satan is accountable to God; he can only do the evil God allows him to do. Satan must periodically appear before God and be held accountable. If he does anything without God's permission, anything on his own initiative, then he will be sent to hell before his time. God initiated the test when he asked, "While you were wandering around the world, did you notice my servant Job?" Satan can only inflict a righteous person by God's permission and God's purpose is always to create a greater good.
- ❑ If Moses wrote Job, and Job is God's inspired word, then Job is about God offering only one justification of his ways to man. God's justification of his ways to man is "I AM WHO I AM, the omnipotent Creator of all things, and I have no obligation to explain my will or ways to you." **God maintains His inscrutable sovereignty!**
- ❑ No matter what evil and suffering we experience we want to say what Job said 1:21: *And Job said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the*

*Lord.*” Or when it's all over: “The Lord gives and takes away and then gives again and doesn't take away.” We can say this because we know God is good and merciful.

**Moses’ Job Theodicy:** *God is Omnipotent and Omnibenevolent.*

- The Adversary (Satan) plays a major role in Moses’ Job theodicy.
- God rejected the theodicy of Job’s friends (42:7-9).
- Job doesn’t have a theodicy. He desperately needs a Mediator (9:32-33; 19:25-27).
- God’s justification of his ways to man is “I AM WHO I AM, the omnipotent and omnibenevolent Creator of all things, and I have no obligation to explain my will or ways to you.”

“No pain, no gain.” **What benefits did Job gain from his pain? What greater good came from Satan’s evil unleashed upon Job and his suffering?** Read 42:1-6.

- Let start with the obvious and get it out of the way (42:10-17). The LORD returned to Job twice as much as he had before. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away (1:21), and the LORD gave back twice as much.
- Job learned that Satan is his real enemy. Satan is the first cause of evil. Job was tempted to see God as his enemy. God was not Job’s enemy. God has total control over Satan and the evil he can do. Satan is God’s dog on a leash. Job learned about Satan’s evil only after he had learned the other greater-good lessons.
- I know that You can do anything and no plan of Yours can be thwarted.* Job learned that no purpose of God can be thwarted. Every speech in Job propounds the greatness of God as revealed by the wonders of creation. The Bible from Genesis to Revelation is proof of that. We are waiting for Revelation to finish the purpose of God.
- Surely I spoke about things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.* Job learned humility before God (See 40:3-5). See also Habakkuk 2:20: “*But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.*” (Analogy: I want to know something about astronomy, so I meet with the world’s foremost

astronomer. But I don't ask any questions and don't give him any time to talk because I spend all the time telling him what little I know from the books I've read. Be silent and let the expert speak and explain the wonders of the universe!)

- ❑ *I had heard rumors about You, but now my eyes have seen You.* Job moved from religion to relationship with God. Job had a more intimate relationship with God as a result of his suffering. Many aspects of "religion" are man-made (rituals of a worship service - Catholic or Protestant), so a person can be religious, but not have a living relationship with God.
- ❑ *Therefore I take back my words and repent in dust and ashes.* Job learned the significance of repentance. Repentance is more than confession of sins. Repentance is genuine change in the mind and heart.
- ❑ Why did Job repent? His first two responses were true and he didn't sin with his words (1:20-22, 2:10). *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. (To his wife): You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?"* He didn't stick his fist in God's face and say, "God, it's your fault I'm suffering!" BUT He indirectly implicated God when he cursed the day of his birth because God gives life (Job 3). Job also lived in fear that this would happen so he made sacrifices to protect himself and his children (Job 3:25). He worried the sacrifices weren't enough. Blood sacrifices atone for sin, but Job still felt insecure and feared the angry judgement of God; that's not a healthy relationship. Job needed a mediator and cried out for one (Job 19:25-27).
- ❑ Job learned to forgive his friends who falsely condemned him and spoke incorrectly about God: 42:7-9. It's hard to forgive and forget when people judge our actions and motives unfairly.
- ❑ Job learned he couldn't count on people for support and understanding - his wife would not support him when he needed it the most. Read Job 19:13-17. Why didn't God kill Job's wife instead of his children? That would've alleviated some of Job's suffering. Job couldn't count on his friends for comfort, but certainly he could count on his wife? NO.

- ❑ Job learned that the greater good of beatific face-to-face intimacy with God engulfs even horrendous evils. We may experience terrible suffering in this world and wish we had never been born. Job experienced deep existential regret and cursed the day of his birth (3:3-7). Job could honestly raise the argument from gratuitous evil against the existence of God. **Job learned that even deep existential regret can be healed by knowing God has a purpose for the experience of evil and suffering.** Job was able to see that his life was indeed a great good. He regretted that he had cursed the day of his birth.
- ❑ We will not always be able to understand or identify the greater good because we are not omniscient. So we TRUST the love and goodness of God. So no matter what evil and suffering we experience we want to say what Job said 1:20-22: *Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.* Or when it's over: "The Lord gives and takes away and then gives again and doesn't take away."
- ❑ **Job got an answer to the million dollar question asked by Eliphaz, Bildad, and himself.**
- ❑ Eliphaz the Temanite: 4:17: *"Can a mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?"* 15:14: *What is man, that he can be pure? Or he who is born of a woman, that he can be righteous?*
- ❑ Bildad the Shuhite: 25:1-5: *How then can man be righteous before God? Or how can he be pure who is born of a woman?*
- ❑ Job 9:2: *How can a person be in the right before God?*
- ❑ **Read Job 25.** The greatest lesson of Job answers the question of Bildad in the shortest chapter 25. Job is described as the most righteous man in the world and he cared deeply for the salvation of his children (1:1-5). Job made sacrifices for their righteousness. But Job learned that his self-made righteousness was not good enough to save him or his children. His self-made righteousness could not protect him and didn't make him immune to Satan's evil or God's testing. Job was righteous but lived in fear of displeasing God and getting punished (3:25): *For the*

*thing I feared has overtaken me, and what I dreaded has happened to me. I cannot relax or be still; I have no rest, for trouble comes.*

- ❑ There is no rest in self-made righteousness. We rest in the righteousness of Christ graciously given to us. There is no fear in love. Perfect love drives out fear (1 John 4:18).
- ❑ What is necessary for a person to be in the right before God? **A righteous Mediator!**
- ❑ Job pleaded for a mediator. Job pleaded for an arbiter in the heavenly courtroom: 9:32-33: *“For he is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. There is no arbiter or mediator between us, who might lay his hand on us both.”*
- ❑ Job got a glimpse of the Mediator, Christ’s future redemption: Job 19:25-27: *“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!”*
- ❑ 1 Timothy 2:5-6: *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.*

I ended the message focusing on the key question asked in Job: “Can a person be righteous before God?” The answer: Not without a righteous Redeemer/Mediator. We have a righteous mediator in Christ who imputes or transfers His righteousness to us by our faith.

In Christ we are the righteousness of God: 2 Corinthians 5:21: *God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Jesus.*