

## **Job: What Does It Say About God? “If God Didn’t Do It, Who Did?”**

1. What is the main message of the book of Job? It is often suggested that the book of Job is about the question, “Why do the righteous suffer?” But, does the book of Job say anything to us about God? (See Job 9:24 (*GNB*): “And if God didn’t do it, who did?”)

This is not a book about fairness. There is nothing fair about Satan’s accusations against God or Job. There is nothing fair about Satan’s treatment of Job. (See Job 1:12-19; 2:3,6-8; compare *GNB* or *TLB* with *NIV*, *RSV*, or *KJV*, especially on Job 2:3,6.) There was nothing fair about the accusations of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar who, in effect, reflected and reinforced Satan’s accusations. (See below.) There is nothing fair about the whole great controversy. Satan does not care about being fair. Satan is the one who is always claiming God is not fair! Only God is concerned about being fair! Job is no bedtime story for children; it is a serious book for adults.

### **Discussion:**

This book immediately suggests that even in the affairs of this earth, there is much more involved than what we see before our eyes! Is the case of every Christian or follower of God—like that of Job—discussed in the heavenly council? Or, is it just the “all-stars” like Job? (See Job 1:6; 2:1.) What do we know about this council? (See Daniel 7:9-13; Zechariah 3:1-5; Revelation 12:7-12; and Ephesians 6:12.) Job’s friends did not recognize the existence of a great controversy, and they did not see how anything happening here on this earth had anything to do with God’s sovereignty in heaven or His winning in the great controversy. (Job 22:1-3; 35:6-7)

2. God’s first statement about Job (Job 1:1,8; 2:3) was that Job was:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שֵׁטֶן הִשְׁמַת לִבִּי עַל־עַבְדִּי אִיּוֹב כִּי אֵין כְּמֹהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ אִישׁ תָּם וְיִשְׁעָר יָרָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מִרָע:

*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: with Westminster Hebrew Morphology.* (1996). (electronic ed., Job 1:8). Stuttgart; Glenside PA: German Bible Society; Westminster Seminary. [Remember that the Hebrew text reads from right to left--not like English.]

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שֵׁטֶן הִשְׁמַת לִבִּי עַל־עַבְדִּי אִיּוֹב כִּי אֵין כְּמֹהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ אִישׁ תָּם וְיִשְׁעָר יָרָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מִרָע

*The Lexham Hebrew Bible.* (2012). (Job 1:8). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

8 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος Προσέσχεες τῇ διανοίᾳ σου κατὰ τοῦ παιδός μου Ἰωβ, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν κατ’ αὐτὸν τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἄνθρωπος ἄμεμπτος, ἀληθινός, θεοσεβής, ἀπεχόμενος ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ πράγματος;--*Septuaginta.* (1979). (electronic ed., Job 1:8). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

<sup>8</sup>And 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? (*King James Version*)

“perfect and upright” (*KJV, Young’s Literal, Darby, ASV, Isaac Leeser, Smith-Godspeed*)

“blameless and upright” (*Moffatt, NKJV, RSV, NIV, NRSV, NEB, NAB, NASB, Tanakh, New World, Amplified*)

“simple and upright” (*Douay-Confraternity*)

“faithful and good” (*GNB*)

“a truly good person” (*CEV*)

“honest and innocent” (*NCV*)

“He is a man of integrity: He is decent” (*God’s Word*)

“loyal, blameless and faithful in all that he does. He loves me with all his heart and hates whatever is evil.” (*The Clear Word*)

“a sound and honest man who fears God and shuns evil” (*Jerusalem, NJB*)

“the finest man in all the earth—a good man who fears God and will have nothing to do with evil” (*TLB*)

“the finest man in all the earth—a man of complete integrity” (*NLT*)

“a man unblameable, true, pious, abstaining from everything evil” (*Septuagint-Charles Thomson*)

### 3. **Satan’s Accusations:**

Satan immediately accused God of unfairness and giving Job preferential treatment. (Job 1:9; 2:4) But, that was not the end of Satan’s accusations against God.

Satan was clearly making the claim that God cannot correctly judge the characters of either angels or men. God had said that Job was “perfect and upright.” (Job 1:1,8; 2:3) But, the adversary (Satan) said that if God would stop bribing Job, Job would curse God to His face. (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5) Satan thought that God had misjudged Job’s character and implied that God had misjudged Lucifer himself (Satan, the adversary) in the beginning!

### 4. What was the source of the accusations made by Job’s “friends”—especially by Eliphaz?

#### **Job 4:15-16:**

<sup>15</sup> וְרוּחַ עֲלֵי-פָנַי יִתְקַח וְהָלַךְ אַחֲרַי שְׂעָרַת בְּשָׂרֵי:

<sup>16</sup> יַעֲמֵד וְלֹא-אֶפְיֶר מִרְאֵהוּ וְתַמוּנָהּ לִגְדַד עֵינַי דְּמַמָּה וְקוֹל אֶשְׁמָע:

*The Lexham Hebrew Bible.* (2012). (Job 4:15–16). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

15 καὶ πνεῦμα ἐπὶ πρόσωπόν μου ἐπήλθεν, ἔφριξαν δέ μου τρίχες καὶ σάρκες. 16 ἀνέστην, καὶ οὐκ ἐπέγνων, εἶδον, καὶ οὐκ ἦν μορφή πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν μου, ἀλλ’ ἡ αὖραν καὶ φωνὴν ἤκουον--*Septuaginta.* (1979). (electronic ed., Job 4:15–16). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

“a spirit ... a similitude” (*Young’s Literal*)

“a spirit ... form ... an image” (*KJV*)

“a spirit ... a form” (*Darby, ASV, NIV, RSV, NRSV, NASB, NKJV*)

“a spirit ... a form ... a figure ...” (*Leeser-Hebrew*)

“a spirit ... it ... this form ...” (*Moffatt*)

“a spirit ... likeness ... figure” (*NAB*)  
 “a spirit ... the spirit ... a shape” (*NCV*)  
 “a spirit ... something ... a vague image” (*God’s Word*)  
 “a spirit ... the spirit’s presence” (*TLB*)  
 “a spirit ... appearance ... no form ...” (*Rheims*)  
 “a spirit ... one whose countenance I knew not ... an image ...” (*Douay  
 -Confraternity*)  
 “a spirit ... the spirit ... appearance ... form ...” (*Amplified*)  
 “a spirit ... wind ... shape ... form” (*NLT*)  
 “a light breeze ... something standing there” (*GNB*)  
 “a wind ... form” (*Tanakh*)  
 “a wind ... a form ... a shapeless form” (*CEV*)  
 “a wind ... a figure ... an apparition” (*NEB*)  
 “a wind ... a figure ... shape ... an apparition ...” (*REB*)  
 “a breath ... appearance ... form ...” (*Smith-Goodspeed*)  
 “a breath ... Someone ... the form” (*Jerusalem, NJB*)  
 “a ghostlike figure ... I couldn’t see its features” (*The Clear Word*) [Content in  
 brackets is added.]

No doubt, Satan himself in the form of “an apparition” appeared to Eliphaz in the middle of the night to suggest some ideas to him in dealing with Job. (Contrast Job 33:15-18.)

Satan had destroyed everything that Job owned or had. (Job 1:13-19) Later, Satan destroyed Job’s health. (Job 2:7) Then, Job lost the confidence and respect of even his family (Job 2:9; 19:17) and his associates. (Job 12:4-5; 19:9; 30:1,9-10) Then, getting desperate because he had failed to get Job to curse God, Satan took another approach: He worked through Job’s “friends.” After hearing Job’s despairing cries as recorded in Job 3, Satan thought that with a little further “push,” Job would go all the way and give up his trust in God and curse God to His face.

5. Through Eliphaz, Satan suggested that God cannot even trust His own angels! (See Job 4:17-19; compare 15:14-16.)

**Job 4:17-19** [In the words of Eliphaz relating to Job his encounter during the night and quoting the words of the “form” that appeared to him]:

<sup>17</sup>‘Is mortal man than God more righteous? Than his Maker is a man cleaner? <sup>18</sup>Lo, in His servants He putteth no credence, Nor in His messengers setteth praise.’ <sup>19</sup>Also—the inhabitants of houses of clay, (Whose foundation *is* in the dust, They bruise them before a moth.)  
 (*Young’s Literal*)

<sup>17</sup>Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker? <sup>18</sup>Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he

charged with folly: <sup>19</sup>How much less *in* them that dwell in houses of clay,  
whose foundation *is* in the dust, *which* are crushed before the moth? (*KJV*)

17 “No humans are innocent  
in the eyes of God their Creator.  
18 He finds fault with his servants  
and even with his angels.  
19 Humans are formed from clay  
and are fragile as moths.” (*CEV*)

17 “Can [any] mortal be righteous to God?  
Can [any] human being be pure to his maker?’  
18 “You see, God doesn’t trust his own servants,  
And he accuses his angels of making mistakes.  
19 How much more will he accuse those who live in clay houses  
that have their foundation in the dust.  
Those houses can be crushed quicker than a moth!” (*God’s  
Word*)

“Can anyone be righteous in the sight of God  
or be pure before his Creator?  
God does not trust his heavenly servants;  
he finds fault even with his angels.  
Do you think he will trust a creature of clay,  
a thing of dust that can be crushed like a moth?” (*GNB*)

“Can mortals be righteous before God?  
Can human beings be pure before their Maker?  
Even in his servants he puts no trust,  
and his angels he charges with error;  
how much more those who live in houses of clay,  
whose foundation is in the dust,  
who are crushed like a moth.” (*NRSV*)

“Can a mortal be more righteous than God?  
Can even a strong man be more pure than his Maker?  
If God places no trust in his servants,  
if he charges his angels with error,  
how much more those who live in houses of clay,  
whose foundations are in the dust,  
who are crushed more readily than a moth!” (*NIV*)

[Content in brackets at beginning of this section is added to explain the setting of

these verses. Content in parenthesis, content in brackets, and italic type within Bible verses are in the source documents.]

Through Job's friends, Satan tried to convince Job that if God cannot trust even His angels, He could never trust a mere human to remain true no matter what happened! Remember that these "inspired" statements are direct quotations from Satan, the adversary! (See Job 4:19; 25:4-6; compare Job 22:1-3; 35:6-7.)

#### 6. ***The Accusations by Job's Friends:***

Throughout the book, Job's friends made a number of accusations against Job. According to their theology, a good person is always blessed by God; and if he is blessed, he will be rich. Thus, if a person is poor or suffers sudden losses, he is obviously not blessed—like Job at this point in his life—and he must be a sinner. Since Job had so suddenly lost all his wealth and his family and only a short time later his health, it was very clear in their minds that Job must have committed a terrible sin! (Job 4:7; 8:20; 11:5-6,13-14; 15:5-6; 22:5-9; 34:34-37; 36:17)

Job's friends believed that God is supreme and sovereign and that no one has the right even to question anything that He does. (Job 5:7-11; 11:7-12; 37:20-24, *GNB*) They believed that God is almighty and all powerful. In fact, they were afraid even to approach God lest He should destroy them! (Job 37:20, *GNB*) They went so far as to suggest that Job was receiving a "just punishment" for his sins! (See Job 8:6; 11:6; 34:11; 36:17; contrast 42:7-8.)

Job's friends also appealed to all the authorities that they could think of to support their views! First, they appealed to their own experience. (Job 5:27) Then, they appealed to the authority of age and wisdom. (Job 8:8-10; 15:10,18; 20:4-5)

Job's friends believed that good people are glad and that the innocent laugh when they see the wicked punished! (See Job 22:19; compare Psalms 58:10.) In his early depression, Job was even inclined to agree. (Job 9:21-23) However, later Job said clearly: "I have never been glad when my enemies suffered, or pleased when they met with disaster; I have never sinned by praying for their death." (Job 31:29-30, *GNB*)

The Devil even tried to weave the ideas of hell into the accusations against Job made through his friends! They thought that the only way to get people to obey was to put the "fear of God" in them! (Job 15:4) They were sure that God was going to punish sinners. (See Job 35:15; compare Job 31:11.) They warned of the fires that would consume the wicked. (See Job 20:26; 22:20; compare Job 31:12.)

#### 7. ***Job Responded:***

Job did not have any questions about God's sovereignty or His power! (Job 12:16-25) He admitted that God might be punishing him. (Job 19:6-9) But, Job thought that it was only fair for God to punish those who actually committed the sins—not their children! (Job 21:19-20)

Job did not try to hide his faults. At first, he even suggested that maybe his friends were right and that he had done something wrong, even inadvertently, although he did not know what it was. (Job 6:24-25; 10:2) Job never tried to conceal his sins. He admitted that he had made mistakes in the past. (Job 10:6; 14:16-17; 31:33) But, he ardently

denied that he had committed the terrible sin(s) of which his friends were sure that he was guilty. (Job 27:5-6; 29:7-17; 31:5-40; 33:8-9; 34:5-6)

Job cried out to God and pleaded with God to speak with him! (Job 6:8; 13:3,19-28; 23:1-17) Job recalled what it was like when God was still communicating with him. (Job 29-30)

Job was willing to let God do whatever God knew was right; Job would trust God even if it led to the death of Job himself. (Job 13:14-28)

8. **God Spoke to Job:**

In His first two speeches, God even seemed to support the views of Job's friends! He talked about His power that had created the world. (Job 38:1-40:2) Job must have begun to seriously wonder if he had been wrong in his convictions about God! How did Job and his friends know for sure that it was God who was speaking to them? Job cried out, "I spoke out of ignorance." (See Job 40:3-5; 42:2-3; compare Job 34:35.) God went on to speak again about His power even in controlling the largest of the wild beasts. (Job 40:3-41:34) That was too much for Job. Job said: "I guess I was wrong. I repent in dust and ashes." (See Job 42:1-6.) Many modern readers stop reading with those verses and ignore what God said next! In Job 42:4, Job even quoted God (See Job 38:3.) as God seemed to suggest that Job was very ignorant! Job concluded by, in effect, saying: "I guess I didn't know you as well as I thought, God. Forgive me for speaking so boldly about You as my Friend!"

9. **God's Final Comment:**

Please do not stop reading at the end of Job 42:6! God decided the time had come for Him to conclude the experiment. God then spoke to Eliphaz and Job's other friends!

**Job 42:7-8 (GNB):**

<sup>7</sup> After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you did not speak the truth about me, the way my servant Job did. <sup>8</sup> Now take seven bulls and seven rams to Job and offer them as a sacrifice for yourselves. Job will pray for you, and I will answer his prayer and not disgrace you the way you deserve.

You did not speak the truth about me as he did." (Contrast Job 34:34-37.)

10. When the whole experience was over, who proved to be right? That must have been an incredible shock to Job's friends! Even Job was probably surprised by God's concluding statement. But, Job had vindicated God's original judgment of his character, and that is essential in the controversy over who is telling us the truth and who is lying! No doubt, God turned to the Devil and, in effect, said: "You have been proven wrong again, Satan. Job can be trusted, and nothing you can do will get him to deny his relationship with Me." If God had been proven wrong in this case, can we trust Him in the final judgment? Or, in anything?

11. **Conclusion:**

Job went through a terrible time of trouble. But, the worst trouble of all was the bad theology from his friends—theologians or pseudo-theologians. Could this happen to us at the end of time? Job felt very strongly about his relationship with God. If he did not, he

would not have cried out with such feeling! (Compare Psalm 77 and DA 753.1.) That is proof that Job's relationship with God was very important to Job. No doubt, in their later conversations, God said: "Thank you, Job. Your behavior was a great compliment to Me!" Don't you think that when God and Job renewed their regular conversations, Job immediately asked God why all that trouble had happened to him? Is it possible that it was at that point that Job was told about the events described in Job 1&2? Do you think that Job thought that he had been used as a pawn? Would you be willing to be used as a pawn if God could use you to checkmate the Devil? Wouldn't you be honored? Can you think of any higher honor than to have God say of you someday, "You have said of Me what is right"? The only way to hope for such an honor is to be sure that we are speaking the truth about God every day! Is that what God is waiting for now? Why didn't the Jews ever seem to get the message of Job?

## 12. **Review and Summary:**

1. God was proud of His friend Job and focused the attention of the entire universe, including the council of heaven, on Job to help answer some of Satan's accusations against both Job and God. (Job 1:6-8; 2:1-3)
2. God said that He knew Job well and that His friend Job was a perfect and upright man. (Job 1:8; 2:3)
3. Satan said that the only reason that Job served God was because God continually bribed him by treating him so well and giving him such wealth. (Job 1:9-11)
4. God said that Job would remain true to Him no matter what happened to Job! (Job 1:8; 2:3)
5. Satan said that if God would just remove the "hedge" around Job and let him face "reality" a little bit, Job would turn from God and even curse Him. (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5)
6. Job's "friends" claimed that God was sovereign and almighty and was too busy running the whole universe to have time to pay any attention to the events affecting humans on this tiny planet. (Job 4:19-20; 5:9; 9:10; 35:6-8)
7. Satan tried to get Job to believe that no one can be righteous in God's eyes. (Job 4:12-21; 15:14-16; 25:4-6)
8. Job admitted that he had no idea why such terrible things were happening to him; but, he was sure that if he could discuss it with God, he could understand it all. (Job 6:8; 10:2; 13:3,22-24)
9. Job's friends believed that good people are blessed, and blessed people are rich. So, the fact that Job had lost everything was proof that he was a terrible sinner. (Job 4:8-11; 11:13-16)
10. Job admitted that he was a sinner; but, he denied that he had committed any serious sin that might be the reason for his being treated the way he

was. (Job 6:10; 13:22-23; 27:1-6; 29:14-17; 31:29-30; 34:16-18)

11. Job's friends were so certain that he had committed some terrible sin that they even accused him of very specific sins for which they had no evidence at all! (Job 22:23; 34:34-37)
12. Job begged for his Friend, God, to come and speak with him as they had in the past. (Job 13:22-28; 23:1-7)
13. Job's friends said that they were afraid even to speak to God lest He destroy them! (Job 37:20)
14. God said that Job's friends deserved to be punished and needed to repent because of their terrible treatment of Job. (Job 42:7-8)
15. Job's friends said that, no doubt, Job and his children were being punished as they deserved—perhaps, even less than they deserved! (Job 11:6; 36:17; 8:4; 34:11; 36:17)
16. The Devil tried everything he could think of to force Job to curse God. He even appeared as a ghost-like apparition at the bed of Eliphaz to repeat his accusations against God. Later, Elihu claimed it was God who sent such messages to humans! (Job 4:12-21; 33:15)
17. God said that Job was the one who had spoken the truth about Him! (Job 42:7-8)
18. So, we conclude that Satan brought the calamities, suffering, and disease upon Job and his family.

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### ***E. G. White Summary Comments***

It is very natural for human beings to think that great calamities are a sure index of great crimes and enormous sins; but men often make a mistake in thus measuring character. **We are not living in the time of retributive judgment.** Good and evil are mingled, and calamities come upon all. Sometimes men do pass the boundary line beyond God's protecting care, and then Satan exercises his power upon them, and God does not interpose. Job was sorely afflicted, and his friends sought to make him acknowledge that his suffering was the result of sin, and cause him to feel under condemnation. They represented his case as that of a great sinner; but the Lord rebuked them for their judgment of His faithful servant.—Ellen G. White, *MS 56*, (1894); *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, 1140.

There is wickedness in our world, but all the suffering is not the result of a perverted course of life. Job is brought distinctly before us as **a man whom the Lord allowed Satan to afflict.** The enemy stripped him of all he



possessed; his family ties were broken; his children were taken from him. For a time his body was covered with loathsome sores, and he suffered greatly. His friends came to comfort him, but they tried to make him see that he was responsible, by his sinful course, for his afflictions. But he defended himself, and denied the charge, declaring, "Miserable comforters are ye all." [Job 16:2] **By seeking to make him guilty before God, and deserving of His punishment, they brought a grievous test upon him, and represented God in a false light; but Job did not swerve from his loyalty, and God rewarded His faithful servant.**—Ellen G. White, *MS 22*, (1898); *The Signs of the Times*, June 21, 1899; *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, 1140. [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]