

# Living with Tragedy

**Key Verse:** *“The LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.”*  
—Job 1:7

**Selected Scripture:**  
**Job 1-3**

## **JOB WAS AN UPRIGHT MAN**

who stood high in the esteem of his fellow men. We find Satan accusing Job before God, insisting that this rich man's loyalty to God was based wholly upon his self-interest, that if his blessings were taken away he would curse God.

When tragedy occurs, some people conclude that it would be better to die than to live. God allowed Satan to take Job's health and riches but not his life. We ask, what can help us survive tragedy should it come to us? These lessons from Job imply that the desire to end pain is a basic human reaction, yet death is not really the answer.

God gave Satan permission to do anything to all of Job's riches, but he was not to touch him physically—“The LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.” (Job 1:12) Job was deeply grieved when he received his first of four trials; but, upon realizing he came into the world with nothing and will leave with nothing, he remained faithful. Despite the urgings of Job's wife to curse God and die, Job does not sin because of anything she says.

Satan was permitted an opportunity to try to prove his accusation by bringing calamity upon Job, whose flocks and herds were destroyed and his children killed. First, he was stricken with a loathsome disease, and then his wife, thinking that God had withdrawn his favor from her husband, turned against him. In spite of all these misfortunes, Job maintained his integrity before God. He proved that it is possible to serve God without receiving material reward in spite of great loss and severe pain.

When Satan's accusations proved false, three 'friends' of Job visited him. "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 Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him." (chap. 2:11) Finally a fourth appeared—Elihu. These first three are sometimes referred to as 'Job's comforters,' although they aided little in consoling him. Instead, they endeavored to prove to him that his suffering was evidence that he had committed some gross sin for which he was being punished. Job argued with his comforters, but neither he nor his friends concluded as to why so much evil had befallen him.

Finally, God silenced Job out of a storm and set the facts before him. He made him realize that while he was able to refute the charges of his comforters, he actually was a sinner and stood in need of Divine wisdom. Elihu said, "Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf. I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker."—Job 36:2,3

The lesson learned, Job was restored to health and again became a rich man. God also gave him another family, and in the end he was far better off in every way than he was before Satan was allowed to test him. ■