

Title: When Calamity Comes Knocking (Part 1)
Number: 0719Job1.13-22(3)
Text: Job 1:13-22
Central Idea: True Worship Survives the Fires of Affliction
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**[i] Many of you are familiar with the story of the hymn writer
Horatio G. Spafford**

Spafford was a successful lawyer & businessman in Chicago. He had a lovely family: wife, Anna, & 5 beautiful children.

Even w/that they were not strangers to tears & tragedy.

Their young son died with pneumonia in 1871, and in that same year, much of their business was lost in the great Chicago fire.

On Nov. 21, 1873, t/French ocean liner, Ville du Havre was crossing t/Atlantic on its way to Europe with 313 passengers on board. Among the passengers were Mrs. Spafford and their four daughters.

Altho Mr. Spafford had planned to go w/the family, he found it necessary to stay in Chicago to address an unexpected business problem. He told his wife he would join her and their children in Europe a few days later by way of another ship.

Some 4 days into t/journey across t/Atlantic, t/French liner collided with an iron-hulled Scottish ship, t/Loch Earn. Chaos erupted.

Anna hurriedly brought her 4 children to the deck & knelt there praying that God would spare them if that would be His will.

Some 12 min. after being struck their liner slipped beneath t/dark waters of t/Atlantic, carrying w/it 226 of t/passengers incl t/4 Spafford children.

Anna was spotted floating alone on a piece of wreckage. She was rescued & taken to Wales. From there she wired her husband a message which began, "Saved alone, what shall I do?"

Another of t/ship's survivors later recalled Anna saying "God gave me four daughters. Now they have been taken from me. Someday I will understand why."

Horatio Spafford booked passage on t/next available ship & left to join his grieving wife. W/the ship about 4 days out, t/captain called Spafford to his cabin & told him they were over t/place where his children drowned.

It was at this time that Spafford wrote t/great hymn "It Is Well With My Soul."

When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

[ii] Two things we learn from this story, as we will learn from Job

- 1) True Worship Survives the Fires of Affliction.
- 2) Comfort can give way to calamity w/o warning.

I. The Stage is Set: A Family Gathering (13)

A. We have another scene shift

1. The book of Job is a story . . .

a. Like any story you have scenes

Picture a movie which begins w/an introduction—an opening scene & then t/scene shifts to another place.

Maybe t/movie begins w/a scene looking at t/outside of a nice home. It's a beautiful summer day; sky is blue; t/house is cozy; there's a swing hanging from a tree. Birds chirping, children playing.

Then t/scene changes to inside t/house where you see a lonely woman silently crying. Tears stream down her cheeks as she peers outside. You wonder: the beautiful serene landscape outside of t/house now seems secondary to t/grief that's found inside.

b. In a similar way, we began the book of Job with a picture of what it looks like when “Life is good”

Have a man named Job—a good man, a G.-fearing man. He is materially prosperous. In an age when wealth was measured by land, animals & servants, Job was wealthy. He is not only materially prosperous; he's familially or domestically blessed. He has 10 kids. T/family gets along well. Look at v. 4 ==>

4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

c. Job loves his family & is concerned for their spiritual welfare

In fact, he offers sacrifices on their behalf in case, as v. 5 says, they may have sinned by cursing God *in their hearts.* (Perhaps a more subtle form of taking God's name in vain.)

For Job and his family, life is good.

That's t/opening scene.

d. Then the scene shifts from earth to heaven

We see a celestial council gathered in v. 6. Angels adorn t/throne room of G. Among t/holy angels is a demon—the Satan. As Peter would describe him 2k yrs. later, he is a roaring lion seeking someone to devour—particularly someone who fears & loves G.

(1) God brings Job to the Satan's attention, v. 8 ==>

8 “Have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.”

Satan's response: “Yes, I know about Job. You've blessed him with family and things and a relative life of ease. In fact, that's why he's a blameless, God-fearing man. Take away his stuff and that will change. He won't worship you—far from it—He will curse you openly.”

(2) That heavenly scene closes with v. 12 ==>

12 . . .the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.” So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

We’ve gone from earth in vv. 1-5, to heaven in vv. 6-12.

We go back to earth again in our passage for today: vv. 13-22.

I. The Stage is Set: A Family Gathering (13)

B. When/What/Where?

1. When?

13 Now on the day . . .

Time marker: Cf. 1:6 (‘there was a day’); 2:1 (‘again there was a day’)

Here: (‘now on the day’). We don’t know how much time passed between vv. 12 & 13, but I suspect it wasn’t very long.

2. What?

13 . . . when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine . . .

3. Where?

13 . . . in their oldest brother’s house,

C. The Picture

1. I think this v. connects to v. 4 ==>

4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

13 Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,

Whether or not this is 1 of those Bday celebr. or another day when t/family was gathered together isn't all that imp.

What is imp. is that we see a happy family gathering.

A JOYOUS OCCASION: Eating & drinking . . . wine / real wine.

Psalm 104:15 . . . wine which makes man's heart glad . . .

These joyous events are interrupted.

This particular day was not just a day of feasting ==>

II. Calamity Strikes: An Appointment with Tragedy (14-19)

-A. How Fast Things Can Change....

You can go from t/best of times to t/worst of times in t/blink of an eye

Xmas Eve. 2015. Initially a frustrating day. I was working on various projects, trying to get a few things fin. B4 officially breaking for t/holiday. I lost my cell phone (I set it on the top of t/car, turned my back, and Lois took the car to go to t/store—w/the phone riding on top of t/sunroof—unbeknownst to her!). I was frantically trying to get a hold of her to no avail; drove down to Wegmans but couldn't find her. Finally she showed up and the phone was still there: safely cradled on top of t/car under t/visor for t/sunroof.

It was a rare 60 deg. day & to wind down I took a short motorcycle ride (Just to say I rode my bike on Xmas eve in Roch.).

Then it was family time. We hadn't gotten around to buying a Xmas tree, so Giana and I took our old Ford SUV in search of a tree farm.

I remember looking forward to a nice evening.

Lois was making dinner. We'd decorate t/tree together. Watch it's a Wonderful Life.

Hmmm. It's a Wonderful Life. Sometimes it is.

B4 we could reach t/tree farm a drunk driver coming in t/oppos. direction crossed t/center line hitting us head-on. It would be 6 mos B4 I made it home: home to our house in NY.

Giana made it to a different home: her eternal home in heaven.

How quickly things can change from Celebration to Calamity // Delight to Doom // Pleasure to Pain.

-B. Look at our passage ==>

1. Verse 13 ==>

13 . . . sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house

2. Verses 14-15 ==>

14-15 14 a messenger [arrives announcing], “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans (nomadic raiders) attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

3. Verse 16 ==>

16 . . . another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

4. Verse 17 ==>

17 . . . [another messenger arrives] and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

5. Then Verses 18-19 ==>

18-19 18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, 19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they [were killed] . . .

How did v. 13 begin (4 words)? ==>

13 **Now on the day . . .**

It was just a day; it could have been any day. Here it was a planned day of celebration. But that celebration was overruled by Tragedy. Forever etched upon Job’s mind—the day when everything changed.

What happened? 1 writer sums it up this way ==>

“Satan began his assaults on Job when his 10 children were feasting in the eldest brother’s house.... The assaults were alternately caused by human and “natural” forces: a Sabean attack ..., “the fire of God” .., a Chaldean raid ..., a great desert wind... God permitted Satan to move both kinds of causes to accomplish his purposes—and to do so in rapid, precise timing. Job, while reeling in shock from the news of one loss, was stunned by another. [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*]

II. Calamity Strikes: An Appointment with Tragedy (14-19)

Take a closer look at how this unfolds. I’m calling vv. 14-19 ==>

A. The Four Horsemen of Doom (14-19)

We’re using “horsemen” figuratively. If t/messengers were riding anything it would have been camels (4 camelmen of doom??).

A. The Four Horsemen of Doom (14-19)

These 4 disasters that rapidly strike alternate from human attacks (Raiders) to “natural” disasters. How insurance companies used to differentiate from acts of man & acts of God.

1. The First Horseman: Raiders (Sabeans) (14-15)

14-15 14 a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

a. Here we have a normal agricultural day in the Middle East

Some scholars believe that this happened in t/winter mos which started in Oct. & ended in April. Job's farm hands were plowing w/teams of oxen joined by a yoke. T/donkeys feeding beside them.

W/this t/writer brings us back to v. 3:

500 yoke of oxen & 500 female donkeys.

b. This normal work day is interrupted by a group of nomadic raiders: *seBa'* (pl. Sabeans)

Sabeans were nomadic marauders descended from Sheba, a grandson of Abraham (Gen 25:3).

They may have come from northern Arabia, but we're not sure.

Later they settled in the southernmost part of the Arabian peninsula. Sheba became a wealthy nation by the time of Solomon. (famous Queen of Sheba).

{paraphrase ==>}

"The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword,

15 **"... and I alone have escaped to tell you."**

Pic. t/messenger: covered in sweat / agitated / out of breath.

Lit. t/Heb. text reads:

"And I have escaped! Only me! I alone to tell you!"

B4 he can hardly finish ==>

2. The Second Horseman: Natural Disaster (Lightening) (16)

16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

a. “Fire of God” I take to be “lightening”

That’s w/i t/range of meaning for t/phrase. But rem. these disasters alternate from being what we might call “human” & “natural”.

A raid on t/oxen—lightening—a raid on t/camels—wind.

Some sort of miraculous fire storm coming down out of hvn, while possible, just doesn’t seem to fit t/pattern here.

16 . . . “A lightning storm struck from heaven. It burned up the sheep and the servants and devoured them . . .” [HCSB]

Certainly a lightening storm can burn grasses, start fires, and incinerate animals.

Ancient historian, Herodotus wrote that: “The Egyptians believe fire to be a live animal, which eats whatever it can seize, and then, gluttoned with the food, dies with the matter which it feeds upon” (Herod., iii. 16). —

H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., Job, Pulpit Commentary (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 6.

b. Here’s a question I keep asking myself: Who did this?

(1) God gave Satan permission (v. 12) ==>

I take this to imply that Satan has permission by God to affect natural things like tornados & lightening.

“The devil causes strife, murder, rebellion, and war, also thunder and lightening, and hail, to destroy corn and cattle, to poison the atmosphere. . .” [Martin Luther, Larger Catechism, Question 4]

(2) God is the sovereign agent

What God permits he is sovereign over.

Job’s confession in v. 21 reflects that: It is t/Lord who gives & takes away.

Note also t/dialogue in chapt. 2 ==>

In v. 3 God says that Job: “still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.”

In v. 4 Satan answers and says to LORD: “put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.”

V. 6 So the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.” {sum up}

The next domino falls in v. 17 ==>

3. The Third Horseman: Raiders (Chaldeans) (17)

17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

a. Chaldeans at this early time in history are not to be confused with the later Chaldeans or Babylonians

These Chaldeans would likely be associated w/the Chaldea of ancient Ur (a city in southern Mesopotamia). Abraham (Gen 11:28).

They “formed three bands” (common military tactic) enabling t/raiders to surround t/fast-moving camels they came to steal.

A herd as large as Job’s would be a great prize to camel raiders.

Again the fate of the herdsmen is the same as in v. 15 (death of dozens of workers).

The last, most painful domino falls ==>

4. The Fourth Horseman: Natural Disaster (Wind) (18-19)

18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house,

Back to v. 13 where we started.

Note t/first two words of v. 19 ==>

19 and behold . . .

“Behold” = Hebrew “Hinneh” We see same word in v. 12 (Lord: “behold, all that Job has is in your power”)

We see it here.

Marks this last event as t/most climactic.

19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

These great winds or sciroccos were common in t/middle east.

Tornados do occur, tho rarely. This may have been one since it had t/force to topple a house.

When a house is destroyed by wind & people are inside, inevitably there are fatalities. In this case, Job lost every single one of his children: 7 sons & 3 daughters.

Talk about a family struck by catastrophe! This is almost too difficult to fathom.

As one commentator observes==>

“An alternation of two human terrorist attacks and two ‘natural’ disasters have deprived Job of everything. If we dwell for a few moments on this scene, it is hard not to weep with Job. Throughout the rest of this long book we must never forget the trauma of this scene. We are used in our culture to post-traumatic stress disorders and to the training of trauma counselors to assist in times of natural disaster, terrorism, and war. But rarely if ever in human history can there have been a succession of such extreme disasters as this. Bankrupt and bereft, Job is basically left alone. His protective hedge has been broken, his outer skin so to speak violated, and all he had has been taken away.” [Ash, 48]

Another writes:

While the number of Job's children did not compare with the numbers of lost livestock, there is no comparing the grief that arises from losing children. —Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 60.

How do you respond? What can you do. You're utterly helpless. Nothing on earth or in heaven can undo what has been done. Talk about feeling small; empty; helpless.

Job's response has been both a challenge & an encouragement to millions of sufferers, incl. this one.

What follows in vv. 20 & 21 are 5 Verbs (actions by Job) followed by 5 statements that come from his mouth.

III. Job's Conduct: 5 Verbs (20)

A. Job stood up

20 **Then Job arose . . .**

He had been sitting the entire time. But w/this last most painful announcement he stood.

B. Job then tore his robe

He grabbed and ripped his outer garment. An action of a man in anguish. (I've torn at least one shirt during a moment of agony.)

C. Job shaved his head

This was another cultural way that sufferers demonstrated their grief.

D. Job fell back to the ground

Rem. he was sitting & then he stood. After tearing his robe w/one hand & shearing t/hair off his head w/the other, he fell flat on his face.

1. BUT What does he do last?

Not what you would expect. You hear that your children have all been killed, you expect to see anguish. Tearing of clothes, ripping of hair, falling to t/ground.

But there was more to t/falling to t/ground than just anguish.

You see television reports of disaster & t/living relatives fall to t/ground sobbing.

E. Last Verb: Job Worshipped

His falling prostrate was an initial act of reverence. Job responds to his adversities w/adoration. His woes w/worship.

Then Job speaks ==>

IV. Job's Confession: 5 Statements (21)

A. Five statements that stand parallel to the 5 verbs of v. 20

1. Count them with me:

21 **He said,**

“Naked I came from my mother's womb,

And naked I shall return there.

The LORD gave

and the LORD has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

This is “the noblest expression to be found anywhere of a man’s joyful acceptance of the will of God as his only good.” [Francis I. Anderson, cited in Talbert, 49]

2. What did Satan predict in v. 11? {cite}

Satan predicted cursing. Job responds with blessing.

Not dry-eyed stoicism. You have to hear t/words of v. 21 thru t/tears of v. 20. You hear t/tear of t/robe, you watch Job shear his head, you see t/tears & hear t/sobs as he falls to the ground.

3. Then, thru it all, there’s trust

When calamity strikes do you run to God or away from Him?

True Worship Survives the Fires of Affliction

4. Do you think the Holy Spirit was only active in the NT?

There’s no way that a man faced w/calamity responds in genuine worship apart from t/work of t/H.S.

“God is blessed not only for the giving but also in spite of the taking. In every circumstance he is to be honored. Thus, although Job knows nothing about Satan’s involvement, he in effect says: “Satan, you are wrong. God is still worthy of worship even when life is hard.” — Sam Storms, *Biblical Studies: Job* (Edmond, OK: Sam Storms, 2016).

21 **“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, A n d n a k e d I shall return there.** [then words I cited at our daughter’s memorial svc] **The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.”**

V. Closing Commentary (22)

22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

1. “Blame” = *tiphlah* - something that is empty, inappropriate

Job believed that no wrong could be credited to God’s acct.

He trusted that somehow, someday, God was acting w/a purpose.

He didn’t sin in his tears, his anguish of heart, or in his worship.

He certainly didn’t sin in his attributing calamity to t/hand of God.

He stood the test of faith.

Chapt 1 ends with “the greatest of all t/ment of the east” destitute, childless, afflicted. . T/Greatest of men, of happiest of men, to t/least of men, broken. BUT not hopeless . . .

VI. Concluding Thoughts

I want to leave you with 6 lessons from this passage.

A. Beware: calamity strikes without warning

Just as we should always be ready for t/Lord’s return, or for death, we ought to be braced in t/power of t/H.S. for adversity. Not to be morbid or imply that you need to live a life of fear. But we ought to always rem. that we live in a fallen world & we are subject to suffering.

B. God is always in control, always

Job didn’t say ==>

“the Lord gave and the Sabeans have taken away,” or “the Chaldeans have taken away,” or even, “Satan has taken away.”

No, “the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.”

Job acknowledges that whatever secondary causes may be involved (acts of men or acts of nature), ultim. nothing could touch him apart from t/permission of G.

As one commentator has put it:

“Job sees only the hand of God in these events. It never occurs to him to curse the desert brigands, to curse the frontier guards, to curse his own stupid servants, now lying dead for their watchlessness. All secondary causes vanish. It was the Lord who gave; it was the Lord who removed; and in the Lord alone must the explanation of these strange happenings be sought” (Storms / FA/ 88).

C. We leave this world as we enter it (naked)

“naked I came from my mother’s womb, & naked I shall return there.”
Job’s point: *“I didn’t bring it w/me when I came & I won’t take it w/me when I leave. All I own is on loan from God.”*

In t/ANE they would often bury a body in t/fetal position (picture of a return to t/womb).

Think about it: Everything you have: your possessions // \$\$ // family — You have been given these things since your birth. All of those things, in one way or another, are surrendered at death. You come naked (literally) & you leave this earth t/same way.

Ecclesiastes 5:15–16 15 As [man has] come naked from his mother’s womb, so will he return as he came. He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand. 16 This also is a grievous evil—exactly as a man is born, thus will he die. . . .

Ray Stedman, a pop. preacher from a few decades ago, spoke of having traveled for a series of meetings in which he was to speak. After he arrived he realized that he didn't bring a suit to wear. He had a novel idea: there was a funeral home right by his hotel; maybe he could borrowed a suit from them for t/day (suits they use for corpses). He saw t/funeral director who agreed to loan him one of the suits. Stedman appeared at t/conference wearing the suit, no one t/wiser. As was his habit, while he was speaking he reached to put his hand in his pocket. There wasn't one. Cadaver suits don't have pockets.

D. Are you willing to pay the cost of faith

We live in an age of ease. Even in t/CH there are those who teach that being a Xn entitles you to a life free of suffering.

Was that true for Job? Think about it: His faith and devotion were the reason why he was suffering in the first place. Ironic.

Goes back to v. 8 ==>

8 . . . "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."

The great missionary to t/American Indians, David Brainerd, was dying of smallpox. Jonathan Edwards, perhaps America's greatest theologian, allowed him to convalesce at his home. Braiered didn't recover, he died. Edward's daughter served as his nurse. As a result of her care she caught smallpox & died. Edwards lost his friend & his daughter to t/dreaded disease. ==>

Afterward, Edwards was quoted as saying that he had no regrets in taking Brainerd into his home. It was his honor and blessing.

His faith / faithfulness cost him t/life of his very daughter.

I often think, what if we hadn't moved here from AZ in 2002? If we weren't here t/events of Xmas Eve 2015 would not have happened. But I know that this was all a part of God's plan for us; I rest in that.

What might your faith, your faithfulness cost you?

E. Know the difference between a loan and a gift

“It's as if [Job] is saying, ‘The One who gave me life and has put everything on loan to me during my lifetime has chosen (and has every right) to take everything away. I won't take anything with me anyway. Blessed be His name for loaning it to me while I had it. And blessed be His name for choosing to remove it.’” [Swindoll, 24]

“God has given [Job] a rehearsal for death. All things belong to God absolutely, to be given as a [loan] . . . to be taken back without wrong. There is no talk of human ‘rights.’ The Lord is the sovereign owner of all, and Job rejoices in this wonderful fact.” [Francis I. Anderson, cited in Swindoll, 26]

“Job had not done anything to deserve the removal of all God's blessings. God Himself acknowledges this (2:3). But neither had he done anything to deserve all those blessings in the first place.” [Talbert, 51]

Everything we have is on loan (health, possessions, spouse, children).
{{Loan vs. gift (as in the gift of salvation)}} Open hand.

F. The Shadow of the Cross Is Never Absent

Where is Job now? In t/presence of His G.

Why? B/C he was righteous? No, b/c he believed G.

Like his contemporary, Abraham, in Genesis 15:6

. . . he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

T/Cross casts a large shadow. Even backward to t/time of Job whose salvation was ultim. accomplished here.

We have t/benefit of looking back. For us, t/work of JC on Calvary's Cross is history.

1 Corinthians 15:1–4 1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,