

One of my jobs in the Air Force was driving high-ranking officers from my base to Sacramento Metro Airport about 45 minutes away. On one early morning run, an officer I was driving showed me a shortcut to the airport. After I dropped him off, I decided to take the new quick route back to the base. It was a little rainy and still dark, making road conditions and visibility less than ideal especially on an unfamiliar road. Reacting late to a curve, my little blue Chrysler K car (yes, I'm that old) spun off the road and wrapped itself around an electrical pole. Thankfully, I ended up requiring only a few stitches, but the Air Force car was totaled. I figured my military career might be totaled as well.

There was an official investigation done on the crash. When it was complete, I learned I would receive a minor deduction from my pay and virtually no other punishment. And then I was told something very interesting. Totally unbeknownst to me, the officer making the decision about my punishment just so happened to be the officer who I had taken to the airport. I was told when he received the investigation he remembered me and also that he had told me about the shortcut. Apparently, he felt so bad about introducing the shortcut to me that he decided on a lesser punishment. Now, I'm not sure this was the most just decision, but I greatly benefitted from having a powerful person working for me behind the scenes when I didn't even know it.

The second question in the book of Job is found in Chapter 1 verse 8:

8 And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?"

Notice, it's God who draws Satan's attention to Job through the question. This demonstrates His sovereignty over the enemy and the events to follow. God didn't create evil and He never does evil. He allows the enemy and sin to operate, but they are never outside His control.

After naming Job, God describes his character in the same way it is described in the opening verse of the book. Job wasn't perfect or without sin, but having been saved by God's grace through faith he was a uniquely righteous servant. This uniqueness may have been due to the fact he was a holy man even though he had exceptional wealth (Matthew 19:23-24, Job 1:2-3). While Job had shown himself to be a godly man, God would further sanctify Job through the suffering He had ordained for him.

Satan may not be directly involved in your suffering like he was in Job's, but all your suffering has been ordained by God. This should be a comfort to you. For as those He called, foreknew and predestined for salvation, God has promised to sovereignly work all things for your good (and His glory!), which means making you more like Jesus:

28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Romans 8:28-29

Remember, Christ's own sacrificial suffering on the cross was also ordained for your good:

²² *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—
²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. **Acts 2:22-24***

And, the Savior endured His suffering knowing it would result in His good, that is His joy:

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Hebrews 12:1-2

Do you believe God is sovereign over your current suffering and is using it for your good?

**For a long time now I have been fascinated with the questions found in the book of Job. Because of this, I have determined to consider these questions one by one as I have opportunity to write the weekly pastoral encouragements in the months and years ahead.*

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