

ENDORSEMENTS

Union with Christ involves suffering (1 Peter 2:21), and that suffering can take many forms—whether physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual. In this helpful treatment of suffering, brother McSherley comforts suffering believers with the comfort he received from God during his own “Job season” (2 Cor. 1:4), pointing them in their afflictions to the strength of Christ and the means of grace which He provides, such as prayer, singing, fellowship, and meditating. This book is biblical, faithful, practical, realistic, and the author makes himself vulnerable; it is excellent reading for the seasons of suffering that inevitably face the child of God. May this book point you, above all, to the suffering Lamb of God in whose strength we can persevere!

Dr. Joel R. Beeke

**Chancellor and Professor of Systematic Theology and
Homiletics, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, Michigan**

It was my privilege to be frequently in touch with Travis as he and his family suffered through the afflictions described in this book. Travis never lost sight of God during that time, and he has kept Him in the forefront throughout this book. The overarching lesson of *Lessons of a Job Season* is that the promises of God are true, the presence of God is real, the power of God is invincible,

and the grace of God is boundless. And if we can learn this now, we will know peace, provision, and hope whatever afflictions may befall us. All this Travis and his family had confirmed again and again, through many sources, as they looked to Jesus and found Him faithful, and as they continue doing to this day.

T. M. Moore

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The Lord, in His sovereignty, faithfully led the McSherry family through an extended season of trials and heartache. During this time, I had the privilege of observing first-hand how Travis sought to glorify Christ in and through these hardships. What a blessing it is that Travis has graciously shared seven lessons that the Lord taught him during his “Job season.” I highly recommend this biblical and practical book to those going through their own Job season, as well as pastors and church members ministering to others in the midst of suffering.

David Mitzenmacher

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LESSONS FROM A JOB SEASON

*GOD'S GRACE AND SOVEREIGNTY IN
THE MIDST OF SUFFERING*



TRAVIS MCSHERLEY

LESSONS FROM
A JOB SEASON

*GOD'S GRACE AND SOVEREIGNTY IN
THE MIDST OF SUFFERING*

Lessons from a Job Season:

God's Grace and Sovereignty in the Midst of Suffering

By Travis McSherley

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To the saints at Grace Baptist Church

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PREFACE

The book of Job is a fascinating account, though it can be confusing. It is immensely comforting, though occasionally frustrating. It is encouraging, while also unnerving. But I am grateful that the Bible includes an account of the life of this man, Job. The book acknowledges the reality, which all of us experience to a greater or lesser degree, that this world is full of suffering and hardship, even to those who are striving to live lives that honor the Lord. Amidst a cascade of tragedies and trials, Job asks the questions that all of us are tempted to ask during times of suffering: *Why is this happening? How long will it last? Where are you, oh God?*

Eventually Job does get an answer of sorts, straight from the mouth of God Himself. And that answer is, essentially, “I am strong enough to hold the entire creation in My hand. I see what you don’t see, and I know what you don’t know. Trust Me.” To our carnal minds, that might not seem like an answer at all, but it is really the most amazing and comforting truth there could be. The God who spoke the cosmos into existence, who makes the rain to fall and the lightning strike, who crafted the smallest insects and the largest beasts—this God knows about, cares about, and is sovereign over every detail of our lives.

It is truly a gift of grace that the canon of Scripture includes Job's story. I actually find it to be a compelling apologetic for the veracity of God's Word that it contains so much pain and suffering. Scripture never ignores or glosses over the fact that the aftermath of man's fall is a world with all kinds of difficulty that doesn't always make sense. And that is by no means limited to Job. There is also the prophet Habakkuk, who called out to God, "O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you 'Violence!' and you will not save?" (Hab. 1:1-3). There are psalms that groan in agony and plead for God's help. There is the hopelessness of the book of Ecclesiastes and the despair of the book of Lamentations. There are depictions of war and disease and disaster, some of which was a product of God's righteous judgment, and some of which has no obvious explanation revealed. Even the Lord Jesus Himself makes clear that "in the world you will have tribulation" (John 16:33).

No one could accuse the Bible of sugarcoating the struggles of living in a sin-tarnished world. But, praise be to God, it does not leave us there. Jesus does proclaim the certainty of trouble in this life, but He adds, "But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). In Lamentations, Jeremiah does express deep sadness over the state of his nation, but he also declares that "the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end" (Lam. 3:22). The Preacher in Ecclesiastes does lament the "vanity" of life, but he finds that the "end of the matter" is to "fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). Habakkuk concludes that "God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my

high place” (Hab. 3:19). The psalmists are confident that “those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you” (Ps. 9:10) and “you who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again” (Ps. 70:20).

So God’s Word never denies that dwelling in a fallen world is hard or pretends that any of us are promised a life free from suffering and trial. Quite the opposite. But it makes just as clear that the Almighty is neither shaken nor surprised by anything that befalls us. He is aware of all of our challenges. He is with us in our darkest moments. Not only that, but Christ became flesh and dwelt among us so that He could experience the depths of suffering Himself, and by doing so provide a way that we can be free from the ultimate judgment of our own sin and eventually enjoy a creation without curse.

In the meantime, we should not expect things to be easy. God tells us that “the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided *we suffer with him* in order that *we may also be glorified with him*” (Rom. 8:16–17, emphasis added). We will have troubles in this life, but the end result is that, if we are in Christ, those “light momentary” troubles will one day give way to “an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Cor. 4:17).

This is a book about suffering, but more than that, it is a book about the God who is sovereign over all of creation and all of our lives, including the hard days

or months or years or decades. Maybe you are in the midst of a “Job season” or know someone who is. Maybe, by God’s grace, you have not yet endured tragedy or immense trials, but I am sure you still feel the burdens of life and observe the suffering around you. Whichever category you currently fall into, I hope and pray that these words might encourage your heart, uplift your soul, and help you anchor your mind in the divine truths about who God is and what He has done.