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Some thoughts on a Nice Guy. - posted by Sidewalk (), on: 2019/6/15 1:02

It was quite a day, long ago, as the sons of God gathered before the throne of God. Even Satan himself showed up- and God started the conversation.

Experienced trial lawyers know some very basic rules of conduct, you do not ask a witness a question with an answer you do not know. As the moral governor of the universe, God's lawyer credential is always close at hand. And He asks Satan two loaded questions:

“Where have you been?” He leads.

“On the earth, walking around on it.” An admission of his weakness, and the substantial limitation which rests on his existence. The weakness of Satan has been set into the record.

“Have you considered My servant Job?” He continues.

At this point, we the readers tend to cringe! None of us relish the idea of being in Satan's focus, much less having our loving Heavenly Father encourage it. Our human flesh is tempted to take the reins here, ready to scold God for shooting off His mouth and putting poor Job in such jeopardy. We forget that God knows exactly what He is doing! He always has a purpose, and all His actions are toward that purpose.

Job was indeed a good man. With determination and skill, he had learned to both obey God, and live a life that was certainly pleasing to God. His deeds and spiritual routine are outlined in that first chapter. A good man.

But I believe God saw something deeper in Job. I believe He saw Job as a man who would not yield to sin, having a heart in agreement with God on all the moral issues of men. He was a rock... but he had come as far as he could with the knowledge and experience he had, but no further. He was a good man, and he knew he was a good man. But God saw deeper potential.

The author of the book of Hebrews in 2:10 speaks of how the Captain of salvation was perfected through His sufferings. Hmmm, He who was perfect became truly perfect through sufferings!

There are other references to suffering, and the fruit produced thereby. But no rational person chooses suffering to become more perfect, indeed those who self-inflict punishments upon themselves end up with little more than painful bruises and an ugly strain of invisible pride. (Colossians 2:18-23 addresses this if you are interested in pursuing that.)

But back to God's dilemma with Job. God knows several important things here- beginning with the fact that unscheduled suffering in a man of God will either make or break him. God believes that the suffering will not break what Job already has with God.

He also knows that part of Satan's limitation is that he cannot know the strength and value of a love relationship. Satan mistakenly believes that Job serves from purely selfish motives- something of an affront to God.

God also knows that it would violate His own sacred character to personally afflict Job- giving him life and faith threatening grief. He is a good God, desiring only good things for the jewels of His creation- and he has no authority to turn and cause pain. He does not do that.

But He is not without means to fulfill His will for Job. He has seized the opportunity to trick Satan into doing something that God intends for Job's much greater good!

The book of Job is a strange but unique piece of the scriptures. Written in ancient times- no one is certain just when- it is in a form of the Hebrew language not used in other Old Testament texts. I am not a Hebrew scholar, I just found that in my research. Some place the writing in the age of the prophet Ezekiel, other scholars suspect it was written much earlier. Following Job's redemption and restoration, he lives an additional 140 years- way outside the normal life-span of

f Ezekiel's contemporaries. We just don't know.

What we do know, is the suffering that humans experience, from burning one's tongue on a spoonful of hot soup to the wrenching pain of a traffic wreck that takes the lives of loved ones and perhaps the permanent loss of health for a survivor. There is the suffering of ridicule, the suffering of chronic pain, of a thousand misfortunes that suddenly or slowly seek to quench one's life.

But perhaps one of the worst is that suffering is not evenly distributed! No two people suffer the same things at the same intensity. Whatever you suffer, it is not the same as what I suffer!

So it comes down to this- whatever you or I suffer, it is never true that we suffer more than the Captain of our salvation! Not only has He suffered as profusely as any other man, but He has watched all the suffering in history- and knows both the grief of suffering and the evil of those who inflict it! His knowledge of grief is unfathomable, and His loving forgiveness is boundless.

Yes He orchestrated the suffering that brought Job into a relationship with God that was richer and deeper than anything Job might have imagined. The way Job got what he got- could only come the way it came!

So that, I believe, is the secret of Job. Thrust the hard way into deep ecstasy with his Savior, by a God who skillfully tricked the unsuspecting villain into doing His will.

Job- like his successor many generations down the line, became as it were- perfect through suffering.

God does indeed know exactly what He is doing, every second of every day, for our good, always!