

Episode: God and His Family No. 12

Narrator: Job

Primary Scriptures: Job 1,2; Romans 5:1-5

Story Summary: The children of God will have to suffer

Location: Israel

Time: 50 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Romans 5:3-5

It has always been normal for people to suffer. God has not promised that his family will suffer less than others. In fact, the New Testament indicates God's people get to endure an extra measure of suffering. While suffering is not pleasant, it does have beneficial effects.

Paul writes that suffering produces benefits. In Romans 5:3, he wrote, "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

James seemed almost thrilled with the benefits of suffering. In James 1:2-3, he wrote, "Count it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the test of your faith produces perseverance." He goes on to say that maturity is another result of testing.

Suffering gives people an extra credential when acting on behalf of Jesus. Acts 5:41 says, "The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name." When Jesus chose Saul to be his special representative, he said, "I will show him how much he must suffer in my name." Not how much he *might* suffer, but how much he *must* suffer! Apparently, Saul (Paul) would not be able to accomplish what Jesus wanted unless he suffered.

Through most of human history, suffering was considered a normal part of life. In the modern world, it has become common to want an explanation for why suffering happens. The story of Job shows that God does not always provide an explanation for why people suffer.

Jesus said his followers will suffer. In Luke 14:27, he said, "And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." Jesus suffered, and he makes it clear that his followers will do the same.

One special aspect of suffering is that it qualifies you to comfort others who suffer by assuring them that God comforts those who suffer. 2 Corinthians 3:4 says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."