

## Worthless Physicians

by Tricia Berg

*You, however, smear me with lies; you are worthless physicians, all of you! If only you would be altogether silent! For you, that would be wisdom. Hear now my argument and listen to the pleadings of my lips. Will you speak falsely for God and speak deceitfully for Him? Will you show partiality toward Him? Will you plead the case for God? Will it be well with you when He searches you out? Or can you deceive Him, as one deceives a man? He will surely rebuke you if in secret you show partiality. Will not His majesty terrify you, and the dread of Him fall upon you? Your maxims are proverbs of ashes; your defenses are defenses of clay. Job 13:4-12 (Also see Prov. 17:28.)*

Remember, Job was under trial because God was pleased with him and so Satan wanted to push him to the limits to try to get him to abandon his devotion to God and His ways. (Job 1:6-12, 1:20-2:6) Job's friends (his worthless physicians) were reprimanded by God after Job had passed his extremely difficult trial. (Job 42:7-10)

There is a very important lesson in this for us. Coming under persecution, trial and tribulations does not necessarily mean we have done anything wrong. It may only be a test through which we must hold fast to the truth (Luke 6:22-23, Matt. 5:10-13, James 1:12-16). We need to hold our ground, remembering how good our God is, even if our friends and family tell us that we are suffering because He is displeased with us. Job's wife advised him to "curse God and die" so that he could avoid his suffering. (Job 2:9) Job knew that he would "come forth as gold" when tried (Job 23:10), even though he had no way of knowing how difficult and painful the "trial by fire" would be. (Isa. 48:10, 1Pet. 5:6-11, Psalm 17, 1Pet. 4:12-19, Rev. 3:18)

We believers are in a position of being tested more frequently than we may realize. Every time we cave in to the wicked ways of the world and go along with the flow (whether we "have no choice" or we actually just prefer it), we have failed a little test. (1John 2:15-17, 1Thess. 4:1-8, Eph. 5:1-21)

*Let love be genuine. **Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.** Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. **Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.** Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.*

Never be wise in your own sight. **Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God,** for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, **"if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."** **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.** Romans 12:9-21

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has **ceased from sin**, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For **the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.** With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 1 Peter 4:1-5

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must **no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!**—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to **put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,** and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:17-32

If we glide along through life and no one ever persecutes us for our faith, then maybe we have hidden our light under a bushel. (Matt. 5:14-16, Luke 11:33-36)

Maybe we have hidden our "mina" in a kerchief or our "talent" in the sand. (Luke 19:20-27, Matt. 25:24-30) Or maybe our "salt has lost its saltiness." (Matt. 5:13, Mark 9:49-50, Luke 14:34-35) The Bible repeatedly warns us to expect difficulty when we follow Jesus. (John 15:18-21, 1John 3:12-13, 2Tim. 3:12-13, Acts 14:21-22)

*Only **let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ**, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and **not frightened in anything by your opponents**. This is a clear sign to them of **their destruction**, but of **your salvation**, and that from God. **For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake**, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. Philippians 1:27-30*

Today, it seems to be just as likely to be persecuted from WITHIN the [self-professed] church as from without. People love to take snippets of scripture out of context and use them against anyone who challenges the culture. Passages about not tearing one another apart and the unity of the body of Christ are made into one-sided missiles—anyone who stands up for the truth is accused of being divisive, self-righteous or judgmental. (Gal. 5:13-26, 2Cor. 6:14-18)

People who wish to appear "kind" (and perhaps continue in their sins without any interference from the Bible) fling pieces of Scripture verses at people like they are darts. "Judge not" and "beware of practicing righteousness before men to be seen" are almost always stripped of their context. (Matt. 7:1-5, Matt. 6:1-14) "Forgiving" sins now means condoning sins. (Rom. 1:18-32, Eph. 4:17-5:20, 1Pet. 4:1-5) "Rebuke your brother when he sins" apparently never was uttered by Jesus. (Luke 17:3-4, Matt. 18:15-17) He only came to heal and never mentioned repentance from sins? (John 5:14, John 8:11) In order to "seek and save the lost," they actually need to understand that they are sinners in need of a Savior. (Luke 19:10, Rom. 6:20-23, Rom. 2:6-11)

"Love" has been redefined as "anything goes" (except judging)—but the ones trying to stifle "intolerance" have already judged everyone who disagrees with them. And they haven't judged rightly, according to the full counsel of Scripture, but according to their own version of it, with many edits stemming from their own preferences. (John 7:24, Acts 20:26-31, 2Tim. 3:1-4:5) They love to say "God knows my heart," but they think THEY know the hearts of those they charge with wrongdoing. But God alone searches hearts, and He says that the heart is NOT good inside. That's why we need to be regenerated by His Spirit (born again). (Jer. 17:10, Rev. 2:21-23, Mark 7:20-23, Heb. 4:12-13, John 3:3-8, Titus 2:11-3:11, 1John 3:24, 1John 2:26-29)

Jesus told the Pharisees that God knew their hearts (which were wicked), despite their trying to justify themselves by acting self-righteous while being filthy inside. They loved money and holding power over the people. (Matt. 23:1-28) If they really believed in God, then they wouldn't have put Him to the test with their evil deeds (which they were so foolish as to think that He couldn't see.)

*"No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. And he said to them, "**You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.**" Luke 16:13-15 (Where else have we heard that term "abomination"? Lev. 18:22)*

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but **inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.** You blind Pharisee! First **clean the inside** of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but **within** are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also **outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.**" Matthew 23:25-28*

Just know this. Everyone will give an account of himself to Jesus. (Matt. 12:36-37, Romans 14 in full context, Rev. 11:18, 20:11-15)

*For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and **discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.** And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must **give account.** Hebrews 4:12-13*

I wonder how many would visit someone in prison for preaching the gospel because that activity had been declared illegal? (Matt. 25:34-46) It would be safer to distance ourselves from them, wouldn't it? But sadly, many might even join the world in condemning them in order to avoid drawing attention to themselves. (Luke 22:54-62, 2Tim. 4:16, 2Tim. 1:15-18, 2Tim. 2:12, Mark 8:38, Matt. 13:20-21, 1John 2:19, John 6:66-71) Jesus said He came to bring division. (Matt. 10:34-42, Luke 14:25-35) He separates the wheat from the chaff, the good fish from the bad fish, and the grain from the weeds through tests such as these. (Matt. 3:7-12, 1Pet. 1:6-7, Heb. 12, Mark, 13:36-43, 47, Rev. 2:8-11) He will vindicate and reward those who held fast despite persecution, whether from unbelievers or professed "believers" who think they can live with one foot in the

world and the other in the kingdom of God. (Isa. 66:4-5, 1John 2:15-17, Jam. 4:4, Rev. 3:7-13, Rev. 21:7-8, Rev. 22:10-14)

Let us **hold fast** the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But **recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.** Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of **endurance**, so that **when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised**. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Hebrews 10:23-39

Job was an overcomer (not through positive "self-talk," but by knowing and trusting in God - Prov. 3, Psa. 104), and He was richly rewarded for his faithfulness. Those who abandoned him or gave him poor advice during his suffering witnessed his redemption and restoration by the hand of God. (Job 42:10-17)

Jesus "dictated" letters to seven churches in the Book of Revelation, which were all to have been read in each of the churches. (Rev. 1:10-20) They contain both warnings and "overcomer" rewards for every believer throughout this age to heed. Which of these two letters would you like to have applied to you?

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.' "I know your works. **Behold, I have set before you**

***an open door, which no one is able to shut.*** *I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’* Revelation 3:7-13

*"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. "'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! **So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"*** Revelation 3:14-22

For me, definitely the first one! The second letter (which is actually the last of the seven) has great rewards for those who are wise enough to "buy" the items that Jesus offers to "sell" them (see my article "[Buy Wisdom](#)"), but the first letter indicates that the believers there already possess faith that has been successfully tested and found genuine. God does not TEMPT anyone, but He does allow us to be tested—the same as He did with Job. (Jam. 1:13-16, 1Cor. 10:12-13) The Day of the Lord (God's wrath) comes after the greatest tribulation (severe trial) ever to come on the world. (Matt. 24:21, 29, Joel 2:31, Rev. 12:12, Rev. 13, Rev. 14:9-13, Rev. 17:12, 1Thess. 5:1-11) This "hour of trial" is what the overcomers were promised to be kept OUT of in the letter to the church at Philadelphia. (Remember, these apply to everyone who believes—Smyrna was faithful unto death, which seems to indicate to me that they died victorious in Christ before the hour of trial which is yet to come.)

In this you **rejoice**, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been **grieved by various trials**, so that the **tested genuineness of your faith**—more precious than **gold** that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to **result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ**. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:6-9

Beloved, do not be surprised at the **fiery trial** when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But **rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.** But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. 1 Peter 4:12-19

"**Blessed** are those who are **persecuted for righteousness' sake**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **Blessed** are you when others **revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Matthew 5:10-12

"**Blessed** are you **when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.** But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets." Luke 6:22-26

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet **trials** of various kinds, for you know that the **testing of your faith** produces **steadfastness.** And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4

**Blessed** is the man who **remains steadfast under trial**, for when he has **stood the test** he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. James 1:12

Let's put on the full armor of God so that after the testing is over (whenever that may be for each of us), we're still standing. Let's imitate the steadfastness of Job.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. **Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can **extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one**; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end **keep alert with all perseverance**, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:10-20**

For your **obedience** is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be **wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil**. The God of peace will soon **crush Satan under your feet**. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Romans 16:19-20

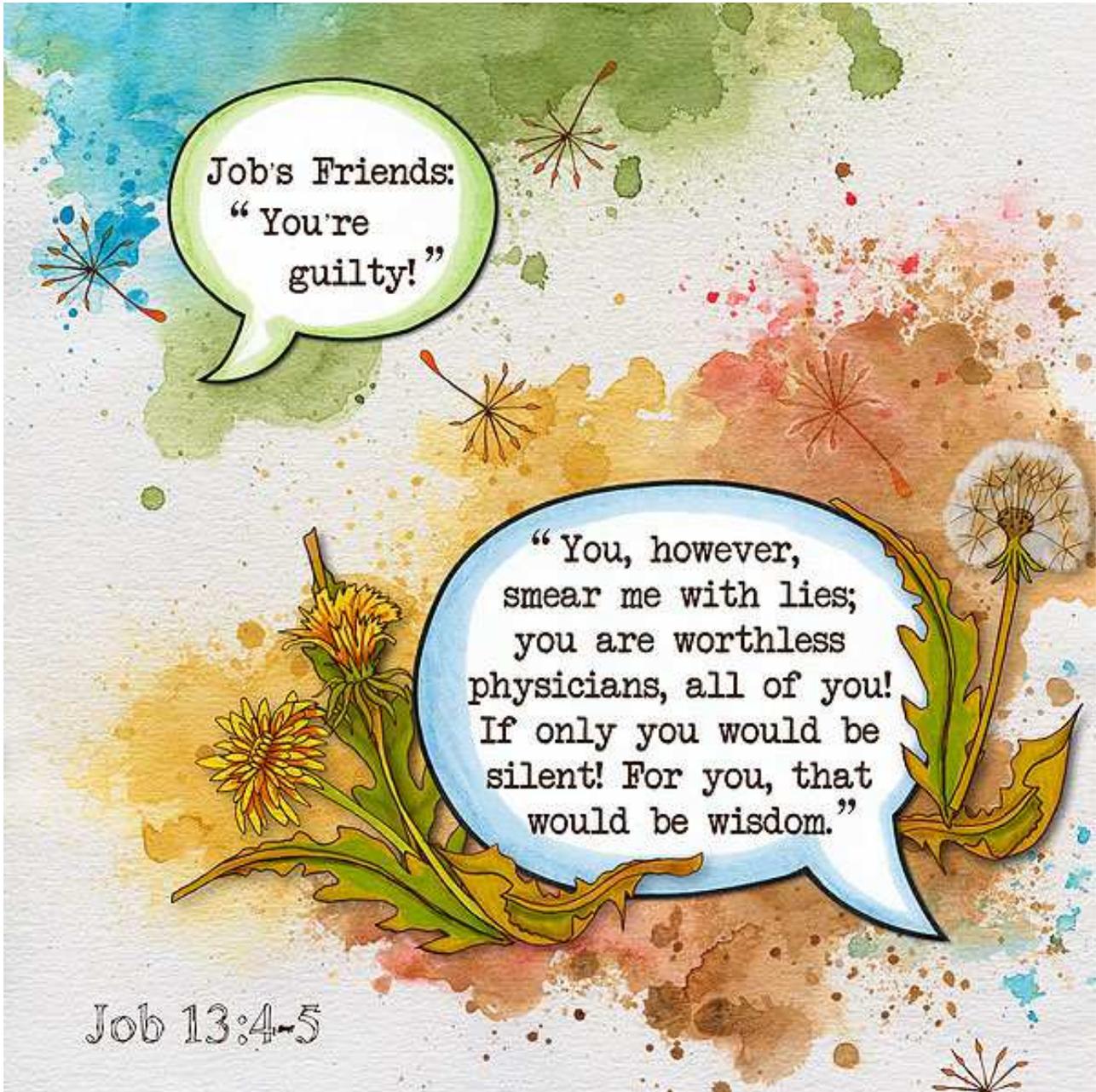
Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. **Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.** To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:6-11

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but **if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back

*into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 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.** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. Romans 8:13-19*

*As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. **Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast.** You have heard of the **steadfastness of Job**, and you have seen the **purpose** of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. James 5:10-11*

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