

PRAISE FOR
GOD SPEAKS

As life inevitably takes each of us through sufferings similar to that of Job, we will no doubt have questions similar to those Job asked—“Where is God in all this?” “Why doesn’t He deliver me?” *God Speaks* gives answers, and with those answers comes much needed comfort.

KIRK CAMERON

Actor and Co-author of *Still Growing* and *Conquer Your Fear, Share Your Faith*

The storms of this life are inevitable, and we know from Scripture that only those who build their house on rock will survive. *God Speaks* lays out God’s building plans through the gospel simply and succinctly. It is the perfect gift for those who don’t know the Lord as well as for those who need comfort in tribulation.

TODD FRIEL

Host of *Wretched* Radio/TV

GOD S P E A K S

FINDING HOPE IN THE
MIDST OF HOPELESSNESS

Life Lessons from the Biblical Book of Job

RAY COMFORT

Published by Regal
From Gospel Light
Ventura, California, U.S.A.
www.regalbooks.com
Printed in the U.S.A.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the *New King James Version*. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Other versions used are

AMP—Scripture taken from the *Amplified® Bible*, Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.
HCSB—Scripture taken from the *Holman Christian Standard Bible®*, Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Holman Christian Standard Bible®, Holman CSB®, and HCSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

KJV—*King James Version*. Authorized King James Version.

NLT—Scripture quotations marked *NLT* are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

WEB—*World English Bible*.

© 2013 Ray Comfort
All rights reserved.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Comfort, Ray.

God speaks : finding hope in the midst of hopelessness / Ray Comfort.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8307-6624-6 (trade paper : alk. paper)

1. Bible. O.T. Job—Criticism, interpretation, etc. I. Title.

BS1415.52.C66 2013

223'.106—dc23

2013006501

Rights for publishing this book outside the U.S.A. or in non-English languages are administered by Gospel Light Worldwide, an international not-for-profit ministry. For additional information, please visit www.glww.org, email info@glww.org, or write to Gospel Light Worldwide, 1957 Eastman Avenue, Ventura, CA 93003, U.S.A.

To order copies of this book and other Regal products in bulk quantities, please contact us at 1-800-446-7735.

This book is dedicated to Lori Nason. She was a passenger in a car that was hit by a drunk driver in 2007. The accident put her into a coma for three weeks and also caused her to have a stroke. Her injuries included a broken hip, pelvis, leg, collarbone and sternum, broken ribs and a collapsed lung. Lori also lost one of her breasts. Lori had been a freelance writer, but even after five years of rehabilitation, her ability to write remained stolen by the stroke. Her world came crashing down in an instant of time, and she found herself in the despair of a Job experience. May this book give her and others in troubling situations comfort beyond words.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	9
1. JOB AND TRAGEDY (Job 1:1-22)	13
2. JOB AND EVIL (Job 2:1-10)	23
3. JOB AND KARMA (Job 2:11-7:21)	31
4. JOB AND JUSTICE (Job 8:1-9:35)	43
5. JOB AND TOUGH QUESTIONS (Job 10:1-7).....	53
6. JOB, THE HAND-MADE MAN (Job 10:8).....	61
7. JOB AND THE LAW (Job 10:14)	73
8. JOB AND SALVATION (Job 10:14)	83
9. JOB AND MORAL RELATIVISM (Job 11:1-6).....	89
10. JOB AND MESSIANIC PROPHECY (Job 16:1-14; 19:13; 30:9-10)	103
11. JOB AND LADY GAGA (Job 21:1-22:30)	109
12. JOB AND IDOLATRY (Job 23:1-17)	115
13. JOB AND TRUST (Job 13:15; 19:25-27)	125
14. JOB AND SCIENTIFIC TRUTHS (Job 26:1-14; 28:25-28).....	137
15. JOB AND LUST (Job 31:1-4).....	143
16. JOB AND “IF” (Job 31:5-40).....	149
17. JOB AND WATER (Job 38:1-11).....	159
18. JOB AND THE WONDERS OF CREATION (Job 38:12-38)	165
19. JOB AND THE HOLOCAUST (Job 40:1-5)	171
20. JOB AND THE DINOSAUR (Job 40:15-24).....	177
21. JOB AND THE FUTURE (Job 42:1-6)	181
22. JOB AND LOVE (Job 42:7-17)	203
EPILOGUE: SAVE YOURSELF SOME PAIN	211
ENDNOTES	227

INTRODUCTION

Although we try to fortify ourselves against the storms of life, trials and difficulties are virtually unavoidable. However, the book of Job contains comfort beyond words—it offers remarkable knowledge and wisdom of which this pain-wracked and suffering world knows nothing.

When we suffer, we usually want to know why bad things are happening to us. But the comfort we find in the book of Job does not come from finding out *why* we suffer but rather in coming face to face, as did Job, with a holy and just God.

Job's servants were murdered, his possessions stolen, his children killed and his health taken away. Job lost everything but his faith in God and a stubborn desire to have a personal audience with the Almighty. He wanted to ask the Lord why such terrible suffering had come his way—to talk face to face with his Creator.

When he finally got that personal audience, God didn't answer even one of Job's questions. Instead, He had 70 of His own to ask Job. But Job wasn't disappointed. Neither will we be disappointed if we take the time to study Job's story of grief and loss and God's responses to this suffering man. *God Speaks* draws from the book of Job, a book in which are hidden amazing truths—including scientific truths that were not discovered in this world until more than 3,000 years later—that prove the trustworthiness of Scripture.

As we look into the Word of God through the story of Job, may it enable us to look past our problems and to rest in the faithful God who is revealed in its words.

GOD
SPEAKS

JOB AND TRAGEDY

J o b 1 : 1 - 2 2

Who was the greatest man who ever lived? Was it Socrates, Lincoln, Gandhi, Beethoven, Shakespeare, Leonardo da Vinci? All these men were great, but Jesus said that the number one was John the Baptist. He said there was none born of women who was greater than John. John didn't invent anything, or paint masterpieces, or write astute plays. He did, however, stand against evil, and like Lincoln and Gandhi, he was murdered for what he believed.

It seems that if John were the greatest, then God would not have allowed him to be cut off in his prime. The Lord could easily have stayed the hand of the executioner, but He didn't. He could have opened the prison doors for John as He later did for Peter, but He didn't. Why didn't God do a miracle for His number one? One thing we do know is that we *don't know*. From a human perspective, intervention on John's behalf was certainly warranted, but for some reason there wasn't a peep from Heaven in his defense.

Perhaps coming in a close second on the list of great men is a man about whom most of the world has never heard. His name was Job, and he had a best-selling biography written about him, despite the fact that his story is about pain and suffering.

We all try to fortify ourselves against suffering, but each of us eventually proves to be like an aged house in a heavy rainstorm of trials. Suffering at one time or another rains down on us, and the constant drips keep coming through our ceiling, no matter how much we try to patch the roof.

Job's whole ceiling caved in. Few of us will suffer to the degree to which Job suffered, but his biography sets an example for us of how we can best handle our pain when life's sorrows and troubles overwhelm us. Job's story gives us a perspective on God's thinking.

The book begins with the ultimate foreword—an incredible character reference:

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1).

Job was a sinner, like the rest of us, and he battled against his sinful nature. However, he was “blameless” (no doubt through the sacrificial system), and he was unique in that he feared God and rejected evil. He wasn't “born again” with a new nature, regenerated and helped by the Holy Spirit in his weakness as is the believer in Christ. Yet in his unregenerate state, Job shunned evil. That's amazing for a human being, as Jesus testified that we love the darkness and hate the light. We run toward sin as a moth flies to a flame.

The cynic may look at Job and say that there was a reason he shunned evil. Job had no reason to steal, as a poor person does, because he was rich. *Very* rich. He had no reason to covet anyone else's wealth, to be greedy or to be angry about life's realities. So half of the seven deadly sins that poor people have to battle were no problem for Job. Here's how rich Job was:

And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East (Job 1:2-3).

Job was rich and powerful, and he was blessed with 10 healthy and happy kids. He had it made. However, the Scriptures pull back the veil over the supernatural world to give us a glimpse into the

spiritual realm regarding Job's life. Here we see God Himself speaking about Job to the ultimate cynic:

Then 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, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person."

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD (Job 1:8-12).

Shortly after this glimpse into the supernatural, Job's life turned a corner. Job's children were celebrating in their oldest brother's house one day, and a messenger came to Job and told him that thieves had stolen his oxen and donkeys and had killed his servants. Then the messenger said, "And I alone have escaped to tell you!" While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived and told Job that his sheep and more of his servants had been struck by lightning and killed. Then he said, "And I alone have escaped to tell you!" While he was still speaking, a third messenger arrived and reported that Job's camels had been stolen and more of his servants murdered, and then the messenger said, "And I alone have escaped to tell you!" Then (believe it or not) while he was still speaking, another messenger came and told Job that his beloved children had been partying when a tornado had hit the house in which they had been sitting. All four corners of the house had collapsed and killed all his children. Then the messenger said (you guessed it), "And I alone have escaped to tell you!"

The Bible is full of . . . well . . . intellectually embarrassing situations, and this is one of them. This narrative sounds like some sort of four-men-came-into-a-bar joke or the beginning of a Grimm's fairytale. There are four disasters, and in each disaster only one person is saved. Each of these survivors finds Job and parrots the exact same sentence to him. For two servants to show up and say the same thing would be an amazing coincidence. Three would be a big stretch. But four is ridiculous—unless the story is found in the Bible. It's because this story is in Scripture that the dynamic radically changes. If something is in the Bible, we are no longer talking about a coincidence or a big stretch. We are talking about the supernatural.

TWO CLASSES

The Scriptures speak of only two classes of people living on this massive earth: the natural person and the spiritual person. Natural people live and think in the realm of nature. They understand through their natural senses, and to them everything has a natural and rational explanation. For them, pigs don't fly, and people don't walk on water. Seas don't split apart and allow masses of people to walk through them. Snakes and donkeys don't talk, walls don't fall down when people shout, arks don't carry animals two by two, the blind aren't made to see with the touch of a hand, and the dead aren't brought back to life with a spoken word.

But the *spiritual* man or woman sees things very differently. For those who are spiritual, *anything* goes, because they are dealing with the supernatural. With God, anything is possible. Demon-possessed pigs can leap off cliffs, snakes and donkeys can talk, the deaf can hear, the blind can see—and what's more, nothing needs to be explained. God created natural law, and He can suspend His own natural law any time He wishes.

As a Christian, I don't wrestle with things like *whether or not* Jesus multiplied the bread and fish; I already believe that He did. But I do wonder *how* He did His miracles. Were the fish cooked? Were the multiplied fish identical to the original ones? Or when Jesus walked

on the water, how deep did His feet sink into the water upon which He walked? Or when the children of Israel walked through the Red Sea, could they see fish in the walls of water on each side?

There's a reason that those who are born again never doubt the miracles of God. They have already experienced their own big miracle. The moment they repented of their sins, they came to know God; their eyes and ears were opened, and faith came to them as a gift from God. It's as though their lungs had been clogged with the filth of sin, and God had given them a lung transplant. Believing the Bible now comes to them as naturally as would breathing with a set of new and healthy lungs. A new life as well as times of refreshing came to them from the presence of the Lord (see Acts 3:20).

If you have not been born again (see John 3:1-21), you are a natural man or woman. You therefore have a few intellectual problems that make you gasp a little when it comes to the subject of God and the supernatural. Let me ask you some questions to see if I can pinpoint the trouble for you: What was in the beginning? What produced this huge, incredible natural world in which we live? If you say it was the Big Bang, then let me ask you where the materials to make the Big Bang came from? If the Big Bang was the product, who or what was its producer?

Sound, like that which we would hear in a loud bang, travels in waves, as do light and heat; but unlike light and heat, sound moves by making molecules vibrate. So for sound to travel anywhere, there must be molecules for it to travel in. On earth, sound travels to our ears by vibrating air molecules, but there are no molecules in space. Therefore there was no bang in space, because there are no molecules to vibrate. So if the Big Bang happened, it was more of a Big Silence. But what was it that caused this Big Silence to explode? You can't say that it caused itself, because for it to do so it would have had to exist before it existed to cause itself to explode. If it existed before it existed, then it wasn't the beginning, because it already existed. For something to create itself is scientifically impossible, of course, but common sense alone will tell us that such a thing cannot happen.

Many scientists now believe that there was “something” before the Big Bang, but they’re not sure what it was:

Ten years ago . . . there was no doubt that the Big Bang was the beginning. But today, the certainty has gone. There is no escaping the inconvenient truth that the Hubble’s graph, work of genius though it is, contains a huge problem. It tells us that everything we see in the universe today—us, trees, galaxies, zebras, emerged in an instant, from nothing, and that’s a problem. It’s all effect, and no cause.¹

It’s only a problem if you reject God as being the first cause.

The solitary rational explanation for the origin of the universe is that something immaterial, eternal and unspeakably powerful created it. The source of this world had to be something *supernatural*. So you are forced to fall back on a belief in the supernatural, and in doing so, you are therefore saying that the impossible happened—that something supernatural created everything from nothing. A belief in the supernatural is much bigger than a mere belief in flying pigs. So if the supernatural had a hand in making birds, flowers, trees, fruit, horses, cows, elephants, milk, cheese, eggs and butter, it’s only natural to believe in the supernatural as it is portrayed in the Bible.

Job 1 necessitates the supernatural. Whoever penned this book’s 42 chapters was either supernaturally lifted into Heaven to witness and record the dialogue between God and Satan and then was able to listen to the conversation between Job and his three friends, or he was supernaturally given the material by divine revelation.

So, the supernatural book of Job is entirely in keeping with the rest of the supernatural Word of God. As with many other strange instances in Holy Scripture, the fact of four men coming to Job, each of them having nearly the exact same account, may be hard for some to swallow. But gnat-straining thoughts of doubt will only keep us from the comforting truths of Holy Scripture.

It is a freeing thing to be able to let go of doubt and rest in knowledge-based trust. It’s like a man who has never flown in a

plane letting go of his natural reasoning. He could sit in his seat indignantly mumbling that it is impossible for human beings to fly at 35,000 feet in the air at 500 miles per hour in a massive steel can with wings. On the other hand, he could say that air travel is a reality that he can't deny, and he could therefore relax; or he could reason a little and consider the way gravity can be superseded by the law of aerodynamics and that it is possible for a steel can to be airtight and filled with renewable air so as to keep human beings alive at that height.

You and I can rest in the fact that all of us who believe in a Creator of creation also believe in the supernatural; or we can have a knowledge-based trust that works things out a little by realizing that God has deliberately placed strange and hard-to-believe instances in the Scriptures in order to humble the proud. All who trust that the Bible is the Word of God are forced to humble themselves and become as little children, much to the scorn of a proud and godless world. But that is the way of salvation. The door has been made low to exclude those who are wise in their own conceits. God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

HIS FORTIFICATION

So how did Job handle the fourfold and terrible news? He didn't hold his fist to the heavens and accuse God of some sort of wrongdoing. The man tore his robe, shaved his head, fell to the ground and worshiped God. Job was a godly man. He knew that God is the giver of life and that ultimately He's also the One who takes life away. That was Job's fortification. Every blessing and every good gift comes from above.

But this isn't how the ungodly think. God isn't in their thoughts (see Ps. 10:4). Millions don't attribute the blessings of loved ones, food, light, the seasons, color, beauty, fruits, eyesight, hearing or their own lives to God. They think that human beings are the mere product of change. There was a big bang, and there you have it—we are here. No one is to be thanked for anything. Others believe in the existence of God, but they never even think to bow

their heads in prayer and thank Him for His amazing kindness. Even though their very ability to breathe comes from their Creator, if you ask them what God has done for them, they will shake their heads and say, “I can’t think of anything.” I know this because I have asked many people that question. I also know it because I was once in darkness, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in me because of the blindness of my heart.

But Job was different. He was insightful and thankful, even in his unregenerate state. Look at the humble words he spoke as his life was being torn apart:

Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD (Job 1:21).

Charles Spurgeon put these words of Job into perspective when he said:

Job lost his ten children at a stroke. O Death, what an insatiable archer thou wast that day, when ten must fall at once! Yet Job says, “The Lord hath taken away.” That is all he has to say about it: “The Lord hath taken away.” I need not repeat to you the story of the gardener who missed a choice rose, but who could not complain because the master had plucked it. Do you feel that it is just so with all that you have, if he takes it? Oh, yes! why should he not take it? If I were to go about my house, and take down an ornament or anything from the walls, would anybody say a word to me? Suppose my dear wife should say to the servant, “Where has that picture gone?” and the maid replied, “Oh, the master took it!” Would she find fault? Oh, no! If it had been a servant who took it down, or a stranger who removed it, she might have said something; but not when I took it, for it is mine. And surely we will let God be Master in His own house; where we are only the children, He shall take whatever He pleases of all

He has lent us for a while. It is easy to stand here and say this; but, brothers and sisters, let us try to say it if it should ever come to us as a matter of fact that the Lord who gave should also take away.²

What wise and wonderful words! Job held onto the things of this world with a loose hand, and so must we if we want to bolster ourselves against inevitable suffering. Job's words need to be close to all our hearts, because his experience could happen to any of us in a moment of time. Every day we hear of lives being torn apart by bombs, tornados, hurricanes and accidents, and the attitude that was Job's must be the attitude that is our own fortification and consolation. We are mere custodians of our loved ones. They belong to God, as He is their Creator.

A friend of mine once told me that he'd had a terrible morning. His car had broken down, and he'd had to go to the expense of renting a vehicle to get to work and to deal with the hassle of getting his own car repaired. But then his eyes lit up with joy as he told me that he had bumped into a man at the repair shop who had listened intently as my friend Scotty had shared with him the gospel. God had prepared the man for this conversation. My friend was convinced that it was a divine encounter, and that knowledge made him feel that the morning's hassle made sense.

Often the Christian doesn't have to look too far to see God's hand in life's trials. God promises to work all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purposes (see Rom. 8:28). But it is also true that we do not always recognize God's hand in our trials or see what good purpose could come of them. So I, in semi-jest, cynically responded to my friend Scotty, "So what was the purpose of Job's experience as he sat in misery, covered with boils from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet? Was he holding a gospel tract and looking for some divine encounter?" I couldn't see too much light in Job's long and dark experience other than the divine revelation that he was vile—and I knew that there were less painful ways for a person to gain that awareness.

Scotty smiled and said, “Are you kidding? *Millions* have taken comfort from Job’s experience.” It was a “duh” moment for me. It is true! Millions of people have found consolation in their sufferings *because of the book of Job*. The Maker of the universe looked into the future to the day when billions of copies of the Bible would be printed and bring light to those who would find themselves in terrible darkness. Job had no idea how much good would come from his terrible suffering. He didn’t know that he would be admired and preached about and written about through the ages:

My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful (Jas. 5:10-11).

Job had no idea that he would become one of the greatest heroes of the best-selling book of all time, which would be published more than 3,000 years after his dreadful experience.