

## It is God that Justifies

At the start of his letter, James said that patience through sufferings tests our faithfulness to God, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into **divers temptations**; Knowing *this*, that **the trying of your faith [faithfulness] worketh patience**” (Jas 1:2-3). Then toward the end, he cited Job as just such an example, “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, **for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience**. Behold, we count them happy which endure. **Ye have heard of the patience of Job**” (Jas 5:10-11).

Satan accused Job of serving God for his own benefit, “Doth Job fear God for nought?” (Job 1:9). He claimed that if everything he had was taken away that he would turn against God, “But put forth thine hand now, and **touch all that he hath**, and he will **curse thee to thy face**” (1:11). But Job stayed true, “the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (1:21), and God Himself justified him from that accusation because of his faithfulness, “Hast thou considered **my servant Job** ... and still he **holdeth fast his integrity**” (2:3).

After that, Satan was allowed to attack his health, “But put forth thine hand now, and **touch his bone and his flesh**, and he will **curse thee to thy face**” (2:5). And the long exchange between him and his three friends that followed consisted of Job trying to justify himself in their sight. Because of his prominence in the land, “this man was the greatest of all the men of the east” (1:3), he was concerned with his public image—that he was seen as suffering for something he had done wrong. But rather than staying quiet and trusting God as he had before, “he justified himself rather than God” (32:2). But he eventually repented after being reprovved for it, “Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes” (42:6).

Trusting God’s justification is also what Paul taught, “Who shall lay any thing to **the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth**. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, **who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.**” (Rom 8:33-34). Who can bring successful false charges against God’s people while His Son is interceding for them at His right hand? When we faithfully and patiently obey Christ’s law of love—treating right those that mistreat us while not caring that our name and reputation

is slandered, our public image is tarnished, our possessions are jeopardized, and even our safety is threatened—God will justify us.

Paul was quoting from this prophecy of Isaiah about Jesus Christ’s trial and condemnation to death, “**He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me?** let us stand together: who *is* mine adversary? let him come near to me. **Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?**” (Isa 50:8-9). Christ didn’t defend Himself but trusted God to justify Him—which He did in vindicating His wrongful execution by resurrecting and seating Him at His right hand. And Peter urged us to follow Christ’s example, “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us **an example, that ye should follow his steps** ... Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but **committed himself to him that judgeth righteously**” (1Pe 2:21, 23).

Paul taught that faithfulness is our most critical means of defense, “Above all, taking **the shield of faith [faithfulness]**, wherewith ye shall be able to **quench all the fiery darts of the wicked**” (Eph 6:16). The fiery weapons are destructive words hurled against us, “And the tongue is a fire” (Jas 3:6). We extinguish insults, slanders, whispers, mocks, accusations, and caricatures by staying faithful to the Lord—loving those that smear our name while trusting God to justify us.

Job recognized that God had given him everything, therefore it’s God’s prerogative to take everything, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: **the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away**” (Job 1:21). And Paul taught the same, “But godliness with **contentment** is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.” (1Ti 6:6-7). Being content in our circumstances shows our trust in God. “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to **be content**. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound” (Phl 4:11-12).

It’s all about letting God be the God of our lives. We’re not to play His role by trying to figure things out for ourselves, then trying to make situations work out the way we want. It’s being patient and content in any circumstance and enduring through any unjust sufferings by trusting Him to justify us.