

CHAPTER Nine

The Prisoner

JOB 19:6-21

Jeffrey MacDonald was living what many would consider to be a great life. He was a medical doctor and a Green Beret during the war in Vietnam. He and his wife had two girls, and his wife Colette was three months pregnant with their first son. As a surprise for his kids, he bought a pony for them that his in-laws were keeping for him until they were able to move into the country. Then in February of 1970, his perfect life came to a bloody halt. According to him, his two daughters were asleep in bed. He had fallen asleep watching TV, and his wife had gone to bed without him. He woke up because he heard his wife screaming in the bedroom. As he started to get up, he was attacked by three men. They began beating on him with a wooden club and trying to stab him with an icepick. He was knocked unconscious. When he awoke, he found his wife on the floor of the bedroom dead. She had been beaten and stabbed in the chest and neck. He then checked on his two daughters. They, too, had been beaten and stabbed to death. They were living on base at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, so he called the Military Police who immediately responded. The death of his wife and children was just the beginning of his nightmare because it soon got worse. Investigators began interviewing him and began to see cracks in his testimony. He claimed he was attacked by three men, yet the living room was hardly showing any signs of a struggle. He agreed to take a polygraph but then later changed his mind. In short order, he became the prime suspect. He was arrested and charged with the murders of his two daughters and his pregnant wife. He refused to confess, maintained his innocence, and after eight months of scrutiny and court proceedings, all charges were dropped. It appeared his nightmare had ended. Two months later, he appeared on a talk show where he appeared to be unmoved by the deaths of his family, and that is when his father-in-law decided he was guilty of killing his wife and kids. He determined to try to put him in jail. His father-in-law began writing to people asking for the case to be reopened. It took almost ten years to make it happen, but MacDonald had to go back to court, and this time, he was convicted and sentenced to prison for life. Jeffrey

MacDonald is 81-years-old at the time of this writing and still in prison. He has appeared before parole boards which have all turned him down for one reason. To get out of prison, all that is required is that he confess to killing his wife and children. He continues to maintain his innocence; therefore, from his vantage point, the justice system is broken and rigged against him. As we approach this chapter, we will hear from a man who was vehemently denying all charges against him. He was stressing as much as he could that he had done nothing wrong, yet in spite of his innocence, God had determined to punish him.

He complained that he was ... **WRONGLY CONVICTED.**

Job 19:7

“Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but *there is* no judgment.”

During MacDonald’s interrogation and testimony, he maintained that one of the attackers was a woman with blonde hair and a floppy hat. During the testimony of witnesses, one of the police officers who responded to the initial call stated that as he was approaching the house, he saw a woman with blonde hair standing on the street corner which seemed odd to him since it was around 4:00 A.M. The woman was tracked down and happened to be a drug addict with a story that continued to change. The problem was, however, that once prosecutors focused on MacDonald as the killer, this woman’s possible involvement was largely ignored. When Job claimed he was being wronged, he was stating it from a judicial complaint. He felt his pleas were not being heard. The result of his words being ignored was that there was no judgment. The word *judgment* means verdict. Job was saying that while he was being put on trial, nothing was happening. He was being tormented by accusations from all directions, yet God, as his Judge, was just sitting there. He was not saying anything. By not resolving this case, the courtroom drama continued to linger on and on with no end in sight.

He complained that he was ... PLACED IN JAIL.

Job 19:8

“He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.”

Back in 1994, OJ Simpson was accused of murdering his ex-wife and her boyfriend. He was arrested and placed in jail awaiting trial. The trial lasted for eight months and ended with OJ being acquitted. He was then released from jail. At this point, most people believed he was guilty, yet while the case was investigated, two key factors happened. First, he was placed in jail even though his guilt or innocence had not yet been determined. Second, OJ always maintained his innocence. Those are the same two factors Job was complaining about because God had fenced up his way. The word *fence* means to wall in or to inclose. The idea was not that God simply created an obstacle in Job's path, but rather that Job had been completely enclosed by walls. He was describing being locked in a room with no way to get out which sounds like jail. Not only did he feel as if he were in jail, but it also seemed God had turned the lights out and kept Job in a darkened cell as well. A cave tour guide will sometimes reveal what total darkness is like. He prepares everyone, cautions them to stand perfectly still, and then turns the lights off. A person might try to see his hand in front of his face, and he sees nothing. It can seem very eerie and kind of scary, yet the guests know two things that give them peace. They know the lights will be turned on soon, and they also know that other people are right next to them experiencing the same thing. Removing those two elements would turn that eerie darkness into a sort of psychological torture. That is what Job was accusing God of doing. Job felt God had enclosed him with walls so he could not get out. It seemed as if He had removed the light, making his life even more frightening than it already was. He saw himself as an innocent man, wrongly convicted, and thrown into a cell with no door or light; and God was the One Who had done this to him.

He complained that he was ... ROBBED.

Job 19:9

“He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown *from* my head.”

When Captain MacDonald came to after being knocked unconscious by whom he claimed were three men and a woman, he discovered his wife had been stabbed more than 30 times. He called the military police who had an ambulance dispatched to his home. As police were taking a statement regarding what happened and looking over the crime scene, it was later discovered that the ambulance driver who was present stole MacDonald's wallet. His wife and daughters had all been horrifically murdered, and the ambulance driver decided it was a good time to steal a wallet he saw just sitting there. How could someone be so cold-blooded that he would choose to take advantage of the chaos of a murder scene and do something like that? Job was accusing God of being just as heartless as that ambulance driver. Instead of trying to help or comfort him, God decided instead to rob him.

What did Job accuse God of robbing? The word *glory* in verse nine is referring to Job's honor or his reputation. He was no longer a man in good standing or viewed as a man of character. All of his status was gone, and his friends were looking at him like the police were looking at MacDonald. Why? Things were not adding up! If Job was really innocent, then why was his life spiraling out of control? If he was really innocent, then why did his wife turn against him? Surely, she must know something no one else knew. As Job was locked away in a jail cell and kept in the dark, he was looking upon God as a common thief who had stolen his good name and his reputation. In Job's imagination, God the thief had taken more – the crown of his glory. A crown is a symbol of power, such as when a person is crowned as a king. In that position, he is granted power over his kingdom and subjects. In Job's life, his crown was the power or control over his life. Thanks to God, Job's life was now spinning out of control, and Job no longer had any say as to what would happen to him.

He complained that he was ... RUINED.

Job 19:10

"He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree."

A 73-year-old retired woman was working on her laptop when a warning popped up on her screen. It stated that someone had tried to break into her Paypal account and she needed to contact the Microsoft number that was flashing on

her screen. She did so and got in touch with a cyber-security expert who began walking her through the process of safeguarding her finances. She began following his steps, but in order to do so, she was told that the security expert needed to first access her computer in order to help her. She gave her permission and granted him access. Her hope was that he would help protect her money. Instead, it was a scam. He accessed her bank and withdrew her life savings. She contacted the bank, and they took a hands-off position telling her there was nothing that could be done. In her own words, describing her situation, she was ruined. In reality, she still had a small pension. She still had her health that allowed her to work part-time when she wanted. While she had lost her life savings, she was still able to endure the loss and carry on with her life.

When Jeffrey MacDonald was found guilty of murdering his wife and children, he was sentenced to life in prison. His wife was murdered when he was 27. He was finally convicted and sent to prison when he was 36. He is now 81 years old, still in prison, and still trying to win his freedom. That sounds like a ruined life. From Job's vantage point, God ruined his life as well. All of his children were crushed to death when the roof of their house caved in on them. His life's savings was taken from him as well as all potential for future earnings. His livestock was dead; his workers were dead; and his health was gone, meaning he could never return to work in his condition. On top of that, his marriage was rocky at best, and the community had taken a turn in how they viewed him. His life was totally ruined, and from his view, God was the One Who had done it all on purpose. Job felt he was now serving a life sentence with no way out, and it was all God's doings.

He complained that he was ... ATTACKED.

Job 19:11-12

"He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as *one of his enemies*. 12 His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle."

One of the leading reasons police investigators and prosecuting attorneys had for refusing to consider that Jeffrey MacDonald was telling the truth was the lack of his wounds in relation to those of his wife. When Collette was found, she was

sprawled on the floor. Both of her arms had been broken as she tried to defend herself from being beaten. She had been stabbed 21 times in the chest with an ice pick and 16 times in her neck and chest with a knife, and her throat had been slashed in 2 places. The 2-year-old daughter had been stabbed 33 times with a knife and 15 times with an ice pick in the neck, chest, and back. The 5-year old daughter had been clubbed on her head multiple times fracturing her skull and stabbed an additional 8 times in the neck. Jeffrey, on the other hand, had cuts and bruises on his face but nothing life-threatening or requiring stitches. He had a minor concussion and had been stabbed in the chest in a precise manner, as if he had done it to himself. To the investigators, it all looked like it had been staged with no home invaders at all.

When Job viewed what he was experiencing in his life, he came to the conclusion that for some unknown reason, God had declared him to be an enemy. Because of God's mistake, He had obviously declared war on Job, and from the most miserable time in his life, Job could see that God had surrounded him with His troops. These would include, in Job's estimation, his friends, his wife, and everyone in his community who knew him. He felt everyone was now against him because they were all on God's side, and he had become the enemy. Is that how it really was? No! His feelings simply reveal how Satan has the uncanny ability to get into a person's head to convince him of something that is not true, especially in relation to God.

He complained that he was in ... SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.

Job 19:13

"He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me."

One of the most controversial forms of punishment for criminals is solitary confinement. It originated in America surprisingly with the Quakers and Benjamin Franklin. The Quakers were convinced that if a person were locked away in a cell with nothing but a Bible and no contact with other people, he would eventually come to the place of repentance. While it may have sounded good, it did not take into account the fact that some people have no desire to repent no matter what is done to them. Over time, the Quakers came to realize

they were wrong and apologized for their position, but the mold had been set, and the practice continued until a change was made. The change came about with the building of a new prison called Alcatraz. Because it was designed to house the most dangerous criminals in the country, it included an area called Cellblock D. That area was where the cells for solitary confinement were maintained. Alcatraz was not going to use solitary confinement just to keep the worst criminals away from other prisoners. They also created a place called the hole. It was a concrete room with nothing but a bed, a sink, and a hole in the floor. The convict was stripped of all clothing and forced to remain in that room for 23 hours a day. The goal was not only to isolate him, but to thoroughly humiliate him as well. From there, instead of realizing the harm and danger of total isolation, supermax prisons were built to continue the practice of solitary confinement. Job was claiming that God had instituted this same barbaric form of punishment upon him.

- **He was BEING ISOLATED FROM ... HIS RELATIVES.**

Job 9:14

“My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.”

Whether Job was referring to the loss of his children or more distant relatives, we do not know, but the result was that he felt forgotten by the world. The CIA has developed their own form of isolation called white torture. They put white clothes on a person, lock him in a room that is all white with no other color visible, and when it is feeding time, they only give him white food like rice. It results in what is called sensory deprivation. Over time, the person becomes convinced the world has moved on and he has become forgotten by everyone who knew him. Job felt he had arrived at that place, totally forgotten by everyone including God.

- **He was ISOLATED FROM ... HIS WORKERS.**

Job 9:15-16

“They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight. 16 I called my servant, and he gave *me* no answer; I intreated him with my mouth.”

A lot of times, one of the greatest reasons people enjoy going to work is not because of the work involved, but because of the people they get to see and associate with. They enjoy the camaraderie. For Job, even that joy was taken from him. His servants and workers who were left would barely acknowledge him. They kept their distance and treated him like he was invisible.

- **He was ISOLATED FROM ... HIS WIFE.**

Job 9:17

“My breath is strange to my wife, though I intreated for the children's sake of mine own body.”

Even his home had become a place of solitary confinement. Whatever the earlier confrontation was with his wife, the issue had not been resolved but appears to have only gotten worse. He describes his wife as not wanting to be anywhere near him, as if his breath was horrible. She was now treating him with contempt. Though he was still around people physically, he had come to feel he was all alone and no one really cared for him anymore, including God.

- **He was ISOLATED FROM ... CHILDREN.**

Job 9:18

“Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me.”

Most have heard the story of the pied piper. Supposedly, in the year 1284, a village named Hamelin had a problem with rats. They were everywhere and carrying all sorts of diseases. The city officials decided to do something about it when a man suddenly appeared, claiming to be a rat-catcher. How was he going to get rid of the rats? He had a magical flute the rats could not resist, and they would follow the sound of that flute, even to their death. An agreement was reached to pay a large sum of money, and the pied piper began playing a tune. Thousands of rats made their way toward the sound of his flute. He led them out of town and then returned to collect his money. However, the city officials refused to pay him, so he informed them he would then use his flute to lead all of their children away from their homes. One takeaway is that

children are very naïve and can be enticed with candy or some other gift. They can easily be tricked and even stolen. Job was accusing God of being some sort of a Pied Piper who had even succeeded in turning the innocent hearts of children who knew him and at one time had loved him. Now, he felt that thanks to God, they refused to even acknowledge him.

- **He was ISOLATED FROM ... HIS CLOSEST FRIENDS.**

Job 9:19

“All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.”

For years, Jeffery MacDonald’s in-laws had stood by him and defended him. They believed he had been attacked and falsely accused. They were his staunchest supporters for years. In the course of his trial, details were released that eventually changed their minds. One of those details was the fact that he had been cheating on his wife, their daughter. He was not the man they had imagined while he was married to their daughter. While the marriage looked typical, with struggles here and there, they believed he was a good husband until it came out that he was an adulterer. As their view of him began to change, they eventually became his worst enemy and lobbied so hard and for so long that they eventually succeeded in having his case retried, and he was found guilty. Job found himself in that same situation. His three best friends, men he had known for years, were slowly turning against him. With no one else to comfort him, Job saw that they, too, had turned against him. This, too, was God’s fault, or so he thought.

He complained that he was ... HANGING BY A THREAD.

Job 19:20-21

“My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth. 21 Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.”

Jeffrey MacDonald has spent over 45 years of his life in prison. The one thing he clings to is his innocence. While there are many things that make him look guilty, there is one thing in particular that gives him hope. The woman seen standing on the streetcorner near his house by a police officer was investigated. It turns out that she was a drug addict who owned a blonde wig. She was not really a blonde, but the interesting fact is that MacDonald recalled seeing a blonde as one of the attackers. While owning a blonde wig is not a crime, a blonde strand of hair was discovered at the scene of the crime, but it was never revealed in his trial. It was later discovered that other evidence was withheld as well, including the testimony of the blonde woman on the streetcorner who was willing to testify that she was in the house at the time of the murders. However, she was threatened by the lead prosecutor to keep quiet or else. Just one more tidbit is that with newer DNA samples tested, it is now known that the DNA found at the crime scene did not match any family members meaning somebody else was in the house.

When Job claimed to have escaped with the skin of his teeth, he was saying he had somehow barely survived up to that point in time, but he was not sure how much longer he could hold out. Like 81-year-old Jeffrey MacDonald, he asked for pity from anyone who would listen but with a condition. MacDonald was still refusing to admit he had murdered his wife. Right when a person might start to feel sorry for Job, he added this one statement that he continued to believe.

Job 9:21

“ ... the hand of God hath touched me.”

He continued to believe it was all God's fault, which just was not true!