

A Bitter Melon

The legendary Arabic author Lokman (c. 1100 B.C.) – believed to be a nephew or grand-nephew of Job – was originally a slave. He had always been treated well, but one time his master gave him an extremely bitter melon, and Lokman ate it without protesting.

“How could you eat that nauseating fruit?” his owner inquired.

“I’ve received many good things from you,” Lokman replied. “Shouldn’t I also be willing to take the bitter from your hand?”

This response pleased the master, and he rewarded Lokman by giving him his freedom.

Job, too, endured some bitter experiences. The disease that plagued him may have been black leprosy. It produces physical weakness, foul breath, difficulty in breathing, and tender, itchy skin. The body turns black, festering ulcers develop, and the legs swell to an enormous size.

Even though his suffering was great, Job did not rebel against the Lord. Instead, he said in faith, “Shall we indeed accept good from God and shall we not accept adversity” (Job 2:10)?

Life sends the “bitter melon” of trial our way. Like Job, let us accept adversity with patient faith, knowing that those who bless God in their trials are blessed *through* their trials.

--Beecher Hunter