



JOB

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Welcome to the book of Job!

To begin your study of Job, meditate on the contents of the book reflected in the overview chart below. Note the basic structure of the book. Why was a test required? What part do friends play in our suffering? Job is a very old book with a very old message. God is sovereign ruler over the sons of men. It is within His power to test and find gold or worthless metal (24:10)!

Also note the passages listed within the overview chart below. Take this opportunity to refer to and note each one, relating the the section titles to the appropriate passages. What have you learned so far about the book of Job?

JOB		Sovereign Suffering	
Job's Test	Friend's Solution	God's Solution	
1:6-12	42:7	40:2-5	
1-2	3-37	38-42	

"I had heard of You...but now I see You!" 42:5

Open your heart as you read!

In a world and a country where what is fair has replaced true justice and true mercy, it could be difficult to determine what was fair in the way Job was treated. What do you learn about Satan's role in our daily lives and his power to afflict the sons of men? In what ways has your personal suffering purified you? Made you stronger?

As you read the book of Job, consider your response to your own sufferings as well as those of another? Do you view God as sovereign in your suffering?

Someone has said that Satan tempts us to tear us down, but God tests us to make us even stronger!

AUTHOR AND DATE

This book could indeed be the oldest in the world. There is no way of dating it or assigning a specific author (Moses?), but we do know that it is ancient, perhaps recorded even before the book of Genesis was set down by Moses! Job's name may mean repents or the persecuted. There is little doubt from the Scripture's perspective that Job was a real person and that the events of the book were true (Ezekiel 14:14-20 and James 5:11).

OTHER BACKGROUND

Job lived in the desert north of Palestine (the land of Uz), probably in the modern area of Iraq. He probably lived before the time of Abraham, somewhere between the events of Genesis 3 and 12.

The book is consistent with the other books of Hebrew poetry in form and function. It is chronologically first among the five: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

THE MESSAGE AND PRACTICALITY OF THE BOOK

In Job, we unlock a number of great Biblical and philosophical themes such as the relationship of good and evil and God, Satan, and man; the sovereign choices of a Holy God, and the purposes behind suffering. These as well as a host of other practical subjects are considered in the book of Job.

Job is immediately aided by three friends who all have a prescription for his recovery:

Eliphaz...4:8; 5:8, 17

Zophar...11:13-15

Bildad...8:3-6

They are joined by the youngest, Elihu, who has a little different perspective on Job's predicament (32:1-3; 36:2). There ensues a painful and animated interaction between Job and his "friends". God is silent until the final chapters, when the answers (as well as the questions) are made clear!

WHY STUDY THE BOOK OF JOB?

1. To consider the issue of suffering and come to faith on this important subject.
2. To better understand the ongoing relationship between God, man, and Satan.
3. And to be better able to comfort another in a way that pleases God and blesses others!



Job Chapter Chart

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Job's Test

Read Chapters 1-2

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
1		
2		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. There are two assaults upon Job. How do they differ in character and severity?
2. What principles do we learn about the practical relationship between God, man, individual men, and Satan?
3. How did God feel about Job?
4. How could God allow Satan to sway His feelings and intent toward Job?
5. What was Satan's overall view of Job? His purpose for Job?
6. If you were to evaluate your friendship with these three men from just the data in these two chapters, how would you describe Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar as friends?

What about today?

How would you have felt if you were Job? How can God justify His choice for this kind of action? What kind of authority should God be allowed to have over our circumstances?

My thoughts about the practical relationship between God, Satan, and man:

Friend's Solutions: Round One

Read Chapters 3-14

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What were Job's current feelings concerning his calamity?
2. What were the specifics of Eliphaz' rebuke?
3. What was the thrust of Bildad's argument?
4. What do we learn about Zophar from his advice in 11:13-20?
5. Why is Job upset with his friends in their first round of communicating help and hope?
6. Is he upset with God?
7. What is Job's current conclusion?

What about today?

Job begins a rash of complaints that will continue until his whirlwind confrontation in the later chapters of the book (7:11, 13, 9:27; 10:1; 21:4; 23:2). In what ways are you a complainer when it comes to adversity? What do you indeed feel that you deserve from life: It is natural to feel defensive when you have suffered loss, and especially when you feel your comforter's comfort has run amuck! But God has bigger plans for Job. Let's see how he makes out!

My thoughts about my personal defensiveness:

Job Washed Up/Out To Lunch

Read Chapters 15-21

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. How did Eliphaz summarize Job's problem?
2. What was Job losing in chapter 17?
3. What is Bildad's serious accusation in chapter 18?
4. How has Job's response modified or remained the same at this point? (17:6-16)
5. How does Job summarize the issues so far (21)?

What about today?

It is easy and natural to feel sorry for ourselves in the midst of our sufferings. When he looked at the unrighteous around him who did not suffer, it all became a very bitter thing to swallow! This can be a real block to our spiritual growth as well. What specific things or circumstances cause you to feel sorry for yourself? How do you respond to these things? What are the indicators that self-pity is just around the corner in your life?

My thoughts about feeling sorry for myself:

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What does Eliphaz specifically state as Job’s sin in 22:1-5?
2. How does he try to substantiate it in the following verses?
3. The three friends’ arguments are woefully lacking in accuracy. They are bent on finding moral fault in Job. Has anything been pinned on Job as of yet?

What about today?

Name the secret sins of your heart. How are they affecting your life? Suffering will result from the choice to sin. But suffering is in no way to be strictly interpreted as a moral indictment of the sufferer. But Job’s friends are not through. They are convinced that finding Job’s secret faults will be his only hope of recovery!

My thoughts about secret sins and personal righteousness:

Job's Conclusions

Read Chapters 27-31

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
27		
28		
29		
30		
31		

KEY QUESTIONS:

Job has listened, reacted, responded, and agonized over his calamity. Investigate these verses and summarize Job's ongoing conclusions:

26:14 _____

27:5,6 _____

28:12,20,28 _____

29:18 _____

30:1,21 _____

31:38-40 _____

What do you feel is Job's basic conclusion?

What about today:

In what ways do you find yourself thinking that you are good? Above criticism? Remember that Job was upright and had great favor in the eyes of God before this calamity came upon him. And yet even with his great morality, Job had lessons yet to be learned! Do you rely upon your uprightness to determine your value?

My thoughts about what makes a person deserve to suffer:

Elihu's Solution

Read Chapters 32-37

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
32		
33		
34		
35		
36		
37		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What was Elihu's attitude as he begins to speak?
2. In what ways does his tone differ from the other comforters?
3. What was Elihu's age relationship to the other men?
4. What does Elihu view as the purpose of men's afflictions? (36)
5. What is his appeal to Job (37)?
6. Do you think that he was more or less accurate than the others?

What about today?

Accuracy in precept must always be tempered with care and concern in attitude. If we want to comfort another, we must not only speak the truth but speak the truth in love! Read Ephesians 4:15 on this important subject.

My thoughts on helping another through his or her suffering:

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
38		
39		
40		
41		
42		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. As you read this section, do so with great respect and sincere desire to listen. How do you measure up to the example of righteous Job?!
2. Note the series of questions that God asks:
 - (38) Where were you?
 - (39) Do you know?
 - (40) Will you contend?
 - (41) Have you considered?
 Note each one in your Bible.
3. What was the condition, if any, for Job's restoration?

What about today?

John the Baptist understood that he must decrease so that Christ could increase. Just like the great and powerful Behemoth and Leviathan of these latter chapters of Job, the power of men's pride must decrease so that the glory of God can increase! Do you find yourself willing to decrease, close your mouth, and receive the authority and justice of God?!

My thoughts about the power of my pride:



THE SUFFERING SERVANT

The way of suffering is in many ways alien to the 20th century believer. We have achieved high levels of personal comfort and developed buffers to isolate us from pain. The concept of suffering (or choosing to suffer) is unthinkable and in some ways, repulsive to our advanced thinking.

To bring this topic into Biblical focus, we need to examine carefully the basic teachings of Christ and the apostles.

What are the boundaries of suffering for the believer? 1 Corinthians 10:13

Who should receive blame for sufferings? John 9:1-3

To what extent can we as Christ's followers expect to suffer? 2 Corinthians 11:23-30

From this passage, what would you consider the big picture on suffering? 1 Peter 5:6-11

What can suffering do for us and should we expect it? Hebrews 12:4-13

What can be one of the chief outcomes of suffering? James 1:12

What should be our response to suffering? James 1:2-4 (See Acts 16:22-30)

What does affliction take from us and what can it replenish? 2 Corinthians 4:8-18

And remember...

The sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed! - Romans 8:18

Our attitudes toward suffering.....

Expect it. Don't question God. Don't seek suffering for self-centered reasons - rather suffer for the Kingdom of God! Don't be crushed by it, even though you may be bruised. Accept it as a way of life for the believer (1 Peter 2:21; 4:1,2, 12-19)!

After all...

Isaiah 53:1-5; Zechariah 12:10

Luke 22:39-46

Matthew 27:46