

Job

Intro: *Tonight we're in the 18th book of the bible, the book of Job*

A few things about Job: *Job is the first of 5 books that make up what is called the **poetic section of the Bible.***

A. *This ancient Middle Eastern poetry was much more about building ideas than rhyming words...*

B. The poetic section contains – Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon.

C. *Those books were penned somewhere along the timeline of the first 17 books.*

D. **Interesting fact:** *The book of Job comes first in this collection of 5 books because Job is the oldest of the books...In fact, Job is the oldest book in the Bible....In fact, Job is the oldest book in human history.*

a) **Job was penned about 4,000 years ago.** *the newest book of the Bible is 2,000 years old. And it has integrity that no other ancient writing has. It dwarfs every other book of antiquity in its integrity.*

E. **The main theme:** *Suffering*

F. The main characters – they're found in two different scenes.

1. *One scene takes place in Heaven. And there we're introduced to God and Satan.*

2. *Another scene takes place on the Earth. And we're introduced to five other characters – **Job, Eliphaz, Zophar, Bildad, and one additional guy – Elihu.***

- a) **Chapters 1-2 An Introduction and a conversation**
- b) **Chapters 3-37 A dialog about suffering**
- c) **Chapters 38-42 The Lord gives perspective**

I. Chapters 1-2 An Introduction and a conversation

This Chapter begins with look into the life of the main character of this story...Job

Job 1:1–5 (ESV) ¹ There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. ² There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. ³ He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. ⁴ His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵ And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, “It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually.

The author, date, and place of the Book of Job are all uncertain....but one thing the author wants to make clear to us is that Job was a stand up guy

- A. **Job was Godly man - ‘blameless’** - *This does not mean Job was sinless, but blameless. There is a huge difference. Sin is vertical, blameless is horizontal. . . . as Job lived before the watchful eye of his peers, no one could justly charge Job with moral failure. His reputation was impeccable.”*
- B. **Job was and affluent man** - *Not only did He have servants and cattle and a renown reputation,*

C. **Job was a good father - “Seven sons and 3 daughters”** - In a culture where status and wealth might be measured by the size of one’s family, Job was a man of impressive wealth and status...and every day he would offer up sacrifices for their sins to God

1. **Here’s the picture:** He was the priest of his home...a good man inside and out...

Next we are transported to an on going conversation in Heaven

*Job 1:6–12 (ESV) ⁶ Now there was a day when the **sons of God** came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The Lord said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered the Lord and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.” ⁸ And 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, who fears God and turns away from evil?” ⁹ Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “Does Job fear God for no reason? ¹⁰ Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.”*

Here we have a scene that’s taking place in heaven, unseen to the eyes of Job or any other Human being...Satan which means “Accuser” comes in from going to and fro looking for people to harass...and Job is mentioned by God

A. **Who are the sons of God** - The phrase **sons of God** is used in the Old Testament to describe angelic beings ([Genesis 6:1-4](#) and [Job 38:7](#)). Among this group of angelic beings, **Satan also came among them.**

1. **This shows that Satan is himself an angelic being, and in no way equal to God.** We often – to his great delight – inflate Satan’s status and importance, thinking of him as the opposite of God, as if God were light and Satan were darkness; as if God were hot and Satan were cold. Satan wishes he was the opposite

of God, but God wants us to know that Satan is a mere creature, and is in no way the opposite of God.

B. God Mentions Job as an up right example of Godliness... But then Satan says. "the only reason He follows you is because all of the blessings you have poured out upon his life...if he was afflicted He would curse you"

1. **He's essentially calling Job a spiritual gold digger** - There are some like that

*¹² And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, **all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.**" So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.*

And the rest of the chapter is the systematic unraveling of Job's life, It's sudden, It's random, it's brutal...and before you know it....He's lost everything - His family - His money...in a blink of an eye, whiteout ever deserving it

Yet while Job's world has burnt down around him...look at his response

*Job 1:20–22 (ESV) ²⁰ Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹ And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. **The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.**" ²² In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.*

- I. **Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head** - Quite appropriately, Job mourned his tremendous losses. He had lost his sons and daughters and servants a great amount of material wealth. It was a time for
- II. **He fell on the ground and worshiped** - In the midst of his mourning, Job also decided to worship God despite his circumstances and feelings.

III. He looks at his situation with sound spiritual logic

- A. **The Lord Gave and the lord has taken away** - Everything good I have I have because of God's blessing
- B. **Blessed be the name of the Lord** - This was the expression of worship mentioned in the previous verse. Job was able to bless the name of God even when he was specifically and severely tempted to curse the name of God.
 - 1. **Here's the point: This is one of the most profound pictures of human strength in all the bible** - I think about when Jesus said *"let your light so shine before others that they might see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven"* (Matt 5:16) It's in the darkest moments where our lights can shine the brightest...If in moments of cursing we instead chose to bless... we shine the most brightly

Chapter 2 - speaks of another conversation that Satan has with God, where Satan says "the only reason he didn't curse you was because He was afraid you would punish him" So God permits Satan to take away his health

- A. So Chapters 1-2 end with Job who once had it all, poor, childless, afflicted with boils from head to toe, sitting on a pile of ashes scraping those boils off with a broken piece of pottery
- B. His wife tells him to curse God and die

Job 2:11–13 (ESV) ¹¹ Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him. ¹² And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled

dust on their heads toward heaven. ¹³ And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

These guys will be with us for the remainder of the journey...and their not all that helpful...but here we see that they were well intentioned and they loved Job

A. In moments like this...sometimes the best thing to do, is not talk and just be there...

IV. Chapters 3-37 A dialog about suffering

So here we have the friends of Job who begin to counsel their broken friend - Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. and they represent the best in ancient eastern thinking...and the some total of almost everything said in this section can be summarized by what God says in Chapter 38

Job 38:2 (ESV) ² “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?”

Now we’re not going to look at all the details, because we’re just driving through this book. But I do want us to see a couple of things that I think are really, really important as we look through this dialogue.

Now this dialog flows from one big assumption that they all have about how the world works - Good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people

The form of these chapters:

A. These chapters begin with Job Lamenting his life...which then is met with a response from a friend, then job responds back...then another friend responds to that it’s this back and forth thing and this keeps going for 3 whole cycles

- B. Essentially Job's constant argument is that these things that have happened to him are on God's judgment on his life because He's innocent** (which was true) and the conclusion that Job keeps coming back to is that God either doesn't run the world according to what is just or he himself is not just
- C. His friends beg to differ**, they believe that God is always just therefore what happened to Job He somehow deserved

Now what's interesting is that each of these main characters represent a different kind of person...with a different voice...but what they all have in common is that they were off...

Job - the voice of someone in pain:

It's easy to understand that Job was a roller coaster of emotion...there are moments where he looks like the optimal picture of Faith in the midst of adversity...

- A. He says things like *"Though God slay me, yet I will hope in him"* (Job 13:15) that heroic
- B. Job 19:25–26 (ESV) ²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. ²⁶ And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God...

One moment He's the picture of strength And at other times he speaks out of total weakness. And in Job's great weakness, he speaks with a voice of pain...And essentially what Job says is that he'd rather be dead.

- A. Job 7:15 *so that I would choose strangling and death rather than my bones*" In other words, these bones that are just searing inside of him, he says, "I would choose strangling and death rather than my bones."... "I loathe my life."
- B. But he's not even satisfied with that. He says it would be better if the day he was born didn't even exist. So he's pulling out all the stops.

1. Job has a lot to say about death in Chapter 3.

- A. *Job 3:11 Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire?"*
- B. *Job 3:13 For then I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept; then I would have been at rest,"*
- C. *Job 3:16 Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light? 17 There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest."*
- D. *He accuses God of being a bully (19:6)*
- E. Now here's why he says those things. This is an important one - the last verse of Chapter 3 - *Job 3:26 I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, but trouble comes."*

1. **Here's the point:** For Job – Pain drives the conclusion that death is better than pain without an end in sight. Yet here's the problem, Job doesn't know anything about death (words without knowledge) Also, five times Job asks the question - "Why.....?" Pain drives the question - "Why....."
2. **App:** Job is important for us to look at because it reminds us that pain has a voice...and it's a roller coaster...remember that
 - a) When your dealing with people
 - b) When things come out of you

2. Eliphaz - The voice of someone who prizes personal experience above all else:

Eliphaz speaks on three different occasions through the book. And this guy qualifies – everything that he's going to say about why Job is suffering - on the basis of an experience. Turn to Chapter 4 really quickly

Job 4:12–17 (ESV) ¹² “Now a word was brought to me stealthily; my ear received the whisper of it. ¹³ Amid thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, ¹⁴ dread came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake. ¹⁵ A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh stood up. ¹⁶ It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, then I heard a voice: ¹⁷ ‘Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?’

So he has this elaborate spiritual experience...He’s got goose bumps. He heard this voice...And that experience drives his argument...His experience essentially shaped his theology.

A. **App:** *Guys Experience can never form theology. Theology always interprets experience....There are a whole lot of Christians who - their understanding of God is based on experience and feelings*

1. *Everything begins with “This is what i did in that situation”*
2. *This guy only understood God in light of that experience. And he clearly misunderstood God.*

B. But Notice That Eliphaz has rigid view of whats happening - Job 4:7 (ESV)⁷ “Remember: who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off?”

1. *In other words “Good people don’t die!...only good things happen to them...what goes around comes around”*
2. *It’s a call to repentance...*

3. Bildad - the voice of tradition

While eliphaz was saying “this is how i see it”...Bildad was saying “this is how our fathers saw it”

Job 8:8 (ESV) ⁸ “For inquire, please, of bygone ages, and consider what the fathers have searched out.

Job 8:10 Will they not teach you and tell you and utter words out of their understanding?”

In other words, that’s how our fathers and their fathers and their fathers before them saw these things. So we’re going to look at it and understand suffering in light of how they saw things.

A. Bildad spoke from a legacy that was very legalistic...He spoke from a tradition that saw God as harsh and angry.

B. His conclusion was the same as the first Job 8:20 (ESV) ²⁰ “Behold, God will not reject a blameless man, nor take the hand of evildoers.

4. Zophar - speaks from the voice of assumption

It’s interesting, that Eliphaz and Bildad were a little more gentle with their conclusion while speaking with Job...not Zophar twice in both of his response to job he speaks on the matter like he knows exactly whats going on

*Job 11:6 (ESV) ⁶...**Know then** that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves*

*Job 20:4–5 (ESV) ⁴ **Do you not know** this from of old, since man was placed on earth, ⁵ that the exulting of the wicked is short, and the joy of the godless but for a moment?*

Zophar represents that kind of person who lacks Patience/Grace/ Gentleness...and the humility to see that sometimes...when don’t have all the clear cut answers to peoples pain

A. Now we don’t want to miss this. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar say the very same thing - **Suffering is the result of sin** - Therefore, Job

you have sinned. And if you get the sin out searched out. of your life, everything is going to go away.

5. Elihu - Chapter 32-37

Chapter 32-37 introduce us to another friend of Job, one who is younger, yet in a way wiser than all of them...He's upset...First because it seemed like these 3 friends had all come to the same conclusion with Job...and that had made who was already fragile and upset...more upset, and he had become more angry at God

*The heart of Elihu's words are found in Job 33:12–17 (ESV) ¹² "Behold, in this you are not right. I will answer you, **for God is greater than man.** ¹³ Why do you contend against him, saying, 'He will answer none of man's words'?"*

A. He's essentially saying, Job, who do you think you are putting God on trial? does he work for you that he would owe you an explanation for all he's done?

B. Romans 11:33–35 (ESV) ³³ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"

*1. **App:** in our pain, we can begin to spiral when we begin to buy into the the idea that God owes us explanation for what he does when he doesn't...*

a) His judgments are unreachable...his ways are inscrutable...in all ways God is greater than man

C. The he goes on to give a couple of examples of why God might allow suffering, as a warning, or too build character

38-42 The Lord gives perspective

God bursts upon the scene. and responds to Job accusation of being mean and incompetent

Chapters 38-39 God take Job on a virtual tour of the universe and he essentially challenges Job to do his Job for the day

- A. **He goes at Job from a macro Level** - He says “have you ever laid the foundation of the earth, or set the stars, or commanded the morning, or controlled the wether?”
- B. **He goes at Job from a micro level** - He says “do you know how the mouton goat gives birth, or the feeding habits of the lion and wild donkeys”
- C. **God’s point is** - I am the one who creates and sustains all of this all the time

Why is he doing this?

- A. Well if you remember the assumption that they all had “Good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people”... **well underneath that assumption was a deeper one that assumed they they had enough perspective to judge what is ultimately and what is ultimately bad**
 - 1. **And what God is doing with Job and with us is reminding us that we are not always gonna understand why God does things because were are limited in our perspective**
 - 2. God is essentially saying to Job...You’re not in a position to understand everything I do
 - 3. He Goes on the challenge Job to do his job
 - 4. He then mentions 2 creatures called Leviathan and Behemoth which are most likely symbols of beauty and majesty, yet disorder and danger...which seem to be a picture of the world we live in...

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It's beautiful, but it's brutal...and we are not in the best position to understand the in and the outs of everything that happens

- a) *Natural disasters*
- b) *Shootings*
- c) *God calls us to trust in HIS WISDOM*

Conclusion *“There will be times when seasons of suffering will come upon you...if we've learned anything from Job it's that sometimes we won't know why...but when your face things you don't know...we have to go back to things we do know”*

I. God's word...And what it says about Jesus - Loves loves us, He knows, He's working all things out of good...