

Job

Suffering Well



The Historical Books of the Old Testament

The Books of Wisdom

1 – 5 The Pentateuch, Law or Torah

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18. Job **Suffering Well**

19. Psalms

20. Proverbs

21. Ecclesiastes

22. Song of Songs

Job Suffering Well

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- The book of **Job** is not light reading – but suffering is not a light subject.
- Still, **Job** clearly reveals the majesty and faithfulness of God.

Job Suffering Well

- The book begins with **Satan, God and Job**; it ends with only **God and Job**.
- **Satan** is gone at the end – in a happy ending.
- He'll be missing when we reach our happy ending too.

Job Suffering Well

- **Job** is one of the oldest stories in the Bible.
- It predates Moses, going back to the time of the patriarchs.

Job Suffering Well

- **Job** deals with some of our deepest, most somber questions:
 - Is there an underlying spiritual root to human suffering?
 - If so, what is it?
 - Why do good people suffer?
 - Why does God allow seemingly pointless tragedy?

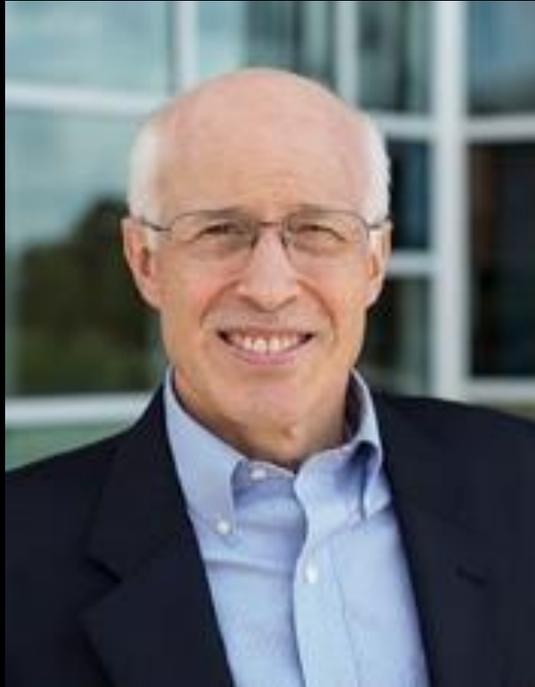
Job Suffering Well

- Job asks God the question, “Why?” 16 times within the book.
- Near the end, however, God asks Job some 75 questions of His own!

Job Suffering Well

- The book of **Job** speaks in detail and at length against the narcissism so prevalent in our culture.
- Instead of assuring us that “it’s all about me,” the book dares to proclaim that it’s really “all about God.”
- While he loves us he never has to do what we want.

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Job ... challenges the reader to accept that the Lord has knowledge that surpasses what humans can know, so that we must accept mystery and place our faith in the God who knows far more than he has revealed. Thus, Job calls upon humans to relinquish their pride and to bow humbly before the Lord, an act of surrender that most people today want to avoid at all costs.

*– Daniel J. Estes,
Cedarville University*

Job Suffering Well

The journey from superficial to steadfast faith is difficult, but we need to be ready and willing to make the trip.

Job **An Outline**

1. Prologue: Satan Attacks Job **Ch. 1 – 2**
2. Three Cycles with Job and His Friends **Ch. 3 – 28**
3. Three Monologues: Job, Elihu and God **Ch. 29–41**
4. Epilogue: God Blesses Job **Ch. 42**

Prologue: Satan Attacks Job Ch. 1 – 2

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- Note Job's attitude in all of this.
- Satan hopes he will turn Job away from God, but is proved wrong by Job's persistent faith.

Prologue: Satan Attacks Job Ch. 1 – 2

[Job] acknowledges that he cannot claim to deserve all the blessings he had enjoyed. He has not earned them by being pious and religious ... Job fully acknowledges God's sovereignty, that is, his right to do as he pleases, both in giving and in taking away.

– Naveen Rao, Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, India



Prologue: Satan Attacks Job Ch. 1 – 2

- As we move through the book, Job's anguish is clear.
- It is exacerbated by his friends attempting to blame Job, rather than Satan, as a way of making sense of his troubles.

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- **Job 22:5** (ESV)
- [Eliphaz to Job]

Is not your evil abundant?

There is no end to your iniquities.

Prologue: Satan Attacks Job Ch. 1 – 2

- Job sees that his ultimate quarrel is with God who always has the last say.

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- **Job 30:19-23** (ESV)

¹⁹ God has cast me into the mire ...

²⁰ I cry to you for help and you do not answer me ...

²¹ You have turned cruel to me ...

²³ For I know that you will bring me to death
and to the house appointed for all living.

Job Some Key Verses

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- Job sees the need for someone to come between imperfect humans and a holy, all-powerful God.
- **Job 9:32-33** (ESV)
 - ³² For he [God] is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together.
 - ³³ There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both.

Job Some Key Verses

- 1 Timothy 2:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

Job Some Key Verses

- This verse nonetheless reveals Job's expectation of a redeemer and of a bodily resurrection.

- **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.

Job Some Key Verses

- Before the time of a written Bible, hearing from God was more important to Job than anything else.
- **Job 23:12** (ESV)

I have not departed from the commandment of his lips;
I have treasured the words of his mouth more than
my portion of food.

Epilogue: God Blesses Job Ch. 42

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Job himself never becomes aware of the origin of his suffering. To him it remains a mystery to the last, and from that fact we may perhaps infer that the author does not regard this as the primary question about suffering.

*– David J. A. Clines,
University of Sheffield*



Epilogue: God Blesses Job Ch. 42

- Job is forced to admit that though he doesn't understand God's ways, he will have to remain content with that.
- Our "Why?" questions do not always get answers.

Epilogue: God Blesses Job Ch. 42

- Perhaps we would not be able to understand the answers.
- Will a child really be satisfied with any explanation as to why she has to eat asparagus instead of ice cream?

Epilogue: God Blesses Job Ch. 42

- Isaiah 55:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Job Conclusions

Job Conclusions



Sometimes God allows pain and loss that have nothing to do with sin in our lives and are not meant to teach us anything. When God puts us into a position where we must hold onto our relationship with God for God's sake only—in which we stand to gain nothing but God—we start to receive him more fully than we ever had before.

*– Eric Ortlund, Briarcrest Seminary,
Caronport, Saskatchewan*

Job Conclusions

Three Questions we sometimes ask of God:

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1. Why is God silent when we want him to speak?
2. Why is he hidden when we want him to show himself to the world – and especially to us?
3. Is God unfair?

Job Conclusions

- Why is God silent when we want him to speak?

Job Conclusions

- Why is God silent when we want him to speak?
- We may never know why in this life, but we do know he wants us to trust him – and that he is, above all, trustworthy.
- For now we'll have to be content with his word as given in Scripture.

Job Conclusions

- Why is he hidden when we want him to show himself to the world – and especially to us?

Job Conclusions

- Why is he hidden when we want him to show himself to the world – and especially to us?
- Again, we may never know in this life, but we do know he has revealed himself:
 - In creation
 - In his making us in his image, despite our sin.
 - Again, in the Scriptures – for example, in the book of **Job**.
 - Here we learn that he will sometimes seem both silent and hidden in our troubles.

Job Conclusions

- Is God unfair?

Job Conclusions

- Is God unfair?
- In truth, not at all – he is more gracious than we can know.
- But we are in the middle of a **very long story** and this will not be perfectly clear until the end.
- He may seem unfair for now, when we only have partial knowledge.

Job Conclusions

- **1 Corinthians 13:12** (ESV)

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

Job Conclusions

The journey from superficial to steadfast faith is difficult, but we need to be ready and willing to make the trip.

Job Conclusions

- And how can we remain steadfast when life is so difficult?

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- And how can we remain steadfast when life is so difficult?
- By remembering Jesus.
- He is the ultimate example of undeserved suffering, but he suffered for our sake.
- When our suffering seems to be both undeserved and unexplained, we can let it bring us closer to Christ.

Job Conclusions

- **Job 13:15** (ESV)

Though he slay me, I will hope in him.

- **James 5:11** (ESV)

Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.