

## Chapters 1-2 Ruin of Job

Job is pictured as a prosperous, righteous man going about his business and living life well before God and man.

1. The character of Job Established.
  - a. 1:1 What do we see about Job? Blameless and upright, feared God, and turned away from evil.
    - i. Who is speaking in this verse? Narrator/Writer of book.
    - ii. How does this change in Chapter 3:1? Characters in narrative start speaking.
    - iii. Does this affect how we interpret the meaning of the passages? Narrator is inspired and reliable. The characters of the story are not necessarily reliable (remember how we need to interpret narrative).

Satan appears in the presence of God and accuses Job of only worshipping God because God has been good to him. God first allows Satan permission to afflict Job by taking his wealth and children. Then God further allows Satan to attack Job's health but not to take his life.

2. A glimpse behind the curtain 1:6-12
  - a. "Sons of God" referring to angels (see also Psalm 29:1)
  - b. Satan, the accuser and adversary, is separated out from the heavenly hosts. v.1
    - i. has some level of access to God.
  - c. V. 8 Who initiates the action of this narrative? God.
  - d. Satan accuses Job of only loving God because his circumstances are good.
  - e. v.12 What does this verse teach us? Satan is fully subject to God's sovereignty.
3. Satan's first attack and Job's response 1:13-22
  - a. Job loses his property and his children.
  - b. Job's response: 1:21 Recognizes God's Sovereignty. Job is worthy of nothing, all good things are undeserved gifts.
  - c. God's (through the inspiration of the author) assessment of Job's response v. 22
    - i. Did not sin
    - ii. Did not charge God with wrong
4. Satan's Second attack and Job's response.
  - a. We have a parallel scene from ch.1.
  - b. v. 3 God again initiates the action.

- i. “incited me” Does this phrase remind you of any other passages we have recently read? David’s Census - 2 Sam. 24:1 & 1 Chron. 21:1
- c. Satan ups the ante. v. 4
  - i. Satan expects Job to Curse you to your face.
  - ii. v. 6 we again see that Satan is fully subject to God’s authority.
- d. How does Job’s wife respond? v. 9 She responds how Satan predicted Job would respond.
- e. Job’s response v. 10
  - i. “evil” is not speaking in moral or ethical categories. It is a natural evil, i.e. calamity.
  - ii. Compare and contrast God’s (through the author) assessment of Job’s response with his first 1:22.

Job is the classic example of a godly person who suffers unjustly\* and tries to come to grips with the philosophical and theological question of why. Satan seeks to discredit God by showing that men only worship God for what they receive from Him not for who He is.

\* Perspective plays a very important role in understanding this book. Its narrative shifts from the heavenly perspective to an earthly perspective help frame our understanding of what the narrative is communicating.

- It is “unjust” suffering in relation to the rest of humanity.

- It is not that God is acting unjustly. Why? We will see that later in the book, but Job’s answers to his calamity give a good response.

Job’s wife doesn’t understand and suggests that Job curse God and die. Job has three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar who come to comfort, console and counsel their hurting, grieving friend.

### **Chapters 3-37 Recurring cycles of rebuke and reply**

This section opens with a lament where Job, because of his adversity and misfortune, regrets that he was ever born. Then begins three cycles of speeches by Job’s friends, to each of which Job has a reply.

Both Job and his three friends are trying to discover the “why” of Job’s suffering. The theology and answer of Job’s friends is simple — righteous people prosper and wicked people suffer; therefore, Job must have sinned to cause his adversity. Job must repent and turn back to God.

Job’s response is that he has not sinned; he is innocent; and God will ultimately vindicate him. But as Job dwells on his own innocence and self-righteousness, he begins to question the character, goodness and justice of God and longs for a chance to confront God and defend himself. Job cannot

understand why God does not answer him — why God is punishing him in his innocence; and why the wicked are still prospering.

### 3 Cycles of Dialogue: Trying to find the “Why” in suffering.

#### 1. The Men and their Message.

- a. **Eliphaz:** Tends to speak from a theological and philosophical point of view. Often appeals to his experience - “I have seen” repeated often. **See 4:7, 15-19**
  - i. First Message “Can mortal man be in the right before God? (4:1-5:27)
  - ii. Second Message “Job’s own words condemn him” (15:1-35)
  - iii. Third Message “Job is guilty” (22:1-30)
- b. **Bildad:** He takes an approach appealing to tradition and history. **see 8:8**
  - i. First Message “Wisdom of the sages” (8:1-22)
  - ii. Second Message “punishment for the wicked”(18:1-21)
  - iii. Third Message “man cannot be righteous before God” (25:1-6)
- c. **Zophar:** Comes from a more dogmatic, moralistic point of view. **See 11:4-6**
  - i. First Message “Repent” (11:1-20)
  - ii. Second Message “The wicked will die” (20:1-29)
  - iii. Third Message (???)

#### 2. Job’s Responses

- a. He proclaims he is innocent.
  - i. He is not proclaiming to be sinless, but that his sin is not proportional to his suffering. (again perspective, this is from man’s point of view, not God’s)
- b. Job wants to plead his case before God but knows he can’t 9:14-20, and sees the need for an intercessor 9:33
- c. Job holds out hope for a redeemer Job 19:25
- d. Job asks “where is God” and seeks to be tried before God
  - i. Job 23:3-9
- e. Job’s final appeal is to his righteous life. Job 31:5-6

Another character appears on the scene whose name is Elihu who tells Job and his friends that they are all wrong and that God is right in this. Between Job and God, God is right. Job’s friends are wrong in concluding that the sin of Job brought him ruin will purify Job’s heart before God.

In the Literary structure of the three cycles of accusation and response, we are left wanting. The structure is broken by the exclusion of a final rebuke by Zophar.

The sudden appearance of Elihu fills in this gap. Instead of following the same pattern his anger is aimed at both Job and the three friends.

32:1-3

- Note that the specific phrase “burned with anger” it is used 6 times in Job, all of which either speak of Elihu or God.
  - The author allots 5 unbroken chapters to Elihu’s response.
  - God does not condemn Elihu and his response to Job.
1. Elihu condemns Job’s friends for not providing comfort and failing to provide an adequate answer.
  2. He condemns Job for questioning God and demanding that God owes him an answer. 33:8-12
  3. He exhorts Job to show that suffering can be God’s way of purifying and teaching his people.
    - a. 36:7-11, 15

### **Chapters 38-41 Reply of God**

Job finally gets his chance to talk to God when God comes to Job and confronts him with the frailty and finiteness of his humanity. Basically, God says to Job —

- I am God and you are not
- I am the sovereign creator, sustainer and ruler of the universe
- I am the final, perfect judge 40:1-14
- I am not obligated to explain everything I do to you
- You need to trust ME and rest in my sovereignty regardless of your circumstances or adversity

### **Chapters 42:1-6 Repentance of Job**

When Job realized that in self-righteousness he had accused God of wrong and that he had sinned, he repented and asked God’s forgiveness.

Job gave up his right to be right, admitting that he was wrong in criticizing God and in seeking to justify himself before God.

### **Chapter 42:7-17 Restoration of Job**

After dealing with Job’s friends, God graciously restored the fortune and family of Job although He was not obligated to do so.

5. Theme/purpose/applicational message

Theme/purpose

The author of **Job** recorded how Sovereign God is worthy of our worship and unconditional trust because of who He is regardless of whether or not we understand why He does what He does.

Applicational message

The right response of a righteous man to unjust suffering is submission to God's sovereignty.