

# Job

## “Faith under Pressure”

### I. Introduction to Job

“Natural diamonds are formed about 100 miles beneath the earth’s surface where carbon rich rocks are melted by the heat of the earth’s mantle, a layer of liquid lava rock, and are compressed by the enormous pressure of the many miles of earth above them.” Diamonds are only formed when the conditions are just right. “Man-made diamonds are created by putting graphite and carbon mix together with a small seed diamond under extreme pressure . . . The machines pressurizes the core to over 800,000 pounds per square inch and heat. It to over 1000 degrees. After several days, a diamond is created.” (ehow.google)

#### A. About the Book

1. Job begins another section of the bible
  - a. Genesis through Deuteronomy – the Law or Pentateuch
  - b. Joshua through Esther – Historical (12 books)
  - c. Job through Song of Solomon – Poetic (5 books)
2. About one third of the Old Testament is poetry and addresses the issues of the human heart.
  - a. We will find great comfort as we read through inspired poetry. It warms the heart, satisfies the soul and fills the lips with praise.
  - b. Hebrew poetry is not based in rhyme, but in parallelism
    - i. Setting ideas against one another
    - ii. Commonly in poetic passages we hear man’s cry to God; in many cases He answers.
3. Job is placed first in the poetic books because it was written first.
  - a. Each of the remaining books find their setting somewhere in the first 17 books
4. Job takes place during the early chapters of Genesis, which makes it:
  - a. Almost 4000 years old
  - b. The oldest book in history
  - c. Great insight into the ancient mind
  - d. “Yet despite the changing scenery of the forty centuries which have elapsed since the author of this old-world epic laid down his pen, can we find anywhere a more poignantly up-to-date treatise on the pathos of human experience?” J.S. Baxter
5. Evidence for an early date of Job:
  - a. No mention of the nation of Israel
  - b. No mention of the Patriarchs
  - c. No mention of the tabernacle or Priesthood
  - d. Lifestyle is nomadic
  - e. Reference to extinct creatures that must be dino-saurs (dino: terrifying, saur: lizard)
    - i. Evidence dinosaurs were contemporaries with men.
      1. Cave drawings
      2. Ancient writings including Job
6. Job contains 10, 102 words, organized into 42 chapters or 1,070 verses.
7. The book gets its name from its main character, Job. Job was a common name in the patriarchal era.
8. Job tells the story of a man who endures great difficulty and seeks to find answers from God.
9. Great men have spoken highly of this book.
  - a. “It is magnificent and sublime as no other book in Scripture.” Martin Luther
  - b. “The greatest poem whether ancient or modern.” Alfred, Lord Tennyson

- c. "There is nothing written in the Bible or out of it of equal merit." Thomas Carlyle

## **B. Main Characters**

1. Two scenes are described in Job
  - a. Heaven – a dialogue between God and Satan
  - b. Earth – dialogue between five men
    - i. Job
    - ii. Eliphaz
    - iii. Zophar
    - iv. Bildad
    - v. Elihu
2. We have the privilege of hearing from the most learned and respected men of Job's day.
  - a. With all their rhetoric, they have one thing in common:  
They are "philosophizing in the dark" J. S. Baxter  
(The blind, leading the blind)
  - b. Job 38:2 "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?"  
(You don't know what you are talking about)
  - c. We see clearly that man cannot understand life apart from revelation from God.
  - d. These five men exchange dialogue, develop sermons and wax philosophical, all without the benefit of Divine revelation.
  - e. They are blind to the council that convened in heaven and have limited understanding of the ways of God.
3. One key lesson we must take away from Job is that God withheld the reason why Job endured his sufferings.
  - a. If you are in hopes of understanding why you are suffering, you will not be disappointed, but redirected.
  - b. The final purposes of God will not be revealed until we see Him face-to face
    - i. 1 Corinthians 13:12 "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.  
Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."
4. Another crucial lesson is that blessings flow from suffering.
  - a. God will take us through challenges to bring about His purposes in our lives
    - i. Hebrews 12:11 "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."
    - ii. This can only be properly understood in light of eternity.
  - b. The story ends with great joy as Job's life goes on with greater possessions and children.
    - i. His first family is not gone, but awaits him in eternity.

## **II. Outline of the book of Job**

Job divides neatly into three sections:

Section 1: The Prologue, Chapters 1 – 2 (prologue, meaning "a word beforehand")

Section 2: Dialogue, Chapters 3 – 37 "the great debate"

Section 3: Epilogue Chapters 38 – 42 (the final word)

### **A. Section 1 Chapters 1 – 2** The prologue or introduction

1. Prologue is Greek, meaning pro – before, and logos meaning word
  - a. The purpose is to open the story, giving vital information in order to follow the plot.
  - b. Without Chapters 1 & 2, the story of Job makes no sense.
2. The opening scene takes place in two realms
  - a. On earth: We are introduced to a godly man who loves his family and serves the Lord

- i. Job 1:1 “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.”
- ii. Job 1:5 “So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify 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 sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ Thus Job did regularly.”
- iii. His world is about to be violently disrupted.
- b. The scene switches to heaven where the angels have convened before God. God begins to brag about Job, as an expression of love.
  - i. Satan responds with accusations and is allowed to attack Job.
- c. Back on earth, on a day like any other, Job will lose his family, his wealth and shortly thereafter his health
  - i. Only through the eyes of heaven can we see understand that Job’s faith is being put to the test
  - ii. Satan wants Jobs to deny God
  - iii. It is here we best understand evil
    - 1. It has its source, not in God, but in the devil
      - a. He rebels against God
      - b. He ushered sin into the world
      - c. He brings calamity against the child of God.

**B. Section 2 Chapters 3 – 37 “The great debate”**

- 1. We will hear from five different men as they seek to explain Job’s suffering. We will glance at a few highlights.
  - a. Job: He speaks with the voice of pain.
    - i. He is an example of all of us
    - ii. He has moments of heroic faith: Job 13:15 “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.”
    - iii. He also has moments of utter weakness. His basic message is a wish to be dead. His thoughts on life after death are from one who has never been there and lets his pain color his thoughts. Pain altered his understanding.
  - b. Eliphaz (Job chapters 4 through 5, 15 and 22): He speaks with the voice of personal experience.
    - i. His view of God is based on his experience of Him. (Job 4:12-17)
    - ii. His message is summed up in Job 4:7 “Remember now, whoever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off?”
    - iii. Let’s answer his question. “Whoever perished being innocent?”
      - 1. Jesus
    - iv. He believes Jobs suffering is due to hidden sin
    - v. His solution: repent & prosper
      - 1. Seeds of the prosperity teaching
  - c. Bildad (Job chapters 8, 18, 25):He speaks with the voice of tradition
    - i. Job 8:8 - 10 "For inquire, please, of the former age, and consider the things discovered by their fathers; for we were born yesterday, and know nothing, because our days on earth are a shadow. Will they not teach you and tell you and utter words from their heart?"
    - ii. This view causes him to have a harsh view of God
      - 1. Seeds of legalism
  - d. Zophar (Job chapters 11 & 20): He speaks with the voice of self-enlightenment
    - i. Repeatedly states, “I know”
  - e. These three men all teach the same message: Suffering is the result of sin
    - i. The problem is, they never read Chapter 1

- ii. Pain, experience, tradition, and self-enlightenment cannot give a satisfactory answer to human suffering.
- iii. They give no thought to the life that awaits us, when this one ends.

**C. Section 3 Chapters 38 – 42** The epilogue or closing thoughts

1. An epilogue brings closure to a story. It is here where God gives the purpose behind Job's suffering.
2. These chapters are a conversation between God and Job.
3. In essence, Job is told he does not have the capacity to understand the ways of God and must trust His loving and sovereign hand
4. Though God does not answer why. It is clear that His loving eye is ever on His servant Job.
5. The ultimate purpose was to bring Job to the end of himself.
  - a. Self-righteousness, self-wisdom, self-confidence must die
  - b. Job comes to see God in a new way through his trial; a way that is impossible apart from suffering.
  - c. Job 42:5 – 6 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

**III. Why should we study Job?**

1. Job addresses a subject near to all of us: suffering
  - a. We have all faced things bigger than ourselves that cause us to question the ways of God.
  - b. It is important to remember that Job did not receive an answer, because *God, Himself, is the answer.*
  - c. He was brought to the end of himself that he might find God (Job 42:5 – 6)
    - i. We will always find God at the end of ourselves
    - ii. "In the Book of Job we see the death of the self-life . . . Job is brought to the end of himself. He sees himself as God sees him. . . The man who at first is said to have been the best man on earth, is found at last on his face before God, exclaiming, 'I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'" J.S. Baxter
2. Job illustrates for us the way the devil works. (2 Corinthians 2:11 ". . . for we are not ignorant of his devices.")
  - a. In Job, we are translated to heaven's Throne, where we are able to eavesdrop on a conversation between God and Satan.
  - b. What we learn:
    - i. Satan prowls the earth looking to devour (1 Peter 5:8 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.")
    - ii. Satan brings accusations against us to God (Revelation 12:10 "Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.")
    - iii. Satan's boundaries are limited by God. He is only allowed to do what God approves.
3. Job demonstrates the folly of human wisdom
  - a. All the experience, traditions of men, or self-realization cannot provide sufficient answers for the troubles of the soul
  - b. Job's comfort comes only when eternity interrupts time and God reveals His ways.
  - c. The solutions to life will be found in the pages of Scriptures.
4. The ways of God are high above us (Isaiah 55:9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.")

- a. Rather than explaining Himself to Job, God's answer is to show how vastly superior God is to man.
  - b. Much of the struggle we have when considering, "why the godly suffer" is due to our failing to realize we cannot fathom the ways of god.
5. Job is a lesson in forgiveness.
- a. Job lost all he had: wealth, family, health, and friends. Yet, he still exalted God.
    - i. Job 1:21 "In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong."
  - b. Job 2:10 ". . . Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips."
  - c. What Satan could not do, his friends did; they brought him to sin; to question the ways of God.
  - d. Job had every reason to hold a grudge, but he chose to forgive (Job 42:10 "And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.")
  - e. Blessings flowed when he chose to forgive.
  - f. "Harboring bitterness is like drinking poison and expecting someone else will die."

#### **IV. Types of Christ in Job**

- A. We take comfort in knowing how carefully God watched over Job
- 1. But in Christ, He visits us, not just watches us (Hebrews 4:14 – 15 "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.")
  - 2. Job pleads for one who will stand between him and God.
    - a. Someone who will plead his case before God and explain God's ways to him.
      - i. Job 9:33 – 34 "Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both. Let Him take His rod away from me, and do not let dread of Him terrify me."
    - b. Christ is that mediator
      - i. 1 Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, . . ."
      - ii. He bridges the gap between man and God and makes the way to heaven
  - 3. Job sees ahead to the future reign of Christ
    - a. Job 19:25 "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; . . ."