



Wednesday Bible Education  
*Biblical Theology*  
Lesson 19: Job

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## REVIEW

*Questions from last week's lesson:*

1. What is Esther about?
2. How does Esther speak to us today?

*Answers:*

1. Esther narrates how the woman named Esther becomes queen to King Ahasuerus. Haman schemes to trick the King into endorsing his plot to kill the Jews and Esther has to overcome fear to appear before Ahasuerus. Haman's plan backfires to where he ends up executed and the Jewish people are saved from destruction.

### ***Summary Statement***

Esther is about the sovereign providence of God to rule over the affairs of men and nations to keep his promises, even to his people who are exiled in judgment.

2. Understanding Esther helps us understand faith in God's promises, despite dark circumstances.

Understanding Esther helps us understand obedience and faithfulness to God are more important than our temporal lives.

Understanding Esther helps us understand God is in control and is at work, whether we can see evidence of that or not.

Understanding Esther helps us understand we are to fear God more than the threats of our enemies.

## INTRODUCTION

**W**hat is the book of Job about? Job is a book about suffering and patience. Job loses his wealth, servants, children, and his own health. Satan is the one at work afflicting Job while Job's friends attempt to comfort him. Finally, God answers Job and

restores him.

### **Book Summary**

The book of Job is about the suffering of the righteous, the limits of human understanding, and God's sovereign administration of the universe he created.

### **Lesson Objective**

This lesson covers the book of Job. The lesson considers the structure and content of the book, along with major themes and practical applications to modern readers. We will consider what Esther reveals about Christ and his kingdom as it fits into the Bible's main story.

## **OBSERVATION**

Job is the first of five books known as wisdom books—Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Job is historical, but not primarily historical narrative. The book is made up mostly of dialogs centering around a particular string of trial events in Job's life. The narrative of the actual trials only take up 8 verses in this relatively long book (1:13-19; 2:7).

The book of Job is named after the central character in the book. The author of the book is unknown to us, as well as the time of the writing. The book is set in the land of Uz, which is also unknown to us. It's generally thought that Job lived contemporary with Abraham, but that is not certain. Many scholars assert the language of the book is ancient, and older than the rest of the Old Testament. This could mean it was actually the first book of the Bible to be written.

The first two chapters set the scene for the rest of the book. These chapters record two different dialogs between God and Satan. The reader is given a rare, behind the scenes glimpse in Heaven relative to what is happening on the earth in real time in the lives of men. Job obviously wasn't the only one affected by what happens.

Job is presented as the greatest man of the east, who is wealthy, righteous, and wise. God bids Satan consider Job as God's righteous servant. Satan suggests Job's devotion to God is only due to the physical blessings he has received, so God gives him leave to take these physical blessings away from Job. Satan is also restrained not to lay a hand on Job.

Satan afflicts Job through various catastrophe events. Job's livestock are stolen, his servants are killed, his sheep and servants are burned up by fire from the sky, his camels were stolen and those servants with them killed, and finally, all his children were together in a house when the wind blew the house down and killed them all. The crucial question of the book that was set up by Satan's accusations is, How will Job respond? Job did not curse God.

Satan appears the second time and God again asks him to consider Job. Satan complains that Job still has his bodily health though he had lost much. God permits Satan to take Job's

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health, but restrains him from taking Job's life. So Satan afflicted Job with boils from head to foot. Job still didn't curse God and three of his friends came and sat down with him in silence for seven days. This ends the beginning of the book.

From this point forward, the majority of the book is taken up by three cycles of dialogs where Job's friends accuse him and Job responds to them. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar say a lot to Job, but basically have one main premise. They argue that God is righteous and when people are righteous they are rewarded. They also argue the converse, that when people are wicked they are punished. They conclude the unusual and extreme nature of Job's calamities must mean Job has committed some great wickedness he must repent of.

Job consistently responds to their accusations. He doesn't argue for some perfect, sinless innocence, but he knows he's not guilty of some great sins as they suggest. Job also is a wisdom teacher as he responds that God's ways are not as simple as they made them out to be. He offers counter examples of the wicked prospering. Job consistently affirms God's sovereignty in his suffering (Job 1:21; 2:10; 6:4; 9:12, 17, 22-25; 12:6, 9; 16:11, 12, 14; 19:6, 8-13, 21; 23:10, 14, 16; 27:2; 30:11, 19). So Job acknowledges his trials have come from God.

Job's friends run out of things to say and the last part of the book starts with a younger man named Elihu. He has listened to the conversation of Job and his three friends without saying anything. He finally speaks and reproves Job for justifying himself. He also reproved the three friends for condemning Job unjustly. Elihu also affirms the sovereignty of God in human suffering and argues the godly and ungodly both suffer. He states their respective sufferings are to different ends and purposes (Job 36:6-14). Elihu also show how the suffering of the righteous is God's loving discipline, correction, and purification.

Finally, God himself responds to Job. He speaks of various aspects and affairs of the creation. He rebukes Job by asking if he has the power and wisdom to create or govern the creation. God asks Job what right he has to question God's administration of his own creation and Job repents and closes his mouth after hearing this. God also rebukes the three friends for their words to Job and they also repent. The book ends with Job's restoration.

### ***A brief outline of Esther:***

1. Chapters 1-2 Job's Trials
2. Chapter 3 Job's Expression of Grief
3. Chapters 4-27 Three Cycles of Dialog
4. Chapters 28-31 Job's Final Defense
5. Chapters 32-37 Elihu's Speeches
6. Chapters 38-42 God's Response and Job's Restoration

## **INTERPRETATION**

What does Job teach?

***God's Sovereignty***

Job is filled with references to God's sovereignty over his creation. Even Satan is depicted as subject to God's sovereign control. All five men who speak in the book affirm God's sovereignty in human suffering. Though Job and his three friends don't get everything right, none of them question if God has sent the trials to Job. Their argument is about why God sent the trials to Job.

The view of God's sovereignty in this book is balanced by vindicating God's justice in whatever he send upon men on the earth. The book also teaches the righteous can and do suffer in ways that are not punishing some sin. The book tackles some of the big and hard questions about life men have had since getting kicked out of Eden.

***Man's Folly***

Job also teaches the limits of human wisdom. Our knowledge is subject to God's sovereignty as much as everything else in the universe he created. Job was never told why he suffered the way he did. As far as we can know, none of the five men who speak in the book knew anything about what happened in Heaven between God and Satan. In that respect, we know more about why Job suffered than any of them did.

People have to be self-conscious of human limitations and must accept that God is not obligated to answer all our questions. The Bible is God's revelation to man and contains everything we need to know, but makes neither claim nor promise to address every issue we might be concerned about or every question we might think to ask. God is also not obligated to explain to us why he does what he does.

***The Messiah and His Kingdom***

Job does contribute to the expectation of the Messiah and his kingdom. In Job's suffering, he cries out for a mediator, a go-between, between God and men (Job 9:32-33). He recognizes an immeasurable distance between God and men and his longing speaks to the human need for reconciliation. He also looks forward to a personal Redeemer and resurrection (Job 19:25-27). The basic problem in the world is that man has sinned against God and God is righteously angry with sin and man needs a mediator to lay hold of both God and man to reconcile and bring them together. Of course, this mediator is the Mediator, Jesus Christ.

If we think about the book of Job in broadest terms, we can see the big picture. A righteous man is handed over to suffer satanic afflictions by the will of God. He suffers scorn and mockery in his afflictions. He prays for his persecutors and offers a sacrifice for them. He becomes a mediator between God and men for the forgiveness of sins. This righteous sufferer is ultimately vindicated, exalted, and given glory and power and dominion over a large estate to rule in righteousness. The book sketches a realistic picture of the Messiah.

God calls Job "my servant" twice in the beginning of the book (Job 1:8; 2:3), and four times in the end (Job 42:7-8). God's servant is a title used for different figures in the Old Testament, such as Jacob, or Israel, Moses, and David. These are key figures in redemptive his-

tory. Servant of Yahweh is a title for the Messiah in Isaiah 42-53, where he is the righteous Servant and the suffering Servant.

The expectation of the kingdom comes through the kingdom conflicts in the book between God and Satan. Note that conflict is played out on earth, not in heaven, because that is the dominion contested. Job is referred to in kingly terms, such as the greatest of all the men of the east (Job 1:3), sitting in the gate (Job 29:7-11), a wisdom teacher, or sage (Job 29:21-23), and a chief and king who comforted the mourners (Job 29:25).

## APPLICATION

How does Job help us as modern readers?

Understanding Job will help us understand that we do not know or understand everything that happens in our lives, or the lives of those we know around us. We don't know why events happen, and may never know. This obviously leads us to humility and dependence on God.

Understanding Job will help us keep life on this earth in proper perspective. Life is short and fleeting. Suffering is painful, but the life to come is eternal and eternally more important and rewarding to those who trust in Jesus Christ.

Understanding Job will help us understand something about Satan and his work. It should keep us from attributing too much power to him. He is a powerful being and is our adversary, but he is every bit as subject to God's power as we are, and the rest of creation.

Understanding Job will teach us patience. We shouldn't jump to conclusions about our own lives, or the lives of others. We make quick judgments about things that happen, when we don't have all knowledge and don't understand why things happen the way they do.

## CONCLUSION

Job is a long book that touches many different topics. The overwhelming theme of the book is the vindication of God and his sovereignty in human suffering. The book depicts the suffering of the righteous, even to great loss, and the future reward of the same. The book presents the problems of man, for which the only solution is the coming of the Messiah and his kingdom. The book sets up Israel, and even us today, to understand the afflictions sent to them and the promise of future restoration through their Messiah.

## ABOUT THIS STUDY

This series is a study in biblical theology going book by book through the entire Bible. Each lesson typically covers one book of the Bible, though occasionally covers more than one book when the books are short. This PDF is provided for personal study, small group study, or use in a church class. Unless otherwise noted, all lessons have been prepared by Jeff Short, the pastor of Harmony Baptist Church.

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