

GOSPEL of *Grace*
FELLOWSHIP

Job

Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer

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F-L-I-G-H-T

F – The author of the book of Job is unidentified. Early Jewish tradition attributed the book to Moses. It’s possible he wrote the book after first hearing an oral account from his father-in-law, Jethro, during his time in Midian. Though the exact date of its writing is unknown, many scholars believe Job is the oldest book in the Bible.

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F-L-I-G-H-T

L – Job is a story of suffering that asks two of the hardest questions in the world:
1) Why do good people suffer? 2) How can a good, loving God allow such horrible suffering in the world? (called *theodicy* by theologians)

I – Physical Malady (1-2), Spiritual Reality (1-2), Mental Agony (3-37), Ultimate Victory (38-42)

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F-L-I-G-H-T

G – When Job said, “I know that my Redeemer lives” he was anticipating God’s Messiah – a suffering man who was able to look ahead to a living Redeemer who would suffer to guarantee Job’s own resurrection.

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F-L-I-G-H-T

H – Because the time period in which Job took place is unclear, we don't have a thorough understanding of what was going on in the larger world at the time. We know that Job was a wealthy and respected leader in his community and that he lived to a ripe old age. He most likely communicated his story orally to the next generation, who eventually passed that story down to Moses and others.

F-L-I-G-H-T

T – **Suffering sometimes makes us feel like divine playthings, and it can be unnerving.** That doesn't mean God doesn't care about you; it just means he is keeping a bigger picture in mind as he allows certain things to happen in your life. **Not everything that hurts is bad.** Think of Jesus being beaten and crucified to pay the price for your sins. Rather than getting stuck on what you don't understand about God, camp out on what you know to be true about your good, loving, gracious, all-knowing, all-powerful, always-present Father in heaven.

Location of Land of Uz

- **Syria?** Hauran region: Monastery of Job, fountain of Job, lavatory of Job (stone trough), stone of Job, tomb of Job
- **Saudi Arabia?** Oasis of Jowf (Jouf, Al-Jouf, Al-Jawf): tomb of Job, region of 3 friends, fertile agricultural region, trading center, edge of Great Nafud Desert, ruins from 2nd millennium BC

Identity of Job

- **Descendant of Issachar?** *The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puvah, Job, and Shimron.* (Gen. 46:13)
- **Descendant of Esau?** *When Bela died, Jobab [Job-Father] son of Zerah from Bozrah succeeded him as king.* (Gen. 36:33)

Prologue (1-2)

- **Job's Character:** Job is a man of devout moral character, integrity, totally devoted to what is godly and good.
- **Job's Calamity:** Satan deprives Job of his property and children. Job is ignorant of the cosmic dimensions of his experience.
- **Job's Commitment:** Satan inflicts a 2nd round of more intense calamities on Job. Job responds by reasserting his commitment to God.
- **Appearance of Job's Friends:** Three associates come to sympathize with Job, his intellectual peers.

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First Cycle (3-14)

- **Eliphaz:** existence of calamity in Job's case is certain evidence of personal sin; counsels Job to repent
- **Bildad:** God never perverts justice, always destroys the wicked and always prospers the righteous
- **Zophar:** if Job is suffering his affliction must be justly deserved; has little sympathy for Job
- **Job:** steadfastly refuses to acknowledge his suffering is due to sin

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Second Cycle (15-21)

- **Eliphaz:** less sympathetic, charges that Job is suffering the fate deserved by a very wicked person
- **Bildad:** wants to persuade Job that questioning God is wrong and will have dire consequences
- **Zophar:** Job is experiencing the expected fate of the wicked; feels insulted by Job
- **Job:** challenges claims to superior knowledge, feels abandoned by God

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Third Cycle (22-26)

- **Eliphaz:** more concerned with protecting his own beliefs than with comforting Job; takes hostile tone of confrontation, attacks Job's integrity
- **Bildad:** general platitudes that provide no real advance in the discussion; contrasts low degree of man with the greatness of God
- **Zophar:** (doesn't speak)
- **Job:** desires reconciliation with God but finds him unresponsive; responds to Bildad with sarcasm

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Interlude (28)

This chapter functions as a transition from the 3 rounds of dialogue (3-27) to the 3 extended monologues by Job (29-31), Elihu (32-37), and Yahweh (38-41). The narrator brings the reader back to the fundamental issue of the whole debate: is wisdom within the grasp of human intelligence? This chapter demonstrates that only God understands the way to the wisdom that both Job and his friends have been unable to locate.

Speeches of Elihu (32-37)

- **First:** gives what he considers an accurate and decisive critique of Job's position, that God is unjust to attack him
- **Second:** using the same logic as the friends, views Job's situation strictly as a legal test case, not as a personal tragedy
- **Third:** attempts to summarize and counter Job's claims as he hears them
- **Fourth:** looks at the result of suffering rather than the cause of suffering

Yahweh's Speeches (38:1-42:6)

- **First Round:** Series of questions – creation, meteorological phenomena, celestial phenomena, animal world
- **Job's Response:** begins to turn from arguing against Yahweh to being silent before him
- **Second Round:** Features of Behemoth and Leviathan
- **Job's Response:** comes to an enlarged understanding of the wisdom and power of God

Epilogue (42:7-17)

- **Yahweh's Verdict:** 3 friends rebuked for not speaking truthfully of him as Job had, Elihu is ignored (the man who had claimed to be the mouthpiece of God)
- **Job's Restoration:** relationship with God reaffirmed, social relationships restored, property increased twofold, provided 7 sons/3 daughters, given 140 years (double the normal lifespan)