

The Book of JOB



Study Guide

JOB

LORD OF LEVIATHAN PERSONAL AND GROUPS STUDY GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

The Book of Job takes place in the land of Uz, located east and south of Israel. Though the author of Job is unknown, we can infer through the text that the author is likely Hebrew, due to his extensive knowledge of the Hebrew faith and Scripture. Speculations through the ages have suggested that Moses wrote the book, while others believe a contemporary of Ezekial penned the tale. Origins aside, the Book of Job is a rumination on a near-eternal quandary for mankind: what is the purpose of innocent suffering? Job's experiences, questions, doubts, and prayers are still relevant, and deeply relatable, for us today. We will unpack this idea and more in our study, with the knowledge that God still speaks through His inspired Word.

GENRE

The Book of Job, alongside Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, belongs to the category of wisdom literature in Scripture. These books ruminate on existential questions and moral dilemmas. Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do the wicked prosper? What does it mean to live a good life? Such queries are the stuff of wisdom literature.

THEMES

The Problem of Evil

Job, in particular, asks the timeless question of the Problem of Evil: If God is all good and all powerful, how can He allow evil in the world? Our pursuit of an answer leads us to form a theodicy, defined as “the vindication of divine goodness and providence in view of the existence of evil.”

Mystery

We don't do well with mystery here in the West. Our impulses wired for empiricism and pragmatism, we are impatient for ready answers to heady questions. We prefer straightforward statements to ambiguous narratives and gravitate toward five-step how-to's over winding poetics. The story of Job, however, does not allow us easy answers. In his Introduction to the Book of Job, G. K. Chesterton wrote, “It is the lesson of the whole work that man is most comforted by paradoxes.” As we delve into Job's narrative, lean into the mystery. Allow the concepts of Christological typography, the dimensions of angelic dealings, the immutability of God, and the expanse of His sovereignty deepen awareness of our human limits and finitude.

Doubt

In Job, we learn about the correct posture of doubt. Often we dismiss valid questions in the name of condemning the sin of doubt. On the other hand, we might also excuse sinful doubts as harmless. How can we know when our doubt is healthy and when it is unhealthy? Doubt that is unhealthy already knows what answer it wants, while doubt that is healthy simply wants an answer to honestly wrestle with. The characters in this book mirror our own spiritual angst and existential wonder at how God deals with man.

Christ Connection

All of Scripture points to the person of Jesus Christ. This book is no exception. Job suffers because of his virtue, not his sinfulness. It's the very fact that he is faithful and in dogged pursuit of holiness that creates the condition for his calamities, which he bears in a mortal, flawed way. Similarly, Christ suffered for us. He who knew no sin, who was the paragon of holiness, went on a dogged pursuit of salvation for those who believe in His name. Job and Christ both cry out to God, and in neither case does God refrain.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

Our sermon series on the Book of Job will span approximately 9 weeks. The passages selected for each week correlate with this schedule, but can be flexed accordingly to accommodate changes.

Each week contains six questions for personal study. Feel free to do them all at once or take them one day at a time! To stay rooted in the text throughout the week, the latter approach is recommended.

Also included are five question prompts for Grace Groups to use in addition to the Sermon Discussion Questions found in the sermon manuscript. Ask these to inspire further conversation among small groups or use them to supplement your personal study!

OUTLINE

Each section has been chosen to reflect the dominant themes of selected passages.

Job 1:1-12 - Satan Schemes

Job 1:13-19 - Innocent Sufferer

Job 2:1-10 - God Sovereign Over Suffering

Misc. passages, incl. 42:7-9 rebuke of friends - Job's Three Friends

Job 23:1-9 - God Hides

Job 32-37 - Elihu

Job 38-40 - Conversation with God

Job 41 - Leviathan

Job 42:1-17 - Repentance and Restoration

Embrace Community

As God has created us for community, what better thing to talk about together than the Lord who brought us together! Talk things over in your Grace Group, Grow Group, or get brunch with new friends after church some Sunday. Our church is blessed to have many wise, caring members who would love to walk through things with you, and our pastoral staff are always happy to discuss things further. Feel free to reach out to info@graceroadchurch.org with any questions or concerns.

Further Resources

To learn more about how to study the Bible, books such as *Knowing Scripture* by R. C. Sproul and *Women of the Word* by Jen Wilkin are great resources to begin with. Ligonier Ministries and Desiring God Ministries also provide a wealth of articles, videos, and guides on biblical study, popular topics, and various other theological addresses. For further resources on studying the book of Job, refer to the Resources section at the end of this study guide.



Job and His Family, William Blake's Illustrations for the Book of Job, 1821

JOB 1: 1-12 | SATAN SCHEMES

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, spend time pondering and answering these questions:

1. Is this your first time reading the Book of Job? What are you hoping to learn from this study?

2. What characteristics do Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job share that categorize them as wisdom literature?

3. What do you believe about God's sovereignty?

4. The book begins with a look into Job's family life. What kind of a man is Job? What does he value?

5. In 1:6-12, we are shown a scene of what resembles a court case taking place in God's presence. What stands out to you about the exchange between God and Satan?

6. In 1 Peter 5:8, the Apostle Peter warns that "the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." What do both of these passages tell us about the business of the Devil?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever wondered about the problem of evil before? Why does mankind continue to ask this question?

2. Do you have a theodicy? What has comforted, convicted, or encouraged you in wrestling with the problem of evil?

3. How does the doctrine of God's sovereignty impact our day to day lives?

4. Do you find a tendency in your heart to love God more for His gifts than for who He is?

5. As you are comfortable, share about a time where seemingly needless suffering happened in your life. What did you learn from that experience?

JOB 1: 13-19 | INNOCENT SUFFERER

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, spend time pondering and answering these questions:

1. Job's life is completely upended in a series of disasters. What spheres of life does each tragic circumstance affect? (e.g. family)

2. When God permits Satan to inflict hardship on Job, He tells him that there is an aspect of life that Satan cannot touch. What was he forbidden to do? Did Satan obey that order?

3. If Satan's work is allowed by God, what does this tell us about God's sovereignty? What does this tell us about Satan's power?

4. What is your reaction to the idea that Satan's work here is permitted by God? Take some time to honestly wrestle with the implications of this before the Lord.

5. Read Matthew 5:44-46. What kind of person does Jesus say will experience bad times? What does He say this knowledge should motivate us to do?

6. Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Who also suffered innocently?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Matthew 5:44-46, Jesus states that bad things happen to good people. How does this challenge the justice paradigms set by other religions, such as the Hindu and Buddhist conceptions of karma?

2. How might this 'equality of unfortunate events' change the way we engage with others? Might this encourage or discourage our participation in cancel culture?

3. How does Job's characterization as the innocent sufferer ultimately prefigure Christ? How was Christ more innocent than Job?

4. Name some other people in the Bible who prefigure Christ and how Jesus is the better, fulfilled version of them. (e. g. 'Jesus is the better Joshua')

5. Read Isaiah 52:13-15 and Isaiah 53:4-6, 11-12. What does Isaiah prophecy is the purpose of the Servant's (Christ's) suffering?

JOB 2: 1-10 | GOD SOVEREIGN OVER SUFFERING

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, spend time pondering and answering these questions:

1. Chapter 2 opens with another heavenly scene. How is this scene similar to the previous one? Why do you think it was written this way?

2. What is Satan implying about human nature in verses 4 and 5?

3. How does suffering reveal the truth of what is in our hearts?

4. Satan now inflicts Job's body with sores, degrading his dignity as well as his health. Refer to your answer to the first question from last week's personal study. Which of these afflictions are caused by seemingly random natural disasters and which were seemingly personal misfortunes?

5. What does Job's wife advise him to do? Why is self-pity so tempting to us?

6. Job's acceptance of both the good and the bad does not come out of nowhere. What can we learn about Job's view of God's character in the way he responds to both rounds of affliction?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What beliefs about ourselves and about God are underneath our impulse toward self-pity?

2. What is nihilism? How is the advice Job's wife gives him nihilistic?

3. How does our culture promote nihilism? What is attractive about nihilistic messages?

4. Does the Christian have reason to give up hope? See Hebrews 6:19-20.

5. These two chapters unpack a lot about God's sovereignty, Satan's limitations, and the dynamics of good and evil. Take some time to further discuss verses in these chapters that have been challenging, surprising, or encouraging for you.

MISC. PASSAGES | JOB'S THREE FRIENDS

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, spend time pondering and answering these questions:

1. What is Eliphaz's argument?

2. The more that Job protests against Eliphaz's points, the harder Eliphaz doubles down. What sins does Eliphaz accuse Job of committing in Job 22:6-9? How does Job respond to these accusations? See Job 29:12-13; 31:16-18.

3. What is God's reaction to the advice Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar impart?

4. Summarize both Bildad's and Zophar's arguments.

5. Read Job 9. Here, Job cries out for a mediator between God and man, and this plea is met in the God-man Jesus Christ. How does Jesus bridge the gap between us and God?

6. What act does God require Job's three friends to do out of repentance? How is Jesus the better sacrifice for our sins?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. It's been said that Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar were good friends until they opened their mouths. What can we learn from this in our attempts to comfort our grieving friends?

2. Eliphaz was adamant that Job's suffering had to be the consequences of sin in his life – so much so that Eliphaz accuses him of specific sins that Job denies ever committing. How does possessing a bad theology affect our relationships?

3. How does God's allowance of the wicked's prosperity challenge our inclination to declare ourselves righteous by our works?

4. God seems to vindicate what Job has said about Him so far. Is it always a sin to question what God is doing?

5. What can we learn from Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar about friendship and giving spiritual counsel?



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Job's Tormentors, William Blake's Illustrations for the Book of Job, 1793

JOB 23:1-9 | GOD HIDES

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, spend time pondering and answering these questions:

1. What does Job long for in this passage?

2. Is Job's cry deferential to God or in rebellion against him? Is Job wrong to ask these questions? Why or why not?

3. Job refers to his right side, his left, before him, and behind him, and declares that he cannot find God. These times of deep spiritual lows and silence from God have been referred to as a "dark night of the soul." Have you ever felt this way before?

4. Read Psalm 22, King David's poem entitled "Why Have You Forsaken Me?" How does King David's Psalm echo Job's cry here?

5. Who chose to be forsaken on our behalf? (See Matt. 26:38-39, 27:46)

6. Jesus experienced the silence of God on the cross. What does this mean for us in our dark nights of the soul? (Hebrews 4:14-16)

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is it right for us to speak to God like Job does here? What should we do with our feelings of frustration, anger, and disappointment toward God?

2. Where else in Scripture do we see people wrestle with God? How did God respond to them? (See John 20:27 for one)

3. Why is it important to talk about our doubts in the light of community?

4. Why do we tend to pull back from our spiritual communities in times of doubt? What can we do better as a group to make our gatherings a welcoming place for hard questions?

5. As you are comfortable, share about a time you experienced a 'dark night of the soul.' What did you learn from that experience? How would you encourage someone currently walking through their own spiritual despondency?

JOB 32-37 | ELIHU

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, spend time pondering and answering these questions:

1. Describe Elihu's attitude toward Job and the other three friends.
2. Which sin does Elihu accuse Job of fostering? (See Job 33:8-12; 35:12; 36:9)
3. What is the theology behind Elihu's argument? How is his perspective different from the others'?
4. Elihu's position echoes Psalm 119:71: "It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." How does suffering reveal to us our own spiritual poverty and need for Christ?

5. How might this transform our perspective when we find ourselves in a hard season or circumstance?

6. Check out Romans 5:3-5, 1 Peter 1:6-7, and James 1:2-4. What do Peter, James, and Paul say about suffering?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do we wrestle with Elihu's call for Job to defer to God's holiness despite his questions?

2. What do you think of Elihu's tone in this passage? Why do you think he speaks to Job in this way?

3. Do you find it challenging to view your sufferings as opportunities for God's work in your life?

4. Job is declared righteous by God but this does not mean that he is sinlessly perfect. How is Jesus, the Suffering Servant, the better Job in this?

5. Name a time when a period of suffering brought growth and depth to your faith. Were you humbled? Wisened? Convicted? Encouraged?

JOB 38-40 | CONVERSATION WITH GOD

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, spend time pondering and answering these questions:

1. As his suffering waxes on, Job's resolve has begun to slip into self-pity. He has asked where God is, and now God speaks. How does he respond? What is your reaction to God's response?

2. How does God show Job his own human finiteness? List a few of the different spheres of creation that God mentions in these chapters.

3. As God describes His governance over all things, He includes the meek and mild animals alongside the more wild, violent ones. What does this imply about the seeming chaos and brutality of nature?

4. God says that if Job can match God in wisdom, power, and sovereignty, "then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you." How does forgetting our creatureliness cause us to believe we can save ourselves or earn salvation?

5. Where else in Scripture does God answer the doubting and despondent?

6. God meets Job's questions with His own questions, which may sound harsh to us. How is God's chastisement loving here?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you struggle with the concept of chastisement? Why or why not?

2. As you are comfortable, share your reactions to God's response. Are you challenged by how God replies to Job here?

3. Even though our questions, doubts, and frustrations are often a result of forgetfulness and underestimation of God's higher wisdom, why is it important to bring these to God rather than keep them from Him? What should our posture be when we do?

4. How has the book of Job impacted how you view those who are in a season of doubt or struggling to believe in the face of grief and hardship?

5. God meets Job's questions, a kindness that God does not owe, while also confronting him with the truth of His magnitude and design. Look up Ephesians 4:14-16. Why is it important that we speak 'the truth in love'?

JOB 41 | LEVIATHAN

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, spend time pondering and answering these questions:

1. How is the ancient creature Leviathan described here? Write down a handful of its attributes.

2. Turn back to chapter 40. What is Behemoth? Compare and contrast the descriptions of Leviathan and Behemoth.

3. The Book of Job is not the only place Leviathan is mentioned in the Bible. Read Psalm 104:24-26. How is Leviathan described? How is God's sovereignty over the created world a comfort to us? (Matt. 10:29-31)

4. In verse 33, God summarizes his description of Leviathan as, "Nothing on earth is its equal— a creature without fear." Why do you think God chose to spend so much time describing Leviathan in his response to Job?

5. In Isaiah 27:1, the prophet Isaiah refers to Leviathan as a metaphor for Satan, the serpent in the Garden, and declares his destruction. Read Revelation 12:1-17, 20:1-3, 10. What is Satan's fate?

6. Read Genesis 3:15. Who is prophesied here? (Hint: Heb. 2:14)

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. So far in the Book of Job, God has shown that he has both the formidable foe of the natural world (Leviathan) and the enemy of our souls (Satan) on a leash. How might this impact our beliefs about the nature of evil?

2. Do we tend to ascribe too much power to Satan? Is it easier to blame his influence for all of our problems than examine our own sinful inclinations?

3. How does knowing the destiny of all evil and sin help us endure when the wicked prosper?

4. G. K. Chesterton once wrote, "We fear men so much, because we fear God so little. One fear cures another. When man's terror scares you, turn your thoughts to the wrath of God." How does having a holy, reverent fear of God's justice and sovereignty keep our circumstances in perspective?

5. Which of God's other attributes comfort you when you struggle to trust His higher wisdom in allowing evil to occur?



The Destruction of Leviathan, engraving by Gustave Doré, 1865

JOB 42:1-17 | REPENTANCE & RESTORATION

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, spend time pondering and answering these questions:

1. Humbled to the core, Job quotes God's own words back to Him in a speech of repentance. What wrongdoing does Job admit to?

2. What can we learn from Job's posture as he repents?

3. Read Psalm 73. Do you notice any similarities between this song of Asaph and Job's journey?

4. How does God humble Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar before Job for the wrong they did in condemning Job unjustly?

5. What does God restore to Job?

6. Has our study of Job changed how you pray?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has surprised you about our study in Job? How has it impacted your faith?

2. What are some ideas, passages, or challenging doctrines that you would like to continue looking into?

3. What is repentance? Why did Job repent of his doubt?

4. How does the Book of Job show us the poverty of the prosperity gospel?

5. In what elements or moments have you seen Christ prefigured and foreshadowed in the Book of Job?

RESOURCES

WATCH

The Bible Project:

- [Job Background](#)
- [Job Summary](#)
- [Introduction to Wisdom Literature](#)

Assorted:

- [Job, Satan, and God: The Book of Job with Derek Thomas](#)
- [Introduction to The Book of Job with Derek Thomas](#)

READ

- [Introduction to the Book of Job by G. K. Chesterton](#)
- [TGC Course: Job](#)
- [Job: A 12-Week Study \(Knowing the Bible\) by Eric Ortland, J. I. Packer](#)

LISTEN

- [Job Sermon Series, John MacArthur, Grace to You](#)
- [Job Sermon Series, Kim Riddlebarger, Christ Reformed Church](#)
- [Job: Five Sermons on Suffering, John Piper, Desiring God](#)
- [Questions of Suffering, Timothy Keller, Gospel in Life](#)

ETC

- [ESV Illuminated Journals - Crossway](#)
- [Desiring God articles on Job](#)
- [Ligonier Ministries resources on Job](#)
- [The Gospel Coalition Job-related archive](#)

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