

# Job

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Job means 'hated/persecuted'

Satan means 'accuser'

'blessed' can mean 'happy' or 'a greeting of departure and in context can mean to curse i.e. to renounce'

- Job is concerned that his sons not 'curse God in their hearts'
- Satan claims Job will 'curse God'
- Job's wife says 'curse God and die'

**(Job 1:1)** There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who **feared God** and **turned away from evil**.

Job fears God and turns away from evil. Fearing God and turning away from evil is the definition of wisdom so Job is a wise man.

Job is also a priest. He offers burnt offerings for the sins of others at both bookends. First for his family and then for his friends.

**(Job 1:4-5)** His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate his sons and daughters, 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 children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.

Interesting that Job's daughters are included in the feasts and sacrifices at the beginning and at the end Job's daughters are named and included in the assigning of an inheritance.

Job intercedes for his children lest they have sinned and cursed God. Job will be tempted to curse God himself. But do the friends curse God in their folly?

**(Job 1:6)** Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

Satan has to give an account of himself to God.

- The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?"
- Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." The phrases are used of a census or surveying of a kingdom.

(Job 1:8) And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?"

(Job 1:9-11) Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."

Satan's challenge to God is that God is only valued as worthy of worship by men for what the benefit they receive from him and not for his intrinsic worth.

Why doesn't God simply rebuke Satan or just give him a 'going-too-far' look?

The answer is that God had a plan.

- God's plan is to reveal his glory through Job's circumstances
- Glory that will be seen by God's people who read this book
- And by all the angels in the heavenly places

So God says to Satan.

(Job 1:12) "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Satan can do this but not that – he can't do anything without God's permission.

Job has been given over into the hand and power of Satan.

The language implies the captivity of Job.

(Job 1:13-19)

A tribe of wicked people called the Sabeans come from the south and steal all his oxen and donkeys.

A lightning storm comes from the east and caused a fire that burned all his sheep.

Some more wicked men called the Chaldeans come from the north and steal all his camels.

A wind storm from the wilderness comes and strikes the house where Job's children were killing them all.

Evil men and natural forces take away Job's prosperity. But in fact these are the instruments of Satan into whose hand/power Job has been given.

And yet Job says that it is the LORD who has taken away his prosperity. He's right!

(Job 1:20-21) Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

And Job does not curse God to his face.

In chapter 2 Satan again appears before the LORD to give an accounting. Is it a year later? Interesting how God refers to the previous narrative.

(Job 2:3) And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although ***you incited me against him to destroy him without reason.***"

Notice the references to hands.

(Job 2:4) Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life.

(Job 2:5) ***But stretch out your hand*** and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face."

(Job 2:6) And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, ***he is in your hand***; only spare his life."

Again permission is granted and Satan is restricted. Job is in Satan's hand with regard to his captivity but ultimately it is God's hand that is stretched out against him.

(Job 2:7) So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

(Job 2:8) And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes.

(Job 2:9) Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? ***Curse God and die.***"

(Job 2:10) But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. ***Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?***" ***In all this Job did not sin with his lips.***

Job's wife speaks the words with which Satan tempts Job.

Again Job correctly understands his circumstances as coming from God's hands.

In chapter 3 – Job opens his mouth and curses the day he was born. "How Satan must have delighted to hear that word on Job's lips" <sup>(Jones, 77)</sup>

But Job curses his existence – not God. Job laments.

Job's thorn in the flesh

The exact illness that seized Job is unknown, boils is a non-technical term. From Job's speeches some of the symptoms that he suffered included painful pruritus (2:8), disfiguration (2:12), purulent sores that scab over, crack, and ooze (7:5), sores infected with worms (7:5), fever with chills (21:6; 30:30), darkening and shriveling of the skin (30:30), eyes red and swollen from weeping (16:16), diarrhea (30:27), sleeplessness and delirium (7:4, 13-14), choking (7:15), bad breath (19:17), emaciation (19:20), and excruciating pain throughout his body (30:17).

Basically the friends argue that God acts to cause bad things to only happen to bad people.

So because bad things have happened to Job – Job must have sinned. c.f. Job 8:4-6

But the friends are not right. **God brings both comfortable and uncomfortable providences** into the lives of his people even when they are not sinning.

What the friends say is good and right – most of the time (and so what they say can be read and appreciated) – but God doesn't always act the way they say he does – and in that sense they speak incorrectly about both God and Job.

*Although the friends are trying to defend God, their reductionistic theology ends up offering Job a temptation: to confess sins that weren't there, in order to try to retrieve his prosperity. If Job had succumbed, it would have meant that Job cared more for prosperity than for his integrity or for the Lord himself; and the Lord would have lost his wager. Their counsel, if followed, would have actually led Job away from the Lord; Job would have been reduced to being yet one more person interested in seeking God for merely personal gain. (source: D.A. Carson)*

However Job does question God's wisdom and goodness – and God will rebuke him for that before the end of the book.

So Job passes and he also fails.

In the midst of the speeches comes a dramatic change when Job declares his faith with clarity of insight.

(Job 19:25-27)

For I know that my Redeemer<sup>1</sup> lives<sup>2</sup>,  
and at the last he will stand upon the earth<sup>3</sup>.  
And after my skin has been thus destroyed,  
yet in my flesh I shall see God,  
whom I shall see for myself,  
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.  
My heart faints within me!

In other words, Job's redeemer is the God who lives and who will rise up to act on his behalf. After his skin has been stripped and he has been left virtually as bare bones, Job will see God rise up to act to vindicate him before he dies.

(Job 28)

Interlude? Where is wisdom found? Answer: In the fear of the LORD

(Job 29) My life as it once was.

(Job 30) My life as it now is

(Job 31) I am innocent and I demand God declares me so.

(Elihu – Job 32-37)

Elihu

- Isn't rebuked at the end
- 'burned with anger at the friends' just as God later does.
- Has tribal associations with Abraham

Friends said:

- God only makes bad things happen to bad people for their destruction

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<sup>1</sup> In 19:13-17, Job specifically says that he does not have any kinsman-redeemers.

<sup>2</sup> Job had just been describing himself as dying. So his redeemer lives in contrast to Job's dying.

<sup>3</sup> Law court context.

Elihu says:

- God sometimes disciplines people for their good

Friends said:

- Job was suffering because he sinned

Elihu says:

- ***Job has sinned in response to his suffering***
- Job has sinned by straying from his original position of accepting the sovereignty of God and his goodness and rightness – Job has questioned God's fairness and protested his own innocence – Job hasn't rejected God though but continued to wrestle and seek after him.

Only Elihu offers an answer to the problem of righteous-suffering i.e. is disciplinary and redemptive (36:11-16).

Elihu's attack on Job was limited to his statements during the dialogue. He did not accuse Job of a wicked life for which he was being punished. So Elihu was not guilty of false accusation and that may be the reason he was not rebuked by God.

Elihu's speeches provide a transition between the human debate and the theophany.

Within Elihu's speech there is a movement from man-focus to God-focus. Generally Elihu's focus is on God's character rather than his reaction to mankind.

### ***Summary of Elihu's theology***

- Wisdom from the God-given spirit in a man not through age (32:7-8).
- The three friends have not proved Job wrong or answered his arguments (32:12).
- Addresses Job's claim to innocence and of God's inaction by arguing that God acts in righteous suffering in disciplinary and redemptive ways (33:14-30).
- Job's claim that God is acting unjustly is refuted by Elihu's focus on God's sovereignty and transcendence. (chapters 34-35).
- God's justice is evident in judging the wicked, blessing the righteous and disciplining-restoring righteous ones who have strayed.
- Elihu makes similar comments as those God will make in relation to the approaching storm (36:26-37:24).

### ***(Job 37)***

Elihu describes the approaching thunderstorm. But it is no ordinary thunderstorm ... for in the storm comes God's approach.

(Job 38-41)

The LORD addresses Job out of the whirlwind (38:1; 40:6)

The LORD summons Job to prepare for verbal combat (38:3; 40:7)

'gird up your loins'

The LORD says: "I will question you, and you make it known to me" (38:3; 40:7)

In other words, you be the teacher and I'll be the pupil asking questions

70 questions

- Earth
- Sea
- Sky (snow, hail, lightning, stars)
- Animals (lions, goats, cows, ostriches, horses, hawks, eagles)

Job responds

Behemoth land creature (like a hippo but Mot, the land god of death and famine)

Leviathan sea creature (like a crocodile but Satan the dragon)

There is fierce evil in God's world that is opposed God's people (c.f. Revelation 13 where God's people are opposed by evil personified again in both a land beast and sea beast).

There is a fierce evil opposed to God's people but God and God alone rules over such creatures.

So a wise man bows in submission before God – that is wisdom.



(Job 42:10)

(ESV) And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job

(KJV) And the LORD turned the captivity of Job

... in all the other uses of this expression in the Old Testament (see Deut. 30:3; Ps. 126:1; Jer. 30:3,18; 31:23) the reference is to the bondage of the nation of Israel to an alien power that occupies its land. It is only in Job 42:10 that it is used of an individual. ... Was Job not hedged about by the LORD, as the promised land was later? And ***was Job not 'invaded' by an alien power?*** Why not recognize that ***what was frequently the case with Israel in the Old Testament is here the case with Job, the only difference being that Job had not sinned and his being 'occupied' and plundered was not due to God's judgement? The statement that 'The LORD turned the captivity of Job' makes clear that Job's sufferings were a kind of bondage and his restoration was a kind of deliverance or redemption.***

This expression creates another link between Job and Israel because it describes spiritual blessing being manifested in material ways that express the LORD'S kindness towards his believing people (see Deut. 28:1-14). Job 42:7-17 fits into that framework with ease and the events it records are typical of a return from bondage and exile and of an anticipation of heaven. This older translation must therefore be preserved. It is absolutely vital for a theological understanding of 'the coming of the Lord' (James 5:8).

Source: Hywel Jones, *A study commentary on Job* (Darlington England ;Webster New York: Evangelical Press, 2007).

**Turned the captivity of Job,** i.e. brought him out of that state of bondage in which he had been so long held by Satan and by his own Spirit, and out of all his distresses and miseries. Or, *returned Job's captivity*, i.e. the persons and things which had been taken from him; not the same which he had lost, but other equivalent to them, and that with advantage. (Poole)

God *turned his captivity*, that is, he redressed his grievances and took away all the causes of his complaints; he loosed him from the bond with which Satan had now, for a great while, bound him, and delivered him out of those cruel hands into which he had delivered him. (Henry)