

**PREPARATION FOR LESSON:** read *Job*, chapters 1, 2, 8, 22, 31, 36, 40, 42

## BACKGROUND

**Author:** Job; others suggest Moses, Elihu, Solomon or an unknown author

**Date of Writing:** near the time of Abraham, c. 2000 BC, based on:

- anthropology: a society that determines wealth by the number of animals & servants is dated c. 2000 BC
- no mention of Moses' laws, the priests from the tribe of Levi, or Israel as a nation
- Job acted as priest for the family clan as they did in the days of Abraham

**Theme:** suffering

**Purpose:** to teach us about suffering

**Main Personages:** God, Satan, Job, the 4 "friends"

## DEFINITIONS

**East:** Scripture uses Israel as the starting point in geography, so land on the other side of the Jordan is "the East".

**Blameless / perfect:** right with God because of God's forgiveness

**Upright:** right with others

**Fear of God:** awe & worship of God plus a literal fear of God's consequences if there is disobedience

**Sons of God:** in the Old Testament it means good angels; in the New Testament it means those who put their faith in Jesus

**Satan:** the Accuser; he can appear before God to accuse God or God's people

**Repent:** a change of mind that produces a change of direction; to turn around one's actions or thinking

**Abhor / despise myself:** to retract & reject what I just said or did

## OUTLINE

- I. Introduction 1:1-5
- II. Drama 1:6 - 42:6
  - God & Satan 1:6 - 2:10
  - Job & his friends 2:11 - 37:24
  - Job & God 38:1 - 42:6
- III. Conclusion 42:7-17

## EXPLANATIONS

### Chapters 1-2

- **Job's Location:** land of Uz

- **Job's Life**

blameless: right with God

upright: right with others

fears God: worships God Himself; fears His consequences if he disobeys

avoids evil: makes the choice to do what is right; to obey God

- **Job's Reaction**

his human reaction is profound grief

his spiritual reaction is worship; he turns to God & hangs on; he does not sin by what he says

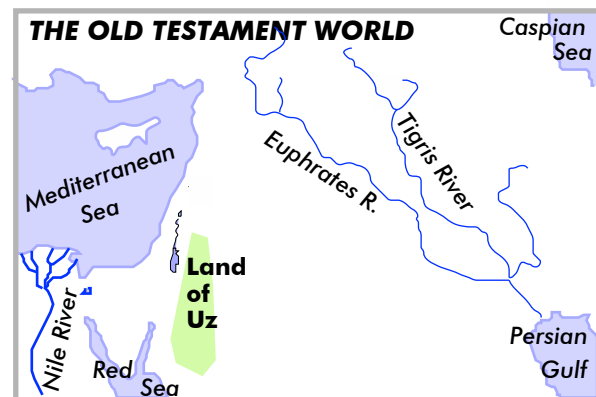
- **Satan accuses God of bribery & what God permits because Job had never been tested** 1:9

*Of course Job follows You. He never had to suffer a day in life because You protected him. Job does not follow or love You for who You are; he follows You for the things You give him. Let him experience suffering & he will reject You.*

The disasters that happen to Job are common in the Middle East. Everyone in the area also suffers these losses. This book tells only about Job because this is the first time **he** has suffered loss. The question is, how will Job react after leading such a sheltered life?

*People can rise to the occasion when they lose their possessions; but take their health & they will turn on You. Job has never been sick. If he has to physically suffer, he will resent & reject You. 2:4-5*

Job is then covered with infected running ulcers.



## EXPLANATIONS

**Chapter 1** Discussions between Job & his friends. These chapters are difficult for 2 reasons:  
the repetition; plus Job & his 3 friends say things about God, some of which are true & some not true

- **Eliphaz, Bildad & Zophar say Job is suffering because of personal sin** 8:4; 11:14; 22:5  
Job knows they are wrong; the more they attack him, the more he focuses on his circumstances

- **Job develops a distorted view of God**

*God does not answer me; He never responds to me.* 30:20

*I feel like God is looking for mistakes just so He can punish me.* 10:6-7

*It seems like God makes life difficult whether I obey or disobey.* 10:15-17, 9:22-24

*God is always going to see me as guilty, so I never have a chance.* 9:28-35

*I feel like God attacks me for no reason.* 16:9-14

**Chapters 29-31** Job develops a **distorted view of himself**; he uses the words *I, me, my* 190 times.

He now sees himself as a victim, caught in the unfairness of life.

In defending himself, he has become self-righteous. He forgets his goodness is **BECAUSE** of God.

At this point Job does sin by what he says.

**Chapters 32-36** **Elihu** says suffering is punishment for the past - not true  
suffering can correct his arrogance; God will respond if Job repents - this is true

### Chapters 38-42

God's challenge: *Are you going to discredit Me & distort My character just so you can say you're right?* 40:8

Job's response to God's challenge: *I despise myself & repent in dust & ashes.*

*I could kick myself for the things I said. I change my mind about my goodness. I am good & do good things because **God** gives me the desire & ability to be good. My goodness is **because** of God.*

Job's action as priest: he prays for his 3 friends. God is showing they are wrong & need forgiveness 42:8

As Job prays for them, the resentment about what they said will fade

Job's restoration: he is probably in his 40's see Job 15:9-10

His possessions are doubled; he has 10 more children; he lives 140 more years

## APPLICATION: What Job teaches us about suffering

**Lesson 1** Suffering is not always because of something we did. We do not always know the exact reason for our suffering. God does not always give us the answers in this life.

**Lesson 2** If we *only* focus on the unfairness of our circumstances, we will get a distorted view of God & of ourselves.  
We will blame God, blame others & only see ourselves as victims.

**Lesson 3** As a friend, there are times to explain that a person's obvious actions have produced obvious consequences. But when there are no reasons or answers, we need to speak less & just be available to give support & comfort.

**Lesson 4** God does not create suffering; He is not the source. Suffering has its origin with Satan. God allows it because we live in Satan's world. Scripture says God created a perfect world & perfect people. But when Adam & Eve rebelled, the perfection was lost. Satan is now temporary prince of this world. This means...

we have an imperfect world that brings disasters in nature such as earthquakes, floods, wind & drought

we have imperfect bodies & genes that are susceptible to sickness & disease

we have imperfect minds & emotions that want our own way

In this life, even innocent children suffer because they live...

...in an imperfect world, with imperfect bodies & around imperfect people who make bad choices.

In this world there will always be suffering. Jesus offers us eternal life in a world free from suffering.

**Lesson 5** Satan wants suffering to destroy our relationship with God. Because God is greater than Satan, He can use the suffering for good. If we turn against God, suffering will destroy us. If we hang on to God, suffering will strengthen us even in the midst of our grief, fear, doubts & questions. His grace will give us what we need to go thru it.

In time of suffering, we need to pray for ourselves & others what Jesus prayed for Peter,

*I have prayed for you that your faith remain strong.* Luke 22:32

