
Job

Place

Job's homeland, the land of Uz, was likely Idumea, the site of Petra, along the southern edge of the Dead Sea. Today, this area is on the border between the countries of Israel and Jordan.

Theme

The theme is tribulation. Job sits in misery for 7 days while his friends sit speechless. In the coming Tribulation, the Jews will suffer at the hands of the Antichrist during a 7-year period (last half). Revelation counts the last 3.5 years as 42 months ([Rev 11:2](#)). Note that Job has 42 chapters.

The Church will not go through Tribulation; however, believers do suffer tribulation now. Job is a picture of this. It doesn't explain why we suffer.

Central Message

When good people suffer bad things, they sometimes never learn the real reason. God did not tell Job why the bad things happened. Job shows good people **how** to biblically deal with bad things. Job also shows that there is spiritual warfare of which we may not be aware. Some things are beyond our current understanding.

Job is a picture of:

- the Jew in Tribulation
- the lost man in Hell
- Christ on the Cross

Application

Often the best approach in comforting grief-stricken persons is to simply be there. Say nothing unless obviously prompted by the Holy Spirit.

High-Level Outline

Job 1-2	Crisis: the Enemy Attacks
Job 3-37	Conversations: the Friends Accuse
Job 38-42	Conclusion: God Answers

Characters

There are no Jewish characters.

- **Job:** means "cry of woe," most likely Jobab, king of Edom
- **Eliphaz:** a Temanite, descendant of Ishmael and Edom; relies on personal observation and tradition
- **Bildad:** a Shuhite, descendant of Abraham and his second wife; legalistic
- **Zophar:** a Naamathite, possibly Arabian, dogmatic and merciless
- **Elihu:** a Buzite, descendant of Abraham's brother Nahor

Job's Struggle and Ours

Job struggled with the unimaginable loss of everything dear to him; his 10 children, his health, his career, savings, employees, and the support of his wife. Amazingly, he did not curse God, but Job did waver between clinging to God in faith and maintaining his own righteousness. See [Job 13:15](#) which illustrates this struggle.

Throughout the story, Job had no idea why he was suffering. He was not aware of the conversations in heaven and the source of his great trials. Even when God spoke and restored much of what Job lost, He gave no explanation. The story ends with Job still completely unaware of why he suffered.

Job's story reminds us that sometimes we have no idea about the real cause of our suffering. We may be caught up in a much larger story unfolding around us.

Nevertheless, we can be sure of God's love, compassion, and support for us in our suffering.

The Friends

Three of Job's friends arrived to comfort him in his affliction. For seven days, they did a wonderful job of sitting quietly and supporting him. After that, they took turns responding to Job through angry diatribes filled with a mixture of Biblical truths and false accusations ([Job 3-31](#)). Notice that Job's three friends took turns responding three times to him.

Job, then Eliphaz part 1 Job, then Bildad part 1 Job, then Zophar part 1	Job 3-5 Job 6-8 Job 9-11
Job, then Eliphaz part 2 Job, then Bildad part 2 Job, then Zophar part 2	Job 12-15 Job 16-18 Job 19-20
Job, then Eliphaz part 3 Job, then Bildad part 3 Job (Zophar is silent)	Job 21-22 Job 23-25 Job 26-31

Job responded to them with a mixture of the sadness, confusion, and anger of a person brought very low. A fourth friend, Elihu, waited for his elders to speak. Notice when Elihu finally spoke, he criticized the friends for their presumption ([Job 32](#)), then made the same mistakes himself ([Job 33](#)).

Prophetic Pictures

Job is filled with rich prophetic pictures which foreshadow the coming Messiah and His suffering. Notice some of the prophetic details in [Job 30](#):

- Being mocked and spat upon by an angry mob
- Praying to God but hearing no answer
- Weeping for those in trouble
- Suffering with burning pain

Personal Reflection and Application

Eliphaz accused Job of not living what he preached. His premise was that if you do the right things, everything will go well with you ([Job 4:5-11](#)).

At first glance, that may sound reasonable, but Eliphaz's understanding was incomplete. Yes, God will ultimately bless the righteous; however, while on earth there will be trials even for the righteous ([Psa 73](#)).

Understanding this won't make the suffering feel good, though it can help you put things in perspective.

Small Group Conversation Guide

When a friend of yours is suffering, in what ways do you try to comfort your friend? Read [Job 2:11-13](#). Discuss the behaviors of Job's three friends and how they demonstrated concern for Job.

How difficult is it for you to simply sit quietly and listen to a friend describe troubles? For many of us, our impulse is to offer a solution to the problems. What could help you know when to listen and when to offer help?

Leadership Principles from Job

Seek to Understand Them

What is it about the way Job's friends talked to him that kept them from actually communicating with him ([Job 16:1-5](#))?

- They focused on making their point rather than trying to understand what was going on with Job. Do you seek to understand others before trying to get them to understand you?
- They focused on what they thought they knew rather than trying to find out what Job needed. Do you watch and look for other's needs before offering what you think might be a solution?

Something to Find in Each Chapter

As you read through the book, it may help to have something to find in each chapter. Try these:

01. Job's character before the attack, the conversation in heaven	02. how Job's friends initially react to his suffering
03. what Job decided to curse instead of God	04-05. how Eliphaz claimed God spoke to him
06-07. what Job asked God to do for him	08. who Bildad blamed for the death of Job's children
09-10. the difficulty Job felt in approaching God	11. the lack of compassion of Zophar
12. the lack of support Job sensed from his friends	13-14. how Job viewed humanity
15. what Eliphaz criticized about Job	16-17. what Job thinks of his friends' support
18. what Bildad expected to happen to Job	19. what Job wished would happen
20. what Zophar expected for the wicked	21. what Job saw as the flaw in his friends' argument
22. how Eliphaz proposed Job solve his problems	23-24. how Job handled God's silence
25. what four things Bildad compared to man	26-27. what six questions Job asked his friends
28. where Job said you can and cannot find wisdom	29. how Job described his life before his trials
30-31. Job's description of his current condition	32. the reason for Elihu's anger with Job
33. Elihu's claim and presumption about Job	34. what Elihu knew about the nature of God
35. what Elihu accused Job of	36-37. how Elihu viewed himself and his counsel
38. what God asked about Creation	39. what God asked Job about the animal kingdom
40-41. how Job initially responded to God	42. how Job ultimately responded to God, how Job's friends responded to God, what God restored to Job