



Job

Session 19

The “Why?” Question

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe the purpose and value of the book of Job.
- Apply effective principles of people-helping in your own life.

INTRODUCTION

We all have traversed through seasons of suffering and asked the *why* question: *Why? Why me? Why now? Why this?* The “Why?” question is one that Job asked too, and in this saga we get to see how Job, his friends, and God addressed it. Outline:

- Prologue (1-2)
- Debate between Job and his friends (3-37)
- God’s speeches (38-41)
- Epilogue (41)

BAD THINGS FOR GOOD PEOPLE

The setting of this story is peculiar because of its lack of detail. It has no clear historical setting. It takes place in the mysterious land of Uz, has no identifiable elements of Levitical worship, and none of the names except for Elihu are Hebrew names. The author’s emphasis seems to be not on historicity but on Job’s experience and the question of suffering. We’re transported into heaven’s courtroom and are introduced to the *satan*, which means accuser/opponent/prosecutor/wandering skeptic of Job’s faithfulness who brings great suffering into Job’s life.

JOB’S LAMENT

We’re told what Job does: He curses the day of his birth. The initial afternoon of sudden suffering launches him into a prolonged period of darkness where he feels abandoned by God. Out of his deep anguish he raises his why question, demanding that God answer (10:1-2). Job wants to plead his case before God so that God has to answer for the seeming injustice dealt to him (23:3-5). Job wants an answer to his why question.

THE NOT-SO-GREAT DEBATERS

Intermixed with Job’s speeches are the speeches of his friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, and a fourth, Elihu, joining at the end. Their interactions with Job make up the majority of the book (chs. 3-37) and are a series of divinely inspired poetic speeches. The speeches bounce back and forth between Job and these friends and focus on three big questions:

(1)

(2)

(3)

		Argument	Implication	Conclusion
Job	Friends			

What lessons about people-helping can we learn from the negative example of Job's friends?

(1)

(2)

(3)

WHERE WERE YOU?

As we get toward the end of the book, we see Job bringing his case before God directly, questioning God's reputation, and finding fault with God. Sin did not cause Job's suffering, but in his suffering he did sin. In ch. 38 God shows up in a great storm cloud and addresses Job. Chapters 38-41 are the longest biblical discourse from God. **Why does God give such a long speech to Job? What's His purpose?**

JOB'S RESPONSE

What do we learn from Job's response to God?

CONCLUSION

Consider these thoughts this week:

- What does it look like to apply wise principles of people-helping?
- Is God enough for you?

HOMEWORK

- Read pp.424-438 in *Old Testament Theology* by Paul House
- Watch The Bible Project's videos on [Overview of Job](#) and [Job Wisdom Collection](#)
- Engage with Job

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