

# Note

## Job – Part 1 of 1

Era	Characters	Chapters
In the beginning	God created the world.	Genesis 1
Before 4000 BC	Adam & Eve	Gen 1~5
Before 3000 BC	Cain Abel Seth	Gen 4~5
Before 2500 BC	Noah	Gen 5~10
Before 2100 BC	<b>Job Elihu</b>	<b>Job?</b>
About 2000 BC <b>Era of Patriarchs</b>	Abraham Isaac & Ishmael Jacob & Esau Joseph	Gen 11~50
About 1500 BC~ 1000 BC <b>Era of prophets</b>	Moses Aaron Joshua	Exo Lev Num Deu
	Joshua	Joshua
	Judges(Othniel Ehud Shamgar Deborah Gideon Tola Jair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson) Abimelech	Judges
	Ruth Boaz Naomi	Ruth
	Eli Samuel Saul David	1 Samuel
About 1000 BC ~ 500 BC <b>Era of princes</b>	Saul Jonathan David Absalom Solomon	1 Samuel 2 Samuel
	Solomon Jeroboam Rehoboam Ahab Elijah Elisha Jehu	1 kings
	Ahab Hezekiah Manasseh Josiah Elisha Jehu Elijah	2 kings
	Saul David Solomon	1 Chronicles
	Solomon Rehoboam Asa Jehoshaphat Jehoram Joash Hezekiah Josiah	2 Chronicles
About 500 BC ~Christ <b>Era of priests</b>	Zerubbabel Ezra Nehemiah Haggai Zechariah	Ezra Nehemiah
	Esther Mordecai Haman Ahasuerus	Esther

# Summary

## **Job - Part 1 of 1 .....3**

The 1<sup>st</sup> of the 5 poetical books in the bible, Job explores answer to a central theme that is pursued to this day; why does an Almighty, good and powerful God, allow innocent people suffer? God's response reveals His Supremacy over all creation. His Justice is as complex as His vast creation – beyond human understanding.

### Key points

- Job, a blameless, upright and blessed man, is offered by God to Satan to test
- Though Satan removes Job's material blessings and torments him with pain in the flesh, Job submits to the will of God
- But when his three friends confront and accuse him of grave sins against God, and of which his suffering was a punishment – Job laments his innocence and demands an answer from God
- Man's idea of moral justice: Good men are blessed, evil men are punished. This justice is meted out in one's lifetime on earth.
- God's plan, justice and righteousness is much deeper and more complex, like His Creation.
- Christian's response to suffering should reflect the following understanding:

i) Man sins (Adam), there will be suffering on earth

ii) even suffering can yield good in a believer's life and conform one to be more like Jesus

iii) temporal suffering cannot compare to the eternal glory of Heaven

# Transcript

## Job – Part 1 of 1

Today let's look at the beautiful book of Job.

We've ended the series on the historical books. Esther was the last of the historical books, so today we begin, what in the English Bible are called the poetical books, poems. The next one is Psalms, then Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and then the Song of Solomon. So we have five poetical books.

Job is considered by great literature people to be one of the greatest piece of literature ever written. Most of it is poetry. Therefore, I would recommend you listen to this. Some of you are still very resistant to listening to the beauty of the Bible, you just have to read it. But for poetry, you want to listen rather than analyse sentence by sentence or line by line or word by word. Now, it's not only the first of the poetical books, but it's also possibly one of the first books written in the Bible. It's very hard to date it, but people guess it's written about the time of Abraham. And so it's very, very early. Now, the theme of this book is 'Why do good people suffer'. Now, this has troubled men from the beginning of time. And it troubles a lot of people about God.

And you have been asked as a Christian many times, "If there's really a god, why do good people suffer? Why do innocent people suffer?" And so many Christians have no answer, and they'll just come up with something that doesn't satisfy the listener. And then, that's the end of your attempt to talk about God. Now, this is a rather large book, and it's put right in the center of the Bible because it's a central thought in many people's mind. Everyday there's suffering in the world. And you ask yourself "Why so many hungry, so many suffering? So many innocent people are suffering. It's a central thought in many, many minds. It's a large book, 42 chapters. Because it's a big problem, it's right in the center. And when you read it, you actually get quite baffled. It's going round and round and round, because later you will realise the answer to this question, 'why do good people suffer?' is not a black and white answer. It is much more

complicated than that because suffering is a complicated issue. And this book appears very complicated to most people.

So, who is Job? He's not an Israelite, as far as we can see. He lived in a land called Uz. We're not sure where, somewhere in the Middle East probably. He's not an Israelite, but this man believed in one God. That's pretty unusual at that time. He probably was influenced by people who believed in one God, that means the Israelites. He believed that God is good. See, a lot of false religions have good gods and bad gods and all the gods can actually behave like human beings. He believed in one God, a good God, and he believed in an all powerful God; not one god of this area, one god of the hills and one god of the valleys. No, he believed in God, a good and powerful God. That's why the problem is, 'if God is good, and God is powerful, why does He allow suffering?' If your theology is, god is bad and then there's suffering-no issue. I mean, a bad god makes you suffer right? Or if your theology is 'god is good, but he's weak, he's not all powerful, then he can't help you, "Sorry, you're suffering, what can I do?" The issue is when we go and proclaim, "God is good and God is all powerful", then this question comes out, "then why do people suffer?" You see, if you don't bring up 'God is powerful or God is good', people won't ask you that question and just say, "Well, you know, there are a lot of evil spirits and that's why there is suffering in this world." So for us who proclaim the good God and the only God, the all-powerful Creator God, Almighty God, you have to be able to answer this question.

Now, Job was a man who was very good. The Bible says he was blameless and upright. And he was so blessed by God. He had everything. And yet in this story, he suffers more than anyone else. He is the supreme example of this issue we are talking about 'Why do good people suffer?' Now I want you to first understand a little background. You must understand this was written before the New Testament, before the Good News. And the Good News tell us there is a place called heaven for those who trust Christ so we can understand this issue of suffering on this earth compared to the glories of heaven. The sufferings of this world are so tiny compared to the blessing. So for us as believers, it's not a big issue. But for someone like Job, someone who lived before the clarity of the Good News, he had no clear idea there was this place called Heaven and they would ever get in there. So for people who don't have God and don't have this hope of Heaven, this is a very troubling issue. Why do good people suffer here? And bad people get away. But we know that there's life after this, where accounts will be

settled. They don't! Job didn't know and your friends you're trying to witness to don't yet know there is eternal life, some future life. Understand that for the Jews or Israelites in the Old Testament, they believe in a place called Sheol. The dead just goes there, they hang in there, good and bad people hang in there. It's like a waiting room or a train station and you don't know where you're going to go after that. They're just in this waiting room called Sheol.

This book has a short prologue, that means a little introduction, then a chunk of it is the dialogue between Job and his friends. And then there's another section called the monologue, where there is no dialogue going back and forth. And finally, there is what you and I will call the epilogue or the conclusion. Let's look at the structure. Prologue is chapter one and two, not in poetry. The rest of it is largely poetry, right until the last chapter which is not poetry. So basically, poetry - the whole chunk, (except) the beginning and the end is not poetry. So basically, a poetical book.

Chapter one and two shows an interesting first scene on earth-Job, a good man blessed by God. Then it flips and shows a scene in heaven where the angels go and report to God what's happening on the earth, and one of the angels, a fallen angel called Satan, goes up to report the bad things about people. The name Satan means accuser. He's an accuser. So he went up, and then God said to him, "Hey, Satan, have you considered Job?" Because Satan is always accusing everybody of being bad, God says, "Have you considered Job?" And Satan said, "Yea, I considered him. He's a good man because you bless him." So he's a cynical guy, doesn't believe anybody can be good. So God said, "Really? Then I allow you to take away his blessings."

So, Satan goes, takes away all his possessions, his kids and everything he owns, all gone except his wife. Then what did Job say? Job, when he lost everything said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return: The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord." He didn't sin, he blessed God. It's true. You came naked into this world. You got nothing. God blesses you. When you die, you leave everything behind. So what's the deal? There's so much theology in that.

Then it shows another scene in heaven when God asked Satan, "Have you considered how righteous Job is? You said because I bless him that's why he is a good man." Then Satan said, "Yeah, you allowed me to take away his possessions but if I touch his body, his flesh, he will curse you." God

said, "Okay, you can do that, but not his life." So Satan gives him boils from head to toe. You know boils are like blisters on your body.

The skin got a little bleb of water inside and it bursts and then all the puss and water comes out, it smells and the whole face looks terrible. And so Job suffers amazing physical pain. Socially, his wife says, "Curse God and die, what's the point of living like that, you're so miserable." He scolds his wife, he said, Shall I not receive good out of the hand of God and not receive evil? Whatever God gives, I have to take. So he's socially rejected, even by his wife, his friends. He's mentally troubled. "Why God, what is all this?" And so we see how horrible his sufferings are. So that's the prologue.

In chapter three Job laments the day he was born: "Why was I born? If I was never born, I wouldn't go through all this!" That's natural, perfectly natural to question what's the purpose of a life like this? Then the dialogue begins when his three friends come. And Job complains about his 'Why am I born' and his three friends now begin to try to comfort him. I don't think they were 'comforters' in any sense of the word, poor comforters. But the three of them now try to explain to him. Three friends, three cycles. It goes like this - the eldest, probably, Eliphaz, explains to him, "Job, you know why you are suffering? Because you're a sinner. If you're a sinner, you have to pay for your sins. Please repent. I beg you, repent!" And Job's response, "I'm innocent. I have nothing to repent of. What do I repent of? I have not done anything wrong. There's no logic for this". So that's cycle number one.

Then the second guy comes in, and he explains it in a different way. Basically the same understanding of suffering that all of us have. Almost all people in the world have this same understanding - you're bad, you suffer, you're good, you get rewarded. Very simplistic. It makes a lot of sense. Not all wrong. It's true but not always true. It's generally true, good people tend to be more at peace and have calmness in their life. They don't have so many marital problems, don't get drunk, the kids are good. It generally is true, but not always. The second friend, probably the next in age, you know ancient people respect age, starts to say this in a different way, but roughly the same thing. There's slight differences. And again, Job responds, "What are you talking about? I'm not that bad. Look at my sufferings. You say I'm such a horrible sinner. That's why I have such horrible sufferings". And then the second friend thinks 'what to do, I already try my best.' So he keeps quiet. The third fellow, the youngest probably, also debate with Him. They get more angry with Job because he's not listening. He's not responding. And Job gets more angry with them because

they're not listening to him. He's innocent, and he knows he's innocent. But they start to accuse him. The third guy starts to accuse him and says, "You are wicked, you take from the widows". He invented this sin. Actually, it was not even there. You know, in a typical argument, people have to prove their point so they exaggerate and that's why all debates and arguments get nowhere. Two people get more polarized in their positions, more separated, more hardened in their positions, and Job protests even more. And in the process, as Job is protesting, he not only protests against his friends' nonsensical accusations, he begins to complain against God: "Why are you like that, God, you're so cruel. You're so unfair, you're so wicked, he vents out his anger and that is also quite typical. When we get angry, we say things we don't really mean sometimes. This is a danger of two people trying to convince each other just by words. So we see here where Job actually flips from despair in his talking, to hope. And that's very normal in this kind of situation, you know, when we believe in God and yet we see our situation, and then we flip up and down. It's like, "God, why? Cannot be! Where are you", and then they say "oh God, thank you". So, this is the dialogue session, this takes place from chapter 4 to 27. There are different ways to divide this book, but basically the chunk of it is in poetry. As they debate, it seems like poetry.

Then comes the monologue part. There are basically four monologues. Mono means there's no back and forth. The first three cycles are back and forth- oldest guy accuses Job, Job replies, the oldest guy keeps quiet. Second guy accuses Job, Job replies, second guy keeps quiet. Third guy accuses Job, Job replies again, you see it was like a debate. Now it's not. Chapter 28 has a poem on wisdom, like how to find wisdom for situation like this. Wisdom is not easy to find. It's inaccessible. And you know, it's quite true. There are no answers. And then the next monologue is Job's declaration of innocence. In Chapter 29 to 31, Job insists on his innocence and he demands an answer from God. "God, I'm innocent, answer me." These friends of mine are accusing me but give me an answer. Answer me." So you see Job demands from God and God is still quiet.

Then the next monologue comes from an outsider called Elihu, who is probably a bystander watching this whole scene, and probably much younger. He kept quiet until everybody had nothing to say. Then he says, and basically his monologue is pretty much the same what all men say. 3 wise men, three friends, these are the wisdom of the ages, saying, 'good people don't suffer, bad people suffer.' That's how it always is. But now,

Elihu comes in, this young guy, and says basically the same thing, but he adds a little bit more and says, “maybe God is trying to mould your character. So maybe it's not just simple as good people don't suffer, bad people suffer, but maybe, maybe God is trying to mould your character.” See, he adds a possible new angle to it.

And then the last monologue is from God. This is so fascinating. Finally after this, in chapter 38 to 41, God answers. For 38 chapters God is just listening patiently. God is allowing men to just vent and talk and accuse him and literally talk nonsense, and Let the three wise men say “God is like that, God is like that,” as if they knew God. They said God would definitely punish the wicked. And definitely bless, definitely, there's no exception, you know, and God just keeps quiet on this beat, this so called wise men talk nonsense? People who don't know nothing about him are talking as if they know him. And then God's response is the most amazing part of this book. He never replies Job. Job said “Answer me God”. You know what God does?

In chapter 38-41, God does two things. Basically number one, he takes Job on a virtual tour of the world. He said, “You see this world, you see the stars, you know how they're made? You see the sea, you know how the sea doesn't cross its boundaries. You see the moisture from the air, the snow, how it forms up there? You see the animals, you see a horse? How come a horse with skinny legs is so strong? You see how animals feed? Who feeds them? How do the birds fly? Do you understand all that, Job?” Job's response -Stars...I don't know who made them. Oh, snow-how come it's up there? The horse, how come it's so strong. I don't know. How does a bird fly? I don't know. So God is basically saying, “You seem to know a lot about suffering, right? You seem to know that you can tell me what to do. But you don't even understand the things you see every day around you. And you want to understand things like how God rules in the area of morals. Even the things you touch and eat and see every day you don't understand. You want to understand this?” So Job's response was, “Okay, God, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked all these because I really don't understand a lot of things and why should I understand this thing called suffering? I mean, why am I demanding an answer when most of things in life, I don't know the answer, almost everything.” Now, if I am asked, if a person demands an answer, I will ask him, “Do you know how the atom works? Do you know what's in an atom? You know how complicated it is? How come the stars are up there? Who holds it up there?”

So the next part of God's answer is even funnier. He says, "Have you considered two of the beasts I made? One is called Behemoth and the other is called Leviathan." Nobody's quite sure what they are. And the commentators give some silly answers like it's a hippopotamus and a crocodile. To me it's nonsense. Are you mad? Can I read it to you today and see what Behemoth and Leviathan is? Chapter 40 verse 15 to 19 "Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar (his tail is like one of the biggest trees in the middle east): the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong as pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him."

They call this a hippopotamus? The hippopotamus has one of the tiniest tails you can see. This guy's tail is like a cedar, like a tree. When he sweeps his tail, it's like a tree sweeping the ground. To me this is a dinosaur! I mean, his strength is in his loins, his thighs. Have you seen the dinosaur's thigh, the dinosaur's drumstick. His bones are like bars of iron. You look at it like, whoa, what is this creature? His tail is like a tree. Now tell me which animal's tail is like a cedar tree? Hippopotamus..? Why? Because they don't want to believe there were dinosaurs. Evolution and all this kind of stuff. Verse 41, He describes Leviathan. Let's look at Leviathan. Chapter 41, verse 14 to 20: "Who can open the doors of his face? His teeth are terrible round about. His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them." So, it's a scaly creature.. crocodile, they say?! "They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered. By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out (of its mouth)." Do crocodiles have fire coming out of their mouth?! "Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth." What! crocodile blowing smoke out and fire out of its mouth? Wake up my friend, what kind of crocodile is that? A hippo with a cedar tail and a crocodile with fire. It described fire out of his mouth. And if you read Google and go to Google to check, those dinosaurs of the past actually blow smoke out of their mouths, that is why we get dragons with smoke coming out. Dragons are mythical creatures, but dinosaurs are not mythical creatures. And it does say in Google that it was found in these things that there are chambers in their mouth that keep

combustible gas. And when they blew it out, sometimes there was bio electricity, spark and fire came out of their mouths. Crocodiles... never seen that in a crocodile. This is a dinosaur alright! So basically, God brought them to see a dinosaur and said, "Look at this. Why did God make this?" Job said, "I know they caused us a lot of harm when they walk, and when they trample on us, we are dead ducks." They caused a lot of suffering, I can guarantee you. And there were dinosaurs in the land, in the days after the flood, there were still dinosaurs because Job is after the flood. Animals and men were no more best of friends already. Dinosaurs cause problems, and God said I made them. And Job had seen this. This is a time, where Job didn't say, "Excuse me, what is this animal? What are you talking about?" God said, "Behold, you know this, right?" And so what is God's answer to Job? You're so smart, right? You know everything, you want answers for everything. If I tell you how snow is made, how stars, atoms are made, your brain will blow out. And yet they're all around you. Why don't you demand an answer for that?

And number two, why is there suffering in the world? You see, when Adam sinned, God already said, men will suffer. That is the lot of men. And now you're asking me, why does man suffer? So you know what is Job's response? In chapter 42 verse two: "I know God, you can do everything and that no thought can be beholden from you. Who is he that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore, have I uttered that which I understood not, things too wonderful for me which I knew not." I talk too big, God, as if I should know everything. Verse 5: 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.' Now I realise how big, how glorious, how wise, how amazing your creation is. And if your creation is amazing, then you are amazing. Verse 6: 'Wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' I'm sorry, God, I talk so big.

What was God's answer to Job? A clear answer for this question of suffering?

What is your answer for suffering? You know, there is no clear answer because we don't fully understand the whole picture. We don't understand how complicated the world is, and why some things happen this way and why some happen that way. The world is more complex than our simple minds can figure out. The simple mind is 'good reward, bad....' yes, generally, often, but sometimes not always the case. And God has a reason. It's almost like a mosquito, if a mosquito could talk and come up to you and said, "You tell me why you put Baygon on us. Why? Why'd you swat me

when I fly by? Tell me, give me a reason.” You know what your answer would be to a mosquito if he talked arrogantly to you like that? You’d say, “You idiot, you don't understand medicine. You don't understand malaria. You don't understand dengue, you don't understand anything because your tiny brain can't understand it. And you want me to explain to you about malaria, dengue and all these things, about vector control and everything? Can you just shut up? The world is more complicated than your tiny mosquito brain can understand.”

You see, that is the answer of God to Job. Because the mosquito only sees things from one perspective, ‘you Baygon me and you smack me to death’. That's the only perspective. Medical? Don't talk to him about medical, don't talk to him about social problems and all these. He can't figure it out. You don't blame unbelievers for asking this question because it is a real issue. But the answer is, there is suffering in this world. We can't understand a lot of things and suffering is one of the things I can't fully understand.

But as Christians, what is your answer?

Number one, man sinned, there will be suffering.

Number two, we know suffering can hurt us, but not harm us. Because in Romans 8:28 says: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.....including the bad things, the painful things.

For what purpose? Romans 8:29 says: so that we may be conformed to the image of His Son. We will be more humble and more sympathetic to others who suffer, we'll be more prayerful. So, God allows a lot of sufferings so that we may be conformed to His Son. As Christians, we can see something that poor Job could not see and unbelievers cannot see. Furthermore, what is all these sufferings compared to the glory that we will have in Heaven? As Christians, we have the answer. As Christians, we can trust God. That God knows best, just as my father on earth knows best. Sometimes he canes me, sometimes he forces me to do things I don't like to do, sometimes he takes away my games, my computer, he takes away the ice cream I like to eat, sometimes he makes me do many horrible things, and as a child you say, “Why, dad?” Because dad says, “Trust me, son, it's good for you.” “Why do I have to take this? Why do I have to go to the dentist?” “Trust me, son, it's good for you.” As Christians, God says, “Trust me, son, I know best.” But to non-Christians, answer them that the world is much more complicated and you and I can't figure it out, and I don't have the answer for everyone's sufferings. But I have the answer for eternal sufferings. It's the Gospel. That's how I would answer.

There are other lessons you can learn like Satan's limit. Satan cannot hurt you without God's permission, etc. There are many lessons in this book about arguing and arrogance and all that, but the main theme is: suffering is a very real part of our life. And in each case, God has a different reason. And the world is much more complex than to give simplistic black and white answers for everything. Thank God, I can trust a wonderful God.

The end of the story-Job is blessed. Everything is restored to him, and he has great peace. God saw him through all that and doubled his blessings at the end of it all. Wonderful God.

Trust Him. God bless you.