

## Bible Study: The Book of Job

**Overview:** Job was a righteous man that feared God (**ch1:1**) and highly regarded by God as his servant (**ch1:8; ch2:3; ch42:7-8**). He was a wealthy farmer who lived in the land of Uz (**ch1:1** and see also **Jeremiah ch25:20; Lamentations ch4:21**) probably in the Mesopotamian basin around the region of the river Tigris and river Euphrates beyond Damascus. The book is believed to be one of the oldest dating back to Abraham's time of about 2000BC or before, but after the time when men were scattered by the Lord over all the earth (**Genesis ch11:1-9**). Much of the book is written as Hebrew poetry.

**Chapters 1 and 2** show a kind of prologue leading to Job's terrible suffering which is allowed by God. There was a divine plan where God had allowed Satan, the devil, to afflict Job to prove that he was a faithful servant of his. Job was not aware of this divine plan where God had spoken to Satan saying: "Have you considered my servant Job?" (**ch1:7; ch2:3**) and had allowed Job to suffer not because he had committed a particular sin against him. God gave Satan permission to take away all of Job's wealth and his ten children who died in a mighty storm (**ch1:13-19**) and secondly to smite him with sore boils (**ch2:7-8**). Despite all that Job suffered he did not turn away from God (**ch1:20-22; ch2:9-10**).

**Chapters 3 to 31** show a dialogue between Job and his three friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. Job was distressed particularly at the start of his speeches (**chapter 3**) and continued to show his feelings of being far away from God because his prayers appeared to be unanswered. He longed for God to speak to him. However even throughout Job's speeches where he felt his situation to be hopeless there were moments when he showed absolute assurance in having faith in God especially when he said: "*For I know (that) my redeemer lives, and (that) he shall stand at the latter (day) upon the earth: And (though) after my skin (worms) destroy this (body), yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another; (though) my reins be consumed within me.*" (**ch19:25-27**). Job's friends believed his suffering was because he must have sinned against God and needed to repent. Job protested his innocence in no uncertain terms but he did not say he was perfect especially in **chapter 31**. The interchanges between Job and these three men ended in deadlock.

**Chapters 32 to 37** show a monologue from Elihu. He seemed to show spiritual insight having revealed God as creator (**ch37:1-18**) and as the almighty (**ch37:23-24**). Being a younger man, he had waited until Job's friends had finished their dialogue with Job. Like Job's friends, Elihu believed Job had sinned. There is a difference of opinion amongst commentators regarding Elihu's speech. Some say there was considerable arrogance shown in Elihu in claiming he was a messenger sent from God (see **ch33:23-33**). Others believe he had a word from God to Job. What we do know is that Job did not respond to Elihu's speech and neither did God appear to do so unless **Job ch38:2** refers to Elihu.

**Chapters 38 to 42:6** show God had intervened to speak to Job. Now Job's prayers were answered but not in the way expected. God did not give Job an answer to why he had suffered but he did reveal to Job much more of who he is particularly as the creator. The greatness of God is shown in the creatures he had created with two examples given in detail namely behemoth (**ch40:15-24**) and leviathan (**ch41:1-34**). God gave this profound statement when he said to Job "*Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if you have understanding*" (**ch38:4**). Job's response at the end was to humble himself having now recognised a closer encounter with God. He was prepared to repent having said: "*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye sees thee. Wherefore I abhor (myself), and repent in dust and ashes*" (**ch42:5-6**).

The conclusion to this book seems to be an epilogue where God was angry with Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar because they had spoken what was wrong. God had regard for Job in having spoken what was right (**42:7-8**). He turned Job's captivity when he had prayed for his friends who had in obedience to God's command offered up for

themselves a burnt offering (**ch42:9-10**). Job was restored to receive twice as much as he had before (**42:10**). He had not received any answer to why he had suffered but he now knew God in a much more personal way.

Clearly God had his hand on Job. Job had to learn through suffering. Likewise, as believers we will have to learn obedience to God through suffering. When we suffer it is not because we have necessarily sinned. God uses suffering to bring us into a closer relationship with himself. Many believers including this writer have valued this book of Job in helping us to cope with suffering knowing God is faithful to all who love him and serve him.

## Questions

**Introduction:** The writer has only given a brief overview rather than show an in-depth exposition of this book. There is much more that God is able to reveal to those including the writer who are prepared to seek God for understanding of his word. Hence the questions are meant to make you think for yourself and hopefully provoke you to further study of this book. The questions are in two sections. The first section gives questions that may require short answers whilst the second section shows questions encouraging more in-depth study and discussion.

### Section One

**Q.1** What do we know about Job from the information in **chapters 1 and 2**?

See **ch1:1-5,8-10,20-22; ch2:3,9-10** and see also **James ch5:11**.

**Q.2** What does this book reveal about Satan, the devil, in **ch1:6-12 and ch2:1-8**?

**Q.3** How does Job's wife react to God when Job suffered? See **ch2:9-10; ch19:17**.

**Q.4** How does God regard Job? See **ch1:8; ch2:3; ch42:7-8**.

See also **Ezekiel ch14:14-20**.

**Q.5** Where is the land of Uz? See **ch1:1,3** and also **Lamentations ch4:21** and

**Jeremiah ch25:20**.

**Q.6** Discuss whether Job wrote this book or was it another writer? See **ch19:23-24**.

**Q.7** How did Job's three friends react when they saw him suffering? See **ch2:11-13**.

**Q.8** How does **chapter three** express Job's grief?

**Q.9** Is there evidence that Job's three friends had consulted together beforehand regarding Job's suffering? See **ch5:27**.

**Q.10** Do you think Eliphaz had received a revelation in the night? See **ch4:12-21**.

**Q.11** How did Job view his comforters? See **ch13:4-13; ch16:2-3; ch19:1-3; ch21:34**.

**Q.12** Is it true to say that Job maintained his faith and confidence in God throughout his sufferings? See **ch13:15,16; ch19:15-17; ch23:10-12**.

**Q.13** Does Job show willingness to know where he has sinned?

See **ch6:24; ch10: 2,14-15** (to God); **ch13:23** (to his friends).

**Q.14** Does Job feel that he cannot find God? See **ch23:3-5,8-9; ch31:35-37**.

**Q.15** Does Job believe God had been unjust? See **ch16:11-22; ch21:4**.

**Q.16** Did Job believe all men were sinners? See **ch1:5; ch7:17-21; ch9:2,20-21; ch14:4**.

**Q.17** What can we learn about the wicked?

Read carefully **chapter 21:7-33** and **chapter 27:7**.

**Q.18** What does the book of Job teach about wisdom?

See **ch12:12-16; ch28:20-28; ch36:5; ch38:36-37**.

**Q.19** Discuss whether Job had been self-righteous in view of what is written in **ch27:1-6; ch32:1-2; ch35:1-3**.

**Q.20** Does Elihu believe Job had sinned? See **ch33:8-12; ch34:7-9, 35-37; ch35:15-16; ch36:17**.

**Q.21** Is there evidence that Elihu speaks with some degree of arrogance? See **ch32:8-10, 18-20; ch33:2-3, 6, 31-33; ch34:2,10; ch36:2**.

**Q.22** In **Job ch38:1-3** is it true to say God rebuked Job for lack of knowledge of who he is?

**Q.23** What can we learn from the divine questions asked below?

(1) **ch38:4-7** regarding the earth's foundations. See also **Psalm 33:9** and **104:5**.

(2) **ch38:8-11** restriction of the sea. See also **Psalm 104:6-9**.

You may wish to study further questions in **chapters 38, 39, 40:1-14**.

**Q.24** Discuss what you think the creature behemoth could be? See **ch40:15-24**.

**Q.25** Discuss what you think the creature leviathan could be in **chapter 41**.

See also **Psalm 74:13-14** and **104:26** and **Isaiah ch27:1**.

**Q.26** Discuss the significance of Job's response to God speaking in **Chapter 40:3-5** and **chapter 42:1-6**.

**Q.27** Is it true to say the Lord had remembered Job? See **ch42:7** and James **ch5:10-11**.

**Q.28** How do we know that Job's three friends had spoken wrongly to Job? See **ch42:7-9**.

**Q.29** What was the result of Job's prayer for his friends? See **ch42:10-17**.

**Q.30** Does the book of Job teach that Christians are blessed when they are prosperous? See **ch42:10-17** and also **Hebrews ch11:37-39** and **1Timothy ch6:3-11**.

**Q.31** In view of God's rebuke of Job's three friends, does it mean their words recorded in scripture were not inspired? See also **2Timothy ch3:16-17**.

**Q.32** What can we learn about prayer in the book of Job? See **ch10:2-20; ch42:8-10**.

## Section 2

**Q.1** Study the speeches of Eliphaz (**chapters 4,5,15,22**), Bildad (**chapters 8,18,25**) and Zophar (**chapters 11,20**). (1) What do they believe Job had done? See **ch5:17-20; ch15:12-16, ch22:4-10**. (2) What answer do they give to Job? The following scriptures will help you. For Eliphaz see **ch5:8-9; ch22:21-30**, Bildad see **ch8:8-10**, and Zophar see **ch11:13-20**.

**Q.2** What does Elihu's speech teach us? See **chapters 32-37**.

**Q.3** What lessons can we learn from Job's sufferings?

**Q.4** Why do you think God never gave Job an answer to why he suffered?

**Q.5** What does the book of Job reveal to us of God as Creator in **chapters 38-41**? It may be helpful to read **ch5:9-10; ch9:4-10; ch10:9; ch11:7-9; ch12:7-10, 16-25; ch14:18-19; ch25:2-5; ch26:6-14; ch28:1-28; ch33:4-6; ch36:27-28; ch37:16**.

**Q.6** Study further attributes of God in the book of Job. See **ch9:10; ch19:25; ch22:3, 17, 23, 25-26; ch23:12, 16; ch24:1; ch36:5, 26**.

**Q.7** Can you see Jesus Christ in the book of Job? See **ch9:32-33; ch13:15-16; ch19:25-27**.

**Q.8** Is there prophecy in the book of Job? See **ch19:25-27; ch21:30; ch23:10-11; ch36:5-12; ch38:22-23**.

**Q.9** What is understood by Job regarding death? See **ch3:13; ch7:21; ch10:21-22; ch14:10-14**.

**Q.10** What can we learn from Job and can you say what you think the message is from this book?

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