

Job

Who, When, Where

Written by Moses. Moses was a Hebrew, born in Egypt towards the end of the 215 years that his people lived there. He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter as a baby and raised as part of the royal family. He left (ran away) from Egypt when he was 40 and lived in Midian to the east where he married and worked as a shepherd for his father in law. When he was about 80 Yahweh called him to return to Egypt and lead his people back to their promised land. He did, but it was a journey that took another 40 years. Moses himself never entered it, but he died at 120, just before they finally entered the land under the leadership of his disciple, Joshua.

We don't know for sure when Job lived. But none of his friends quoted anything from the Law, (to show that Job was wrong or sinful on some point), so we presume it was before the Exodus (1446BC).

We're also not sure who wrote this book. Jewish tradition ascribes it to Moshe. But we don't know for sure.

Job lived in the land of Uz, also called Edom, near the plain of the Jordan, southeast of the Dead Sea, toward the upper reaches of the Sinai Peninsula, east of Egypt and just north of the Red Sea. Now it's not so pleasant, but in Abraham's time it was "well watered", before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 13:10)

Summary

This is a story about how God allowed Satan to bring disaster on a godly man, in order to show how godly he really was, and that he wouldn't desert God for allowing it.

Along the way he has conversations with some of his "friends" which highlight how much more powerful, how much wiser, how much more righteous God is than any person. How we can't argue with him because we're wrong. How we can't stop him because we're powerless. And how even a godly man like Job still falls short of God's standard of righteousness.

And yet this very same God. Loves and cares about us!

Incredible.

Before You Read

If you have never read this book before, then as you do, try to picture how it was for Job. He didn't have the benefit of our hindsight. Imagine what it must have been like for him as he went through this.

And his "friends". What would you have said if you were his friend and were giving advice?

Key Verses

Job 1:1

Job was blameless and upright, and one who feared God, and turned away from evil.

Fortunately my sins are forgiven, but I often wish I was more like that. I'm sure he wasn't perfect, but what a great reputation to have.

Some of us do have that kind of reputation with outsiders. But what if they asked our families? What if they saw what God sees? Our private lives in every detail?

Job 1:2-3

There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. His possessions also were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the children of the east.

Blessed with family and wealth. The dream life.

It's easy to think that nothing could possibly go wrong for someone like that.

Job 1:5

It was so, when the days of their feasting had run their course, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and renounced God in their hearts." Job did so continually.

Isn't it true? When you have kids, especially teens, it's so easy to spend your time just worrying about their salvation.

There's no guarantee though. I've known some godly parents, some who even serve the church full time, who have had children who really went astray.

1 Timothy 3:4-5

... leading his own household well, having children in submission with all dignity. (For if anyone doesn't know how to lead their own household, how will they take care of an assembly of God?)

This is one of the qualifications to be a church leader. Perhaps we should focus more on our own family before raising our hand to lead the church? Maybe Job is right, this is the most important thing. And once our own kids are sorted, then we are qualified to help other people's kids?

Job 1:8

Yahweh said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant, Job? For there is no one like him in the earth, a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God, and turns away from evil."

Wow, Job's reputation isn't just among people. Even Yahweh thinks he's doing great. Even Yahweh says he's blameless and upright.

What would Yahweh say about you?

If you're a Christian, then when Yahweh looks down he sees Yeshua, not you. So for sure, he would say the same thing.

Job 1:11

But stretch out your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will renounce you to your face."

And you? How would you react if all the blessings Yahweh has given you, were taken away tomorrow? All of them. Your family all dead. Your possessions all gone?

What would that do to your faith?

What does your answer say about your faith? Do you only have faith because your life is blessed, and easy?

Are you ready to be the next Job?

Are you ready to join the multitude who have been tortured and killed for their faith in Yeshua?

Job 1:12

Yahweh said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power. Only on himself don't stretch out your hand."

Don't be confused here. Satan has power, but it is 100% within the absolute power of Yahweh. Without Yahweh's permission Satan would be unable to even look in your direction, let alone do anything to harm you.

Job 1:16, 17, 18

While he was still speaking... While he was still speaking... While he was still speaking...

Can you imagine that day!

Social media seems to be teaching us that we're having a bad day if we spill our coffee on our keyboard and stub our toe.

Our modern life is so easy compared with so much our ancestors went through. Even recently. Our parents and grandparents went through world wars. And we rant and rave because our chai latte was a little bit cold.

How was your day?

Job 1:20

Then Job arose, and tore his robe, and shaved his head, and fell down on the ground, and worshipped.

What would you have done? How would you have reacted?
Do you only worship God when he does nice things for you?

The Sabaeans attacked, the Chaldeans attacked, ... you might think that's the forces of evil working against you.

But fire fell from heaven. Wind destroyed the house with all your children in it Is that from God? Is God angry with me? With Yahweh's permission, Satan can even control the weather.

Not that we should all live in fear of Satan. I doubt he would waste his time on anyone like me, and pretty likely you either. He is not a god. He doesn't have infinite time.

Job 1:21

"Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. Yahweh gave, and Yahweh has taken away. Blessed be Yahweh's name."

What an incredible attitude.

Basically Yahweh owes me nothing. He never did. He never will. Anything he ever gave me is already more of a blessing than I deserved.

One day I'll go to meet him. And I won't take any of this with me. No money, no houses, no cars.

Not even any children. They have to work out their own way there. God doesn't have grandchildren.

Job 2:1

Again, on the day when the God's sons came to present themselves before Yahweh, Satan came also among them to present himself before Yahweh.

Who are these sons of God?

Whoever they are, they have access to heaven. Are they angels? Good ones, not bad ones like Satan?

I've read that they are the kings of the earth, or important people. But there is no temple mentioned in Job, so when they come before Yahweh they must be in his presence. Which really means before his throne in heaven.

Job 2:3

... He still maintains his integrity, although you incited me against him, to ruin him without cause.

What would Yahweh be saying about you if this had all happened to you?

What does it take to destroy your integrity?

Job 2:4

Satan answered Yahweh, and said, "Skin for skin. Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.

That's usually true isn't it. When it comes to our life on the line, we would usually give up anything we own to keep our lives.

So many of our brothers and sisters thought had to make the choice. Will you renounce Yeshua to keep your life. Would you?

For how long? You're still going to die. Why not do it now and get out of here with some integrity intact. What a glorious death - martyred, because you refuse to deny Yeshua.

The way the world is heading I think many more Christians will have this opportunity within the next decade, if not before.

Job 2:9

Then his wife said to him, "Do you still maintain your integrity? Renounce God, and die."

Ouch.

Even his wife couldn't see it.

Job 2:10

But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this, Job didn't sin with his lips.

Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?

And actually, are we smart enough to know the difference?

We seem to judge everything by the immediate outcome. But things Yahweh does are based on the long term outcome.

Is it a good or bad thing to break your arm?

What if that leads to you becoming a Christian and nothing else would have?

Job 3:1; Matthew 26:24

After this, Job opened his mouth, and cursed the day of his birth.

"woe to the person through whom the Son of Man is handed over. It'd be better for that person if they hadn't been born."

Ever wish you had never been born?

I'm sure Judas does.

And if we read on a little, we see that Job is wishing he had died in the womb, not that he had never existed.

Job's real issue was that he wasn't aware of the bigger picture. He wasn't aware of what was happening between Yahweh and Satan. How Yahweh was working out a bigger plan. A plan where even Job would end up saying, "wow, that worked out as a blessing for me".

But really, no matter how miserable your existence is here. Even if it's that way because of your own choices, and your own sin. After you die your life will be amazing. Forever.

Not that I'm suggesting you should kill yourself to speed that up. If you're still alive it's almost certain that it is because Yahweh has something he wants you to do for him. Do that.

Job 4:7-8

"Remember, now, whoever perished, being innocent? Or where were the upright cut off? According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity, and sow trouble, reap the same.

It was great that Job's friends came to be with him in his time of grief. But their advice really wasn't that helpful.

Basically his friend is saying here, "If bad things happen to you it's always because you did bad things yourself".

Which, knowing the bigger picture unfolding in the background, we know isn't true. Yahweh was very happy with Job and his behaviour. ... this was not as a result of Job's sin. In fact quite the opposite. This was happening because Job was so righteous that Satan couldn't stand it and had to try to discredit him.

Job 4:17

Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?

But his friend was right here.

Who are we to tell God what to do! To tell God what is right and wrong!

We can only see some of what is happening in the lives of maybe a handful of people on the planet. Yahweh sees 100% of what is happening in the life of every person on the planet.

You probably heard, "If God feels far away ... guess who moved." I would add this one, "If you think God is mistaken ... guess who's wrong"

Job 5:7

man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

It's true isn't it. Things very rarely seem to go smoothly.

We always face different issues, no matter how we try to live.

But it's our destiny. We're born into sin because of Adam, and we stay there because of ourselves.

Yahweh is so kind, and gracious, and forgiving. ... imagine if he hadn't sent Yeshua, of if Yeshua had refused to take our penalty on himself! We would be sitting here, talking about how right Job was. And knowing that we were totally without hope of any chance to do anything to change it. Or to owe our destiny when we die.

Do you ever think about how much we owe him!

Job 5:17-21

Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects. Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For he wounds, and binds up. He injures, and his hands make whole. He will deliver you in six troubles; yes, in seven no evil shall touch you. In famine he will redeem you from death; in war, from the power of the sword. You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, neither shall you be afraid of destruction when it comes.

It's incredible isn't it. God hates sin. Really, really hates it.

We sin all the time.

And yet he loves us. He's constantly looking out for us and helping and protecting us.

Totally amazing.

Job 7:4

When I lie down, I say, "When shall I arise, and the night be gone?" I toss and turn until the dawning of the day.

Life is hard when it drags on like that. No end of your suffering in sight. And all you can do is endure the night. With the expectation that you will wake in the morning only to have to endure tomorrow as well.

One of the great lessons from the story of Job, is that looking back now, we can see that his suffering did have a purpose. It was glorifying Yahweh. It was showing how faithful Job really was.

Like the blind man in John 9, ... born blind, blind for 30 years, despised and put down by all who passed by, "either him, or his parents ... somebody sinned if he's suffering that much"... But in the end, it was so Yeshua could walk past one day and heal him to prove that he really is the son of Yahweh.

How do you think that blind man feels about it all now?

Job 9:1-4

Then Job answered, "Truly I know that it is so, but how can man be just with God? If he is pleased to contend with him, he can't answer him one time in a thousand. God who is wise in heart, and mighty in strength, who has hardened himself against him, and prospered?"

Only one way to be just with God. Yeshua. We can't do it by ourselves. As Job said, who has gone up against God and won. It just doesn't happen.

But somehow he comes across like he thinks if he had his chance to go against God, he could maybe win, because he was actually righteous.

Nobody at the time we might have thought so too, but looking back now we know that nobody is righteous. And nobody will ever enter heaven on their own merit.

Job 10:1

My soul is weary of my life.

We all get down from time to time. And in Job's case, we can understand why. He lost so much so rapidly.

But his mistake was assuming that God was doing it to punish him somehow. That God didn't care for him. That God was against him.

And it's just not true.

We have to be very careful in our jump from the facts to our assumptions about what is behind them.

Job 11:4

For you say, 'My doctrine is pure, I am clean in your eyes.'

Don't we all! We all think our doctrine is exactly right. But almost certainly each of us is going to have an, "Ooooh, now I get it." moment when we meet with God. I'm only hoping there won't be too many.

Job 13:23

How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me know my disobedience and my sin

Imagine the look on Job's face when he finally died and saw God face to face. And suddenly realised how many his iniquities and sins really were. Thinking you are righteous is one of the biggest possible things you can get wrong. If you think you're righteous you will never realise that you DO need Yeshua. You do need him to die in your place. Because without him you will spend eternity paying the price for those sins you didn't even admit you had.

How dumb is that!

Job 19:25-26

But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives. In the end, he will stand upon the earth. After my skin is destroyed, then in my flesh shall I see God

Even in all this, Job knew that a redeemer was coming one day, and even if he didn't live to see it, he would still be redeemed and he would still be alive, (after death), and see God face to face.

How did he know that? How do we know that?

What a blessing it is to live after that redeemer has been here. Making our faith so much easier.

Job 21:7

Why do the wicked live, become old, yes, and grow mighty in power?

There's a question most of us have wondered... How come I make all these sacrifices, try to live a good life, and seem to get nowhere... and some total crooks seem to have a fantastic life.

Did I hear you say, "It's not fair" at the end there?

Ask your question again 1 second after you both die. I bet your answer is different then. I bet theirs is too!

And... who defines wicked anyway? Usually it's someone who does a sin I don't do, much. It's like ex-smokers give smokers such a hard time, but those of us who never smoked can hardly care. We see it's a bad choice, but we see their "right" to choose. The worst sinners in the Bible seem to be the proud and arrogant. Hmmm...

And... one more thing Who causes most of the suffering in the world? Isn't it orchestrated by Satan?

So we would hardly expect him to give his elite worshippers, his right hand men, a difficult time of suffering and hardship right? He would find ways to make them rich so others follow their way of life.

Job 21:15

What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? What profit should we have, if we pray to him?"

That's basically the opposite side of the coin right?

Why should I worship God... what do I get out of it?

You should worship him **because** he is God, even if you don't get **anything** out of it. In fact, even if it costs you.

Job 32:1

So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

Know anyone like that? It's literally a waste of time trying to argue with them. They can justify everything they do.

Wait for Yahweh to reach them. Then they will listen. Then you can help them.

Job 38:1

Then Yahweh answered Job out of the whirlwind...

Yikes. Where were you when Yahweh laid the foundations of the earth? Who laid its cornerstone?

Oh read this whole section (38..41), and then sit there stunned for 10 minutes.

Who would read this and dare to question God's judgement.

Job 42:5-6

I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

It's like that with God isn't it. You can read about him, and Yeshua, in the Bible. Even when you're not a Christian. So you can know stuff about them, what they did, even some of what they're like.

But then one day you suddenly just **know** them. And your life is never the same again.

Job 42:10

After Job prayed for his friends, Yahweh turned the captivity of Job. Yahwech gave Job twice as much as he had before.

In this case, I think some other translations express it better. But basically after he prayed for his friends, (who had really given him a difficult time in the midst of his suffering and loss), Yahweh restored his fortunes, and in fact gave him twice what he had before.

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

How do you think you would have handled it if you had been Job?

Has this given you any insight into your own life?

Has your view of suffering changed?

Can you see that it's not always bad luck or curses which cause your suffering?

What assumptions have you made about the causes of the things happening in your life? What assumptions, (like Job's friends), are you making about other people's lives? They assumed God did all the harm to punish Job for his sin. But they were wrong too.

What else could it be? Can you think of one possible alternative which is actually a positive?

Why not go with that one?