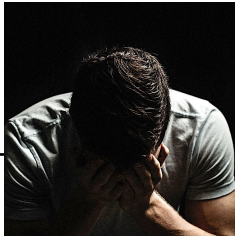


# Job: Why Does God Allow Good People to Suffer?



*"Then the Lord asked Satan, 'Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil. And he has maintained his integrity, even though you urged me to harm him without cause'"* Job 2:3 NLT

- Are you going through a difficult time?
- Do you ever ask why God is allowing you to struggle or suffer if he loves you?

The number one question that people ask about Christianity is why a loving God would allow good people to suffer. The book of Job tackles the issue head on. The main character of the book was a good man named Job. He was one of the most righteous and wealthiest men on earth.

The plot of the story is set up in the first two chapters of the book. Satan came before the presence of God and claimed that Job was righteous *only* because God has blessed him. (The Bible states that the devil accuses the believer before God day and night—Revelation 12:10). Satan argued that if God would remove His blessing, Job would curse Him. God agreed to a test to see what was in Job's heart. Satan was permitted to take away Job's wealth, possessions, health, and even his children through tragedy.

Job was unaware of the accusations being made against him by Satan. Job did not understand his sudden misfortune or why God allowed it. Job searched for answers just as we do today. Job's friends offered their explanations for his suffering, but they were wrong. Even Job's wife was not helpful. On the contrary, she added to his anguish. Instead of being his most affectionate source of comfort, she impatiently advised him to curse God and die! (Job 2:9).

Job found no help from any of the people closest to him. In the final analysis, it was just Job and God. At the end of the story, after every human explanation has been exhausted, God spoke to the issue. But His answer was not what most people would expect.

**Central Lesson: Trust God in adversity & suffering - especially when you don't know why.**

**Date: UNCERTAIN.** Job is believed to be the oldest book of the Bible. It recorded events during the time between Abraham and Moses, 2000-1800 B.C.

**Author: UNCERTAIN.** Bible scholars have suggested: Job, Elihu, Moses, Solomon, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Baruch and Ezra, but no one really knows who the author was.

**Title:** In Hebrew, Job means "persecuted one." The book is named after the main character of the book. Job was not fictional but a real person in history. He is mentioned as a real person in Ezekiel (14:14-20) and in James (5:11).

**Key Word: "WHY?"** (Job 3:11-12, 23; 7:20-21; 9:29; 15:12; 19:22, 28; 21:4; 24:1; 27:12; 31:1; 33:13.

**Key Chapters: Chapters 1-2.** Job is accused by Satan. **Chapter 42** is the climax of the book. The book began with Job being accused and ended with his vindication and reward (42:10-17).

## Outline:

- I. Job's Dilemma (Chapters 1-2)
- II. Job's Dialogues (Chapters 3-31)
  - A. With His Three Friends (3-31)
  - B. With Elihu (32-37)
  - C. With God (38-42)
- III. Job's Deliverance (Chapters 42)

**Purpose and Theme: TRUST God in adversity and suffering - especially when you don't know why.** The book of Job is the first of the poetical books of the Bible. Tennyson called it "*the greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature.*" Job addressed the perplexing question—*why do good people suffer?* It is fitting that the oldest book of the Bible deal with the oldest question of mankind, namely—why pain and suffering? The book contrasted the wrong explanations of mankind to the right answer of God.

Several wrong explanations from mankind were given in the book of Job:

1. **Job's wife**—(implied in her reaction to Job). Job was suffering because God was unfair, so just curse God and die! (Job 2:9).
2. **Job's three friends**—Job was suffering because of his sin and hypocrisy (cf. Eliphaz: 4:7; 5:15; Bildad: 8:20 and 8:6; Zophar: 20:5; 11:6).
3. **Elihu, a bystander and a young man (32:6-7)**—Job was suffering because God was using pain to correct, restore, and mold Job's character (Job 32-37).
4. **God's response**—God spoke to Job "*out of the storm*" (38:1). He displayed His awesome *power* and asked a series of questions that Job could not answer (40:4-5; 42:3). God did this to show Job His great *wisdom* (38:4-40:2; 40:6-41:24). God demonstrated that He is far above humans and deals with issues and circumstances that humanity can't understand. Job apologized to God. (42:1-6).

Bible Teacher, J. Sidlow Baxter, observed—Job was **not meant to know why** he was suffering, because **his knowledge of the reason would prevent what God was actually trying to accomplish.** The prologue of the book told us why—it was a test of Job's faithfulness. But Job did not know this. If he did—his commitment would be artificial.

The book of Job shows us that God uses hardship in 5 ways: (1) To **humble** (22:29). (2) To **test** (2:3). (3) To **rearrange** priorities in our life (42:5-6). (4) To **discipline** (5:17). (5) To **prepare** us for future blessings (42:10).

Warren Wiersbe writes: "The main lesson in Job is this: God is completely sovereign in His dealings with His people and will never permit anything to come to the life of an obedient Christian that is not for his good and God's glory. God does not have to explain His ways to us. It is enough for us to know that He cares and that He never makes a mistake. We do not live by explanation; we live by promises." *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*, p. 411.

**Central Lesson: Trust God in adversity & suffering - especially when you don't know why.**

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.