

# Journey Through the Bible: A Year of Our Lord

## Session 21: Introduction to Wisdom Literature

Remember Acts 17:11

### Outline of Old Testament Wisdom Literature:

#### **Job Wisdom for Those in Pain**

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Son of Solomon

### Introduction to Job:

Writing: Author is Unknown (Date Unknown)

Setting: The Land of Uz  
Uncertain Historical Era

Theme: Theodicy (The Mystery of Suffering)

Genre: Narrative (Epic) Poetry

### Outline of Job:

Prologue:

Ch. 1-2

- Satan's Challenge of God
- The Background of Job
- The Grief of Job

The Earthly Dialogue:

3-37

- Job's Declaration
- Eliphaz the Temanite
- Bildad the Shuhite
- Zophar the Naamathite
- Elihu the Buzite (The Lawyer)

The Divine Dialogue:

38-41

- God's Response to Job's Questions

Epilogue

42

- God Restores Job

### The Questions of Theodicy:

1. What is Justice?
2. Is God Just?
3. Does God Strictly Adhere to Justice?
4. Why to the Just (Human Perspective) Experience Pain?
  - Pain: Inevitable Condition of Mortality/Fallenness
  - Suffering: A Personal Surrender to Pain

Humanistic Philosophy of Universal Justice:

**A Virtuous Person Reaps the Benefit of a Good Life.  
An Evil or Unvirtuous Person Reaps a Troubled Life.**

- Karma (Unbiblical Ethical Understanding)  
(Cf. Mat. 5:45; Romans 1:7; 3:10-12; 8:28)
- Prophetic Resolve (19:23-27)

Prologue (Ch. 1-2):

- Satan’s Challenge of God
  - o Satan: Humanity is Flawed & Without Hope
  - o God: Consider Job (Righteous)
  - o Satan (the Accuser): Job’s Love for God is Conditional
  - o Satan is Permitted to Test Job Through Tragedy
- The Background of Job (“Hated”/ “Persecuted”)
  - o A Wealthy and Pious God Worshipper
  - o Large Family & Prosperous Estates
  - o Satan Attacks:
    - Removing Job’s Wealth
    - Killing Job’s Children
    - Attacking Job’s Health  
(Cf. 1:20-22)
- The Grief of Job
  - o Job Shaves His Head & Rests in Ashes
  - o Curses the Day of His Birth
  - o Wife: Curse God and Die (Ref. 2:9-10)

Insights into the Enemy:

- Satan is Under God’s Restraints
- Nothing is Kept Secret from God
- Is the Author of All Evils on the Earth
- Is NEITHER Omnipresent Nor Omniscient

The Earthly Dialogue (Ch. 3-37):

- Job’s Declaration
  - o Job Declares Himself Innocent of Sin
    - His Pain is Not a Divine Punishment
    - Unless God is Unjust
    - Or God Does Not Run the World by Justice
- Eliphaz the Temanite (“To Whom God is Strength”)
  - o Philosophy: Humanistic Piety/Observation
  - o Encounter with an “Angelic” Being (4:12-21)
  - o Assumption: Job’s Pain is Due to Sin

The Earthly Dialogue (Cont.):

- Recommendation: “Appeal to God’s Mercy”
- Response: “You Are Not Listening” (No Help)
- Prayer: “Who am I? Remember me.”
- Bildad the Shuhite (“Son of Contention”)
  - Philosophy: Justice is Absolute
  - Assumption: Job Has a Hidden Hypocrisy
  - Recommendation: “Confess Your Sin to God”
  - Response: “God’s Wisdom is Beyond  
Argument”
  - Prayer: “What Have I Done to Deserve This?”
- Zophar the Naamathite (“Impudent”)
  - Philosophy: God is Unknowable (Blind Faith)
  - Assumption: Job Misunderstands God
  - Recommendation: “Devotion is Rewarded”  
(Earthy Perspective)
  - Response: “While Blameless, I am a Laughing  
Stock”
  - Prayer: “Have Mercy and I Will Take My Case  
to You” (Cf. 13:15)
- Elihu the Buzite (“Whose God is He”)
  - Philosophy: Karmic Justice
  - Assumption: I’m Smarter Than All of You
  - Recommendation: Pain May Act As A Teacher  
Job is Wrong to Ask God  
“Why?”
  - Response: - NA -
  - Prayer: - NA -  
Definition of Names from *Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*.  
Public Domain.

Summation:

**Job: Declares His Innocence & Faithfulness**

- Pain is Not Just (Punishment)
- Either God Doesn’t Enforce Justice
- Or God is Not Just (Requests Trial Before God)

**“Friends”:** Accuses Job

- God IS Just
- God Enforces Justice in All Situations
- Job is Guilty of Something

**Reader’s Inference:** All Human Wisdom is Meaningless

The Divine Dialogue (38-41):

- Response to God’s Accusations
  - o Do You Have Divine Wisdom?
  - o Do You Have Divine Power?
  - o Do You Have Divine Experience?
  - o Do You Have Divine Sovereignty?
  - o Do You Truly Understand What Justice Is?
- The Truths of God’s Nature
  - o The World is Fallen (Sin)
  - o The Universe (Time & Space) is Complex
  - o Only God is Sovereign
- Humanity (Job’s Perspective of Reality)
  - o Limited by One’s Finite Lifetime
  - o Limited by One’s Limited Experience
  - o Limited by Incomplete Understanding
  - o Humanity Cannot Fully Understand Events/Nature Under Such Limitations
  - o Faith (Trust) is Required (Cf. Is. 55:8-9)

The Restoration of Job (Ch. 42):

- Job Repents of Accusing God
  - o Note (Disrespect/Not Seeking God’s Will)
  - o Accepts that Some Things are Outside Human Understanding & Control
  - o God Honors Job’s Repentance
  - o God Honors Job’s Struggle for Understanding
  - o God Honors Job’s Honesty in Prayer
- God Addresses the “Friends”
  - o Confronts their Arrogance
  - o Assuming Full Knowledge of the Divine Nature
  - o Understanding is too Narrow & Too Rigid
- Job is Financially & Politically Restored
  - o 14, 000 Sheep; 6,000 Camels; 1,000 Cattle, 1,000 Donkeys, etc...

New Testament Considerations (Ch. 14):

- V.4 “Who can bring what is pure from the impure?” (Heb. 10:14)
- V. 10 “When man dies, where is he?” (Mat. 25:30)
- V. 14 “If a man dies, will he live again?” (1 Cor. 15:54-55)

Understanding Hebrew Poetry:

- Rhyming Happens with Ideas, Not Sounds
- Used in Prophetic Sermons, Psalms, Proverbs, Lamentations, Metaphorical Expression
- Are Not Metered/Consonant Rhythm
- Usually Formed in Couplets
  - o Basic Statement -> Development
    - Completion (Finishes a Thought)
    - Deepening the Thought (Makes More Vivid)
    - Contrast (Opposing Ideas/Images)
  - o Sela: "Pause and Consider"
  - o Meditation: Exploration of Thoughts, Feelings, & Truths
- Components
  - o Refrain: Key Lines Repeated Multiple Times  
A-B-C-A-D-E-A-F-G-A
  - o Inclusio: Opening & Closing with the Same Line  
A-B-C-D-E-F-G-A
  - o Chiasm: Repetition of Lines in Reverse Order  
A-B-C-B-A
  - o Forward Symmetry: Repetition of Multiple Lines  
A-B-C-A-B-C-A-B-C

For Discussion:

- Share Reading and Journal Highlights.

Consider Along with the Bible:

- Do We Oversimplify God?
- Do We Question God for Knowledge or in Accusation?
- Are We Strong in Faith in Good Times & Bad?

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