

Lesson 18

JOB

GOD STATEMENT FOR JOB: THE GOD WHO IS WORTH _____ (a)

The book of Job is considered by many scholars to be the oldest book in the Bible. Job probably lived during Abraham's era, but even this is uncertain. Like Abraham, Job was very wealthy, very respected, and very righteous. By "_____(b)" it means that he was very sensitive to God's authority and _____(c) to living his life in accordance to the will of God.

The book of Job is a part of the "wisdom literature" in our English Bibles. It's classified as a _____(d) book because it deals with a profound issue: *why good people* _____(e). Wisdom is the ability to observe life from God's point of view and react and respond to life's situations as God intends.

Several outlines of Job could be proposed, but I like the following three-section outline: (1) the drama, (2) the debates, and (3) the deliverance.

THE DRAMA (Job 1-2)

From the beginning, the book of Job establishes the fact that none of Job's _____(f) occurs because of any specific _____(g) on his part. He has ten children, great wealth, and is a man of the highest character. Simply put, he fears God and he lives his life in a way that pleases God (Job 1:1).

Suddenly the scene shifts from earth to _____(h), and we see God ruling over the angels and Satan. The fact that _____(i) must report to Him shows that Satan is not God's _____(j). Like all angels, Satan is created and God is King over him. In this scene, Satan—whose name means "_____(k) or opponent"—acts as an accuser, and charges that Job righteousness doesn't come from pure motives. Satan claims that Job serves God out of _____(l), just like all people do. His theological question to God is, "Does Job serve God for nothing?" (Job 1:9).

To refute Satan's charge against Job, God allows Satan to _____(m) Job, but He sets _____(n) on what Satan can do. Satan then unleashed

disaster on Job. He first takes Job's wealth and all ten children, and then he takes Job's health. God's confidence in Job's commitment is justified as Job declares that he's willing to accept both _____(o) and _____(p) from God (Job 2:9-10).

Four friends hear of the devastation that Job has endured, and they come to grieve with him in his condition. For _____(q) days they sat with Job in silence and comforted him with their presence (Job 2:13). Then they opened their mouths and ruined everything.

THE DEBATES (Job 3-37)

Job broke the seven days of silence with a lingering lament (Job 3:1-26). He repeatedly laments the day of his _____(r). Then, after he curses the day he was born, _____(s) rounds of debates follow between Job and his friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar in Job 4-31, and with another friend, Elihu, in Job 32-37.

Eliphaz kicks things off and sets the tone for all the friends' comments. He summarizes his theology by declaring that _____(t) and upright people are never destroyed (Job 4:7). Only wicked people perish (Job 4:8-11). In other words, Eliphaz believes in a simple cause-and-effect explanation for suffering: _____(u) is caused by _____(v). There is no room in Eliphaz's worldview for an "innocent sufferer." The term "_____ (w) sufferer" would be an oxymoron to him. Certain parts of Eliphaz's doctrine about God are correct, like his claim that God is just, merciful, and forgiving. But his dead-wrong doctrine—that suffering is God's retribution for sin—hampers his ability to share true wisdom.

Job isn't convinced by Eliphaz's arguments. Instead, he maintains his desire to die, continues to question why he should suffer, and asks God why He made him a target. He questions the _____(x) of God's power, knowledge, and personal interest in people.

Bildad's initial speech continues to follow in Eliphaz's footsteps by claiming that every effect has a specific cause and that _____(y) always results from _____(z). But, he also says, God forgives, so Job should repent (Job 8:20-22). Well, Bildad is right about God forgiving sin, but he's terribly wrong in believing that people only suffer because of their own sin. He doesn't consider the fact that people often suffer for the sins of _____(aa). Bildad just doesn't see any reason for a righteous person to suffer.

In response to Bildad, Job begins toying with the idea of “filing a lawsuit” against God as a way to force God to _____ (bb) why He has afflicted him. In other words, he wants to formally probe God’s character and reputation. But Job doubts that God will respond to him at all because God’s _____ (cc) and _____ (dd) are an obstacle to such an endeavor.

Zophar concludes the friends’ first cycle of speeches in a similar manner. He wishes God would answer Job so that Job’s misguided self-righteousness would be exposed (Job 11:1-6). Zophar claims that God’s ways are beyond human _____ (ee) (Job 11:7-12)—a point Job already made (Job 9:1-20)—and then he tells Job to repent (Job 11:13-20). So, the course of action that Zophar is recommending is the same course of action that both Elphaz and Bildad already have urged.

Job knows that his friends have given him no helpful answers (Job 12:1-6). Job wants to pursue his _____ (ff) with God (Job 13:1-3). Job desperately wants relief, a response, and a renewed relationship with God (Job 13:20-27). He is determined to hope in God even if God kills him (Job 13:15). He begins to conclude that only _____ (gg) Himself can clear God’s own reputation.

When Job and his first three friends reach an impasse, with neither side able to change the other, Elihu, a fourth friend, seeks to break the deadlock by explaining God’s ways to the other four debaters. Though Elihu breaks some new ground by emphasizing that suffering can be instructive to a person, his ultimate perspective on Job’s suffering isn’t radically different from Job’s other three friends. Like the other three, Elihu just can’t imagine a God who would allow a righteous, _____ (hh) person to _____ (ii).

THE DELIVERANCE (Job 38-42)

Part of the friends’ anger with Job has stemmed from his insistence on bringing a lawsuit against God that would force God to justify what has happened. The four friends don’t believe Job is _____ (jj) to God, nor do they think God would _____ (kk) Job even if he were righteous. To them, the Lord is _____ (ll), content to speak to human beings only through cryptic visions, natural disasters, or affliction (Job 33:14-22). Even Job considers God’s wisdom to be beyond human reach (Job 28).

And then God does speak. He’s been listening to whole debate, and He finally ends the _____ (mm) by speaking to Job out of a whirlwind.

Interestingly enough, God never answers Job's questions about how He relates to the world. He never discourses on _____ (nn) and suffering. Instead, God essentially tells Job to get up and take a walk with Him around His garden (His created world). He then asks Job a series of questions that are designed to do two things: (1) expose Job's ignorance of God's ways, and (2) establish the fact that God can be trusted.

God's questions for Job highlight His role as the only God and sole Creator. He has _____ (oo) everything that exists and knows the world's most intimate secrets (Job 38:4-24). And not only has He created everything, but He also _____ (pp) all that has been made (Job 38:25-41). God's power is emphasized in Job 40:6—41:34. Here God asked Job if he can tame the great sea creatures that terrify sailors. Only the Creator and sustainer of the universe has the knowledge and strength to do so. The crucial issue is whether Job will _____ (qq) the Creator and sustainer of the universe who has spoken to him, or will he press his "lawsuit" and continue to question the motives of this powerful, personal God.

Through these questions God is helping Job to see Him more clearly. He is, in effect, telling Job to "Look at Me." And He's saying to Job, in effect, "Job, I am greater, wiser, more powerful, and more glorious than you can possibly conceive. I created everything in the universe—all the beauty, all the mystery, all the complexity—effortlessly. And I sustain it all just as effortlessly. _____ (rr) *ME.*"

In God's two speeches, He does two other things. First, He proves that Job and his friends were completely _____ (ss) about God not wanting to have a personal relationship with people. Second, He vindicates Job and his faith. Job's friends insist that Job can't be both suffering and innocent at the same time, but God's speeches declare otherwise. God clears Job of the guilt they charge him with. God's words acknowledge that Job is indeed an _____ (tt) sufferer.

Job now knows God, and he responds by acknowledging his error with a repentant heart. He confesses his need to remain silent before God (Job 40:3-5). He has learned that God is on his side, and this new knowledge of the sovereignty and power of God satisfies Job's demands. God's personal revelation to Job has left him without a doubt about God's power, wisdom, honor, and love. And it's left him without a doubt that God can be _____ (uu) even when he allows those He loves to suffer.

Finally, there's a _____ (vv) ending. God's appearance could be considered vindication enough for the suffering Job, but God does more. He gives Job a new family, restores his possessions (Job 42:10-15), and gives him long life (Job 42:16-17).

LESSONS FROM JOB

- Those who continue to trust in God even in the midst of suffering will ultimately have a _____(ww) ending.
- God is worthy of our total _____(xx) even when we're suffering.
- _____(yy) and _____(zz) is not evidence that God is not all-powerful.
- Tests demonstrate our _____(aaa) to the Lord and His Word.
- There is no other _____(bbb) to whom sufferers may turn for relief.
- There are many things we'll never understand including suffering. But one thing we do know: God is never _____(ccc) to our suffering. He _____(ddd) when we suffer.
- God has given us the gift of _____(eee) to face the challenges of life's problems.
- God _____(fff) His people to suffer for a time.
- _____(ggg) can bring about an amazing transformation.
- Satan is not God's _____(hhh).
- There is no strict correlation between _____(iii) and suffering in this life.
- We may never know the reason why we _____(jjj).

KEY PASSAGES FROM JOB

- Job 1:1
- Job 1:6-12
- Job 1:20-21
- Job 2:9-10

- Job 23:8-10
- Job 38:1-4
- Job 40:3-5
- Job 42:1-6
- Job 42:10-17

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY

[a] SERVING	[ll] aloof
[b] righteous	[mm] debate
[c] committed	[nn] pain
[d] Wisdom	[oo] created
[e] suffer	[pp] sustains
[f] suffering	[qq] trust
[g] sin	[rr] TRUST
[h] heaven	[ss] wrong
[i] Satan	[tt] innocent
[j] equal	[uu] trusted
[k] adversary	[vv] happy
[l] self-interest	[ww] happy
[m] attack	[xx] commitment
[n] limits	[yy] pain
[o] good	[zz] suffering
[p] adversity	[aaa] commitment
[q] seven	[bbb] God
[r] birth	[ccc] insensitive
[s] three	[ddd] cares
[t] innocent	[eee] revelation
[u] suffering	[fff] allows
[v] sin	[ggg] Trials
[w] innocent	[hhh] equal
[x] goodness	
[y] pain	
[z] sin	
[aa] others	
[bb] justify	
[cc] wisdom	
[dd] power	
[ee] understanding	
[ff] lawsuit	
[gg] God	
[hh] innocent	
[ii] suffer	
[jj] faithful	
[kk] answer	