

## JOB – A LESSON IN FAITH

### WHAT IS THE ESSENCE LESSON OF THE BOOK OF JOB?

#### READ JOB (Chapters 1 and 2)

Job is essentially seen as (1) one of the 5 (five) books of poetry, contained in the inspirational writings of the word of God

The other 4 (four) books in this series of prose are, "Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Songs of Solomon".

These books are a lesson that teaches that man's true worship and wisdom can only emanate from a righteous fear and affection towards God. In other words, we put our trust in God and He directs our path.

We do this by the promises contained in the word of God. If we then walk in righteous humility, everything that happens to us is ordained and for-planned by God.

- This translates into both good and bad things that happen to us, no matter what the reason.
- This also implies that it will not always go well with us. Things will happen to us, which have no bearing on us at all, or as a consequence well beyond our human intervention.
- The book of Job, together with the other 4 books of poems, teaches of the experiences of the heart!
- The message challenges the individual to investigate his / her love relationship to God, through an evaluation of their moral and ethical values.
- It questions the essence of blessings and trials, searching for the hidden mysteries of the extent of the sovereignty of God.
- It leads the individual to inspect his / her spiritual motives.
- It removes the individual's responsibility to self determination, while at the same time, clarifying and re-emphasizing who we are relative to God, in stature, status, authority, heritage and birthright.
- It relays the clear message that God is solely in control! Job defines the true nature of man's struggle.
- It says that man, while having knowledge of who he is in Christ, will still pursue the purpose of his personal trials and tribulations, **rather than to learn from them.**

The bible tells us that "**if God is for us, who can be against us**". The lesson to be learnt therefore is, who is doing the testing and for what reason?

What do we learn about God and His will when we go through testing?

#### **God educates both individually and collectively when He tests**

- God may sometimes choose to use us as an example for somebody else, or for some heavenly reason, or He might choose to test us by stretching us a little more, or to shake us out of our comfort zones and for a myriad of other reasons of His own personal doing and preference. OR

## God corrects and disciplines when He tests

- It may also be however that He may merely want to correct a character flaw in us, or discipline us for something, or to remind us of His protective hand upon our lives, or maybe to stir us up for service by removing certain worldly obstacles.

The book of Job addresses the cosmic struggle between the Lord God and His heavenly enemies. True victory can and ultimately will only be achieved through an individual enduring to “**overcome to the end**”.

There are no guarantees against attacks, trials and tribulations during the journey that leads to eternal life.

Jesus tells us in **Matthew 5: 10 -11**;

*<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*

This book presents both a figurative and a literal message to the readers.

Many writers have presented the argument that the poem is a **figurative account** of mans quest for spiritual enlightenment through the pursuit of wisdom and understanding of the nature and sovereignty of God.

God is portrayed as the true sustainer of life, the unquestionable and righteous judge and unchallengeable Godhead.

Man is merely the object of His **favour or rejection**. Therefore, it can be argued that a **blessed** man is a sign of a favour and conversely, a man of **lack**, a sign of rejection by God.

Job himself argues this point throughout the dialogue with his friends when he attempts to substantiate his innocence in the disaster that has befallen him.

Job is used here as the metaphorical example of the battle between heaven and hell or good and evil, where man is portrayed as the medium (*the created being*) and in this instance of obvious wealth of knowledge and truth, by which God can prove that He can expect a man’s total allegiance and belief in Him, no matter what the circumstances and resultant consequences are.

In this respect, man is insignificant in the test, because God controls the destiny (outcome) of all matters of things upon the earth. The greater the lesson learnt, the greater the reward and visa versa.

By way of an illustration, let us look at a **figurative** (a symbolic or allegorical) example of man’s relationship to God in **John 15: 1 - 8** (NIV) illustrated by the parable of The Vine and the Branches

### The setting

<sup>15</sup> “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

### The consequence

<sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

### God’s Affirmation

<sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

### The crises of faith

<sup>4</sup> Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

### God’s Affirmation

<sup>5</sup> “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

### The crises of faith

<sup>6</sup> If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

### God's Affirmation

<sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. <sup>8</sup> This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

**NB!** The other view is that the book is a **literal (actual and real)** account of the battle between the forces of evil and righteousness. The battle field is depicted as the spiritual realm in the heavens and the battle line, the strife between "good and evil". Man is the white pawn (Job), Evil is the black pawn (the protagonist, Satan) and God is the King (King).

In **Ephesians 6:12** (NIV) Paul illustrates this when he writes

***<sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms!***

It is very important to note that God initially draws Satan's attention to Job and the battle then continues between Job and his friends

All three men are wealthy, like Job was and they had come to see first hand, how easily it is to fall into disaster.

The premise for their visit is for their **own vindication**, arguing that Job must have done something wrong, to land in the mess that he was in. They are not experiencing suffering therefore God must be satisfied with them!

It furthermore also entrenches their belief in their own **innocence**. They are not been tested therefore they are on the right track

Jesus tells us in **Matthew 10: 10** that the **evil one comes to steal, kill and destroy and that God gives life abundantly**".

**Conclusion!** Because they were not been tested, they were holy in God's eyes and Job is guilty.

**NB!** To illustrate this point, we need to look at an illustration from **Matthew 14:22-33** (Jesus Walks on the Water)

### The scenario

<sup>22</sup> Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.

### The test

<sup>23</sup> After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup> but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

### The crisis of Faith

<sup>25</sup> During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. <sup>26</sup> When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

### God's Affirmation

<sup>27</sup> But Jesus immediately said to them: **"Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid!"**

### The leap of Faith

<sup>28</sup> "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

### God's Affirmation

<sup>29</sup> **"Come,"** he said.

### The crisis of Faith

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

### **The Chastisement**

<sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. **"You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"**

### **The resolution (Assured outcome)**

<sup>32</sup> And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.

### **Man's Confirmation**

<sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

## **Who is Job?**

And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and **Job** (also referred to as Jashub) and Shimron (Genesis 46:13)

And

Now the sons of Issachar *were* Tola, Puah, **Jashub** and Shimron (1 Chronicles 7: 1)

He was the son of **ISSACHAR** (Father of Job and 9<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob)

From the Hebrew word *Yissaskar, strictly, (yis·saw·kawr)*

**1** the 9<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob and the 5<sup>th</sup> by Leah his first wife and the progenitor (Head) of a tribe by his name

**2** a Korahite Levite and the 7<sup>th</sup> son of Obed-edom and doorkeeper to the temple

**3** the tribe descended from Issachar the son of Jacob.

**4** the territory allocated to the descendants of Issachar when they entered the land of Canaan.

*Additional Information:* Issachar = **"there is recompense"**.

**JOB** (means **"He who weeps"**)

**Also means;**

*Additional Information:* Job = **"hated"**.

*Additional Information:* Job = **"persecuted"**.

*Additional Information:* Job = **"the cry of woe" or "I will exclaim"**.

*Additional information:* Job = **from the root of anger or vexation**

Also called in Hebrew **JASHUB** (means **"Returning"**)

*Yashuwb, (yaw·shoob)*

**1** the 3<sup>rd</sup> son of Issachar and founder of the family of Jashubites

**2** one of the sons of Bani who had to put away a foreign wife in the time of Ezra

**JOB** is characterized in the word of God as follows;

- A man who dwelt in Uz, (Chapter 1: 1)
- A Righteousness man (Chapter 1: 1, 5 and 8; Ezekiel. 14: 14, 20)
- A Rich man of great wealth (Chapter 1:3)
- A man of Trial, affliction of Satan (Chapters 1: 13 – 19; 2: 7 – 10).
- A man of great Fortitude (Moral strength or courage, esp. in the endurance of pain or adversity (Chapters 1: 20 – 22 and 2: 10, James. 5:11).
- A man of notoriety (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) (Chapter 2: 11–13)
- A man who listened to people (Complaints and replies by his three friends) (Chapters 3– 37)
- A man who spoke to and heard from God (Chapters 38 – 41)
- A man who came in humble submission to God (Chapters 40: 3 – 5 and 42: 1 – 6)
- A man continuously blessed and enriched by God s (Chapter 42: 10 – 16)

**Job** was an Arabian patriarch who resided in the land of Uz (q.v.). While living in the midst of great prosperity, he was suddenly overwhelmed by a series of sore trials that fell upon him. Amid all his sufferings he maintained his integrity.

Once more God visited him with the rich tokens of his goodness and even greater prosperity than he had enjoyed before. He survived the period of trial for one hundred and forty years and died in a good old age, an example to succeeding generations of integrity (Ezekiel 14: 14, 20) and of submissive patience under the most painful of calamities (James 5:11).

It consists of,

(1.) An historical introduction in prose (chapters 1 and 2)

2.) The controversy and its solution, in poetry (chapters 3 – 42)

Job's desponding lamentation (chapter 3) is the occasion of the controversy which is carried on in three courses of dialogues between Job and his three friends.

- The first course gives the commencement of the controversy (Chapters 4–14);
- The second the growth of the controversy (Chapters 15–21);
- The third the height of the controversy (Chapters 22–27)

This is followed by the solution of the controversy in the speeches of Elihu and the address of Jehovah  
This ends with Job's humble confession (Chapter 42:1–6), of his own fault and folly.

(3.) The third division is the historical conclusion, in prose (Chapter 42:7–15).

Stanley says that "The whole book is a discussion of that great problem of human life: what is the intention of Divine Providence in allowing the good to suffer?" "The direct object is to show that, although goodness has a natural tendency to secure a full measure of temporal happiness, yet that in its essence it is independent of such a result. Selfishness in some form is declared to be the basis on which all apparent goodness rests. That question is tried in the case of Job."—Cook.

### **The character of Job**

The first two chapters are written in prose and serve as a prologue to the poetic saga that follows. Likewise, the epilogue (42:7–17) is also written in prose. The exact location of the land of Uz is uncertain, but it is usually associated with Edom

Four great attributes are ascribed to Job:

- 1) **Perfect,**
- 2) **Upright,**
- 3) **One that feared God, and**
- 4) **Eschewed [shunned] evil.**

His life could not have been more exemplary.

- Job was a real person, as Ezekiel 14:14–20 and James 5:11 indicate.
- Job probably lived before or around the time of Abraham (2167–1992 BC).
- Some have suggested that Job was about **70 years old** at the time of the events in Job (cf. 42:16).
- He was very wealthy (vv. 3, 10); he and his sons were homeowners in a large city of the region (v. 4; 29:7);
- He was a respected and **popular judge**, and **benefactor of his fellow citizens** (29:7–25).
- He was a righteous man in God's eyes (vv. 1, 5, 8; 2:3; Ezek. 14:14–20; James 5:11).
- The events related in this book were initiated by God (vv. 6–8), for God did not allow Job's trials because of any sin in his life (2:3).
- Job emerged from the severe testing with a fresh appreciation of God's sovereignty and sufficiency for the believer's life (42:1–6).

The French novelist Victor Hugo once called the Book of Job “the greatest masterpiece of the human mind.” We know very little about the man who wrote Job, but he probably lived before the time of Moses.

The prologue of the book recounts how Job was a righteous man who suffered many calamities. The main section of the book traces the arguments and questions that Job raised about his sufferings. Job's friends offered many of the ideas that people have traditionally used to explain suffering. They said that God might have sent this crisis to punish Job's sin (chaps. 4–31), or to discipline him (chaps. 32–37).

**We see Job growing through the agony of trying to understand why God allowed all of these distresses to fall upon him. At first he pleads for death (chaps. 3, 6), then for mercy (7:12–21).**

God does not respond, and so Job wishes someone would resolve the quarrel between them (9:11–21; 10:8–17).

Finally,

- He decides to face his problems with courage (13:13–28), and
- He asks God to bring him through his painful trials (16:18–17:3).  
Job declares that he trusts God to preserve his life in spite of all the pain and heartache he has experienced (19:25–27).
- He concludes that suffering is a mystery to man; only God knows the reason for it.

When God finally speaks to Job, He gives him no hint as to why he has had to endure such distress.