

# Out of the Storm

## *A Study of Job*

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### Part 1 – “A Well Ordered World”

#### Overview of Job

Job is a long book – 42 chapters. In addition to being long, Job requires that the reader plod through a vast middle section made up almost entirely of lengthy, poetic speeches which often repeat the same themes. Surely this is by design. The length of the book and its methodical pacing tell us, at least, that God desires for us to take our time reading through Job’s story. It is tempting to focus almost exclusively on the opening and closing narratives while neglecting the larger middle portion. But those chapters act like carefully placed speed bumps requiring the reader to move slowly and cautiously through the challenging terrain of God’s providence in human suffering. Questions about God’s role in human suffering are profoundly difficult both intellectually and emotionally. So, it is no surprise that God gave his people a book that requires the reader to slow down, read carefully, and digest slowly. Questions from the ash heap of sorrow cannot be answered with a Tweet.



Technically, Job is classified as wisdom literature. This is appropriate for Job possesses many of the key features of biblical wisdom literature. However, Job is unique among the books of the Bible in that it is a mix of prose, poetry, and speech. Most of all, however, Job is poetry. God, of course, inspired not only the words of Scripture but the various genres as well. And it pleased Him to give us a book which grapples so honestly with human suffering written primarily in a poetic structure. Why might this be? We can only speculate but J.I. Packer is probably getting at the truth when he concludes that poems “are always a personal ‘take’ on something, communicating not just from head to head but from heart to heart” (*quoted in Ash*).<sup>1</sup>

The book of Job is not ultimately about human suffering and grief. Ultimately, Job is a book about God: His wisdom, justice, and mercy.

#### **Books I am consulting during this series:**

Crying Out for Vindication: The Gospel According to Job by David Jackson

Job: The Wisdom of the Cross by Christopher Ash

Job: Teach the Text by Daniel Estes

The Storm Breaks by Derek Thomas

Now My Eyes Have Seen Him: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job by Robert Fyall

The Message of Job by David Atkinson

Job (NICOT) by John Hartley

How Long O Lord? by D.A. Carson

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<sup>1</sup> Ash, Christopher, *Job: The Wisdom of the Cross* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014) p. 22.

**Today's Text – Job 1:1-6**

**Main Idea:** Though sin introduced chaos and suffering into the created order, God nevertheless rules all things with wisdom and justice and has provided for his people a way to be made right.

**1. Job's Righteousness**

Immediately in verse one what is established is Job's righteousness. There are listed three qualities of Job's life that marked him out as a righteous man.

**a) Job obeyed God.**

Vs. 1a – "that man was blameless and upright..."

We are not intended to believe that Job was without sin. Job acknowledges "the iniquities of my youth" (13:26) and "my sin" (14:16). So, "blameless and upright" speak to the genuineness of Job's faith in God which was authenticated by consistent obedience. Job had public reputation for integrity. He was what he claimed to be.

**b) Job feared God.**

Vs. 1b – "one who feared God..."

Job is wisdom literature. Therefore it makes sense that the writer introduces us early on to this particular quality of Job's life. He was a man who feared God which is the beginning of wisdom. Job esteemed God highly. He regarded God as worthy of reverence and awe.

**c) Job shunned evil.**

Vs. 1c – "...and turned away from evil."

Job's faith in God issued in abhorrence for what was evil. Job hated sin. He "turned away from evil." That is, Job turned his back on and fled from wickedness. How the church today ought to learn from Job's example! Instead of playing with what is wicked we ought to shun evil. Job's life was characterized by Godly morality. To pursue the same is far from legalistic. It is to do what is right.

In verse five the writer makes reference to Job's practice of bringing burnt offerings before the Lord for the remission of sins. This makes clear at least two things: 1) Job knew that sin required sacrifice and 2) Job knew that the sacrifice must be that of a substitute. All those many generations before Jesus Job, like all God's faithful people knew the necessity of having ones sins born away by another.

**2. Job's Wealth**

Vv. 2-3

Job's life was marked by all the things that characterized the truly blessed. He possessed great material wealth indicated by the vast sums of cattle. Such herds required great numbers of servants and vast lands. He was also the father of 10 children (7 sons and 3 daughters). Those numbers are certainly rich with meaning. The point is that Job was conspicuously blessed by the Lord. What we will discover however is that such blessings are never to be seen as a sort of divine *quid pro quo*. The sort of wealth that Job possessed will come to be the exception rather than the rule for God's people.

**3. Job's Hope**

Vv. 4-5

Job was a man who knew that sin demanded a sacrifice. Sinners needed a substitute. And his hope, not only for his own life but also for that of his children resided in the promise of substitutionary atonement. His hope was grounded in that fact that God will forgive the sins of his people not by acts of righteousness on their part but on the basis of an innocent substitute.