

Job was probably set in the time period of Isaac and Jacob, before Moses or the law or the Levitical sacrificial system. As you read the book of Job, keep in mind that it is a narrative with real men grappling with a very real and significant issue with which people of all ages have had to deal. The arguments of Job and his companions ought to be read with an awareness of the heated and impassioned discussion going on between them as they try to sort out “why” all these calamities came upon Job.

Does God bless the righteous and afflict the wicked? What do Job, his wife, his four friends, and . . . God think about this question? More directly, is your faith in God rooted more deeply than comfort and convenience? (If your answer is somewhat “tentative” or sometimes “wavers,” make sure you spend much time reading, praying and meditating in chapters 38-42!)

[**Note**, as you read be sure not to “miss” chapters 38-42, but keep in mind that the brightness of their revelation stands out most vividly against the dark canvas of chapters 3-37.]

Chapter

- 1-2 Man often asks, “why is there sickness, abuse, pain and/or death?” Consider all of creation under the curse of sin, and influenced for millennia by Satan’s devices. In these chapters note what limits Satan. Note what he can do.
- 2:9-11 Is God good? Does Satan want us to think that God is good? What is God’s desire for individual men, women and children? What are some of the implications / innuendos in Satan’s comments to God? Are the implications true . . . in general? . . . for you? Were they true for Job?
- 4-14 Compare the complaints in Job’s speeches to the respective counsel and first replies of his three companions. Were the “answers” discovered? As you “listen” to the speeches, what is happening? Do Job and his companions have the

same frame of reference? Why/why not? Are they even on the same page? If they are not connecting with each other, why aren’t they? What is eluding them?

- 15-31 Second time around. Do you observe a difference in the respective arguments of Bildad, Eliphaz and Zophar compared to their *first* speeches (ch. 4-14)? What about in Job’s replies? If you were *there* and heard all this impassioned argument and walked home now, how would you feel about man’s understanding of what had happened to Job? Would you believe his professed innocence? Would you believe he had skeletons in his closet? Would you be satisfied that man had all the answers?
- 32-37 Elihu steps up to the plate. He is younger and qualifies his remarks (32:1-22). His deference is appropriate (32:6-7), and his insight is unfortunately true (32:9). How do his remarks compare/contrast with those of his four elders? Are his remarks valid? compassionate? God honoring? If the aged can’t satisfactorily answer the significant questions of life, is it up to the youth to do so? Were Elihu’s arguments *superior* to those of his elders? Were they essentially the “same as” those of his elders – but packaged differently? Or were they substantively *different* from, but *not superior* to those of his elders? How, or in what way? [But keep your answers tentative until you read ch. 38-42!]
- End Did Job ever know the *why* [or the *how* / or the *reason* / or the *purpose*] behind the calamities that came upon him? What did Job maintain through it all? [Note, more than one answer!] Comfort and convenience rank high on most of our “want” lists. What matters most *to God* for us? [Cf. Rom 8:28-29] Did God accomplish his purpose in the book of Job *for Job? before Satan?* You can’t see behind the curtain now. What do you think God wants most for *you*? What if God never pulls back the curtain to answer all of your “why” questions? How will that affect *your* faith? Consider Rom 8:28-29, Deut. 10:12 and Micah 6:8.