

JOB: “*Though he slay me, yet I will hope in him*” (13v15a)

1-2 PROLOGUE (introduction) in prose (everyday speech)

AFFLICTION: Job’s – Suffering

The problem of pain – why do bad things happen to good people?

Job is righteous (v1 – had integrity), yet behind the scenes, under God’s permission, he experiences Satan, the adversary’s, attacks. So he loses all his livestock (wealth) & his children through calamities and is covered with painful sores. Yet he acknowledges God is sovereign (1v21 & 2v9-11).

Responses and answers...

3-42v6 DIALOGUE in poetry

3 LAMENTATION: Job’s – Self-pity

Job curses the day of his birth e.g. 3v1-3 & 3v20-26. We must be engrossed not in our sickness, for that is morbid *self-pity*.

4-31 DISCUSSION: 3 friends wrong answer (42v7) – Self-accusation

In 3 cycles of Eliphaz, Bildad & Zophar each speak (4v1, 15v1 & 22v1, except Zophar not in last cycle), then Job replies & after they say no more, he gives a final speech (ch. 27-31). The speeches go on and on like the monotony of illness (tip read them fairly quickly, slowing down where needed).

The argument:

The friends (here Eliphaz)

- a) 4v7-8, 22v4-5 God afflicts you because you are wicked
- b) 22v6-10 Shown in you have not helped those in distress
- c) 5v18-19 So you are being chastened to heal you

Job’s responses

- 27v6 But I’m righteous,
21v7-9 and why do the wicked prosper?
31v16-17 & 22 But I have helped them.
19v5-10, 17 But why do I suffer so much?
27v3 and not experience God’s justice?

NB the 3 friends do say some truth (e.g. 5v6-13 & v13 quoted in 1 Cor. 3v19) mixed with error – a) is simplistic & unqualified; God may discipline for specific sin (1 Cor 11v29-31) but this is not always (Jn 9v1-3).

Job’s judgment of his friends: liars, worthless physicians, miserable comforters & be silent (13v4-5 & 14v2)

Job appeals to God & hopes in him:

- needs *mediator* (9v32-34); has an *advocate* (16v19); *redeemer* (19v23-27); & *hope* (13v15a).
- 31v35 “Let the almighty answer me.”

So we must be engrossed in our sins, for that is introspective *self-accusation*.

32-37 INTERVENTION: younger Elihu’s mostly helpful answer – Self-discipline

e.g. 33v8-8 cf. Heb 12v6 and the good effects of serious illness. So reflect on the moral and spiritual profit to be derived from suffering, which is valuable *self-discipline*.

38v1-42v6 REVELATION: God’s answer – Self-surrender

38v1-3 out of the storm (destructive force) God fires question at Job (not answering him) – “tell me if you understand... (v4)

38v4-40v2 God’s greatness & goodness

e.g. 38v4-7, 24-28 in the universe

38v39-41, 39v26-29 in animals

40v3-5 Job’s submission – admits ignorance & becomes silent

40v6-41v34 God the almighty judge

40v6-11 “would you discredit my justice? (v8); “Do you have an arm like God’s?” (v9)

40v15 & 24 “Can you capture” the behemoth? (hippo embodying evil)

41v1 & 10-11 (v11 quoted in Rom 11v35) “Can you pull in the leviathan?” (crocodile embodying evil)

Implication: God the almighty judge can – he can overcome evil

42v1-6 Job’s contrition – confesses his presumption & repents

Now seen God (v5):

- God’s greatness – so I won’t understand why I suffer
- God’s goodness & he’s the almighty judge – so I can trust him

So, “*though he slay me, yet I will hope in him*” (13v15a). Even more now as Christ is my *mediator* (1 Tim 2v5-6), *advocate* (1 Jn 2v1; Rom 8:v34) & *redeemer* (Jn 11v25-26).

Have humble *self-surrender* to the God of power and wisdom and love, who has been fully and finally revealed in the cross.

42v7-11 EPILOGUE (conclusion) in prose

RESTORATION: Job’s – Success cf. James 5v11 (see PTO)

James 5v11 on the lessons of Job

“As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.”

John Stott on the message of the book of Job

“What then is the message of the book of Job? It is this. When faced with calamity or stricken with sickness, the mind must be engrossed not in our *sickness* (for that is morbid *self-pity*), nor in our sins (for that is introspective *self-accusation*), but partly in the moral and spiritual profit to be derived from suffering, which is valuable *self-discipline*, and best of all in God Himself. This is humble *self-surrender* to the God of power and wisdom and love, who has been fully and finally revealed in the cross. This is the sober, wise realism of Christian worship.

I would venture to say in conclusion that he, or she, can best interpret their own sufferings and the sufferings of others who has witnessed the sufferings of Christ. A person can best endure the trials of this world when they have been with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, followed Him up the green hill called Calvary, and there learned to trust Him as Saviour and to surrender to Him as Lord.”