



## Job-

“We cannot understand the meaning of many trials; God does not explain them. To explain a trial would be to destroy its object, which is that of calling forth simple faith and implicit obedience. If we knew why the Lord sent us this or that trial, it would thereby cease to be a trial either of faith or of patience.”

—*Alfred Edersheim, D.D.*

“*Behind* all the suffering of the godly is a high purpose of God, and *beyond* it all is an ‘afterwards’ of glorious enrichment. Such suffering, as we learn from this Book of Job, is not judicial, but remedial; not punitive, but corrective; not retributive, but disciplinary; not a penalty, but a ministry. This is the interim solution. The final solution will be given in that promised day when, instead of seeing through a glass darkly, we shall see ‘face to face’ and shall ‘know even as we are known.’”

—J.Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*

### **Helpful Study Links:**

Additional Commentary: (Great Resource!)  
[http://preceptaustin.org/job\\_commentaries.htm](http://preceptaustin.org/job_commentaries.htm)

### **Sermon Links:**

“Job’s Resignation” by Charles Spurgeon  
<http://www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/2457.htm>

“Satan Considering the Saints” by Charles Spurgeon  
<http://www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/0623.HTM>

“The Pressure of Pain” by Ray C. Stedman  
<http://www.pbc.org/library/files/html/3541.html>

“Job: The Hardest Question” by Ray C. Stedman  
<http://www.raystedman.org/adventure/0218.html>



**Author:** ??? The text of Job does not reveal the identity of its author, but the contents of the book indicate that its author was a profound thinker who treats some of the most crucial and difficult problems of human existence from a mature spiritual perspective. The author was also well-educated and familiar with wisdom literature motifs, nature, and foreign cultures.



**Time:** The dating of Job involves two issues: the date of the book’s setting and the date of its composition. Although it is not possible to determine the precise date of the events described, several factors argue for a patriarchal date (2000–1800 b.c.): the absence of references to Israelite history or biblical law; Job’s long life of over 100 years (42:16); Job’s role as priest for his family, which was prohibited by Mosaic law (1:5); and the measurement of Job’s wealth in terms of livestock (1:3).

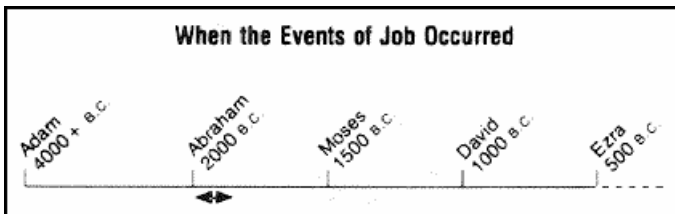
Suggestions for the date of the book’s composition range from the patriarchal era to the postexilic period



**Theme:** The basic question of the book is, “Why do the righteous suffer if God is loving and all-powerful?” Suffering itself is not the central theme; rather, the focus is on what Job learns from his suffering—the sovereignty of God over all creation. The debate in chapters 3–37 regards whether God would allow the innocent to suffer



**Keys:** The subject matter of the book of Job may be divided into three parts: the dilemma of Job (chs. 1–2), the debates of Job (chs. 3–37), and the deliverance of Job (chs. 38–42).





# Daily Bible Study

Friday, May 18, 2007

*Passage for today: Job 4-5*

## Questions to Ponder

1. How would you describe Eliaphaz's comments toward Job in these two chapters? What does he believe concerning Job's calamity? What is the basis for his belief? What does he advise Job to do?
2. In an effort to comfort his hurting friend, Eliaphaz actually responded to Job with accusation and advice. He also used his own experience as the basis for his "wise advice." Why was this wrong? (See Romans 12:9-16.) Take a moment to cross-reference Job 1:9. How do Eliaphaz's comments actually support Satan's belief instead of God's truth?
3. Today, does your counsel concerning the suffering of God's people line up with the truth of God or with the lies of Satan? Explain.











# Introductory Notes

Taken from *Explore the Book*

By J. Sidlow Baxter

Subject and Method

The subject here is that ever-present problem-*the mystery of suffering*, but specially as concerns the godly. We have already referred to the elasticity of Hebrew poetry, and its freedom from any hard-and-fast metrical uniformity. This is particularly advantageous in the treatment of such a variable subject as suffering. To quote Dr. Moulton: "The philosophical discussion (of sufferings) is also a dramatic debate; with rise and fall of passion, varieties of personal interest, quick changes in the movement of thought; while a background of nature, ever present, makes a climax in a whirlwind which ushers us into the supernatural. Interest of rhetoric is added for emphasis: the argument is swayed out of its course by sustained outbursts of verbal workmanship such as are wont to rouse assemblies of men to strong feeling."

The different aspects of this grave and sensitive subject are introduced by different speakers as the dialogue proceeds; while representative mental attitudes toward it are successively exhibited in Job's three friends- Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, with the addition of Elihu the Buzite, a younger man, who speaks later, when Job and his tree fellow-patriarchs have apparently exhausted their discussion in an agreement to differ. The poem then winds up in a Divine intervention expressed in language of the utmost majesty and impressiveness.

It is a pity that in our Authorised Version this mighty poem is not reproduced in its poetic form. The Revised Version, however, restores the parallelism for the English reader, and is a real help in our reading the poetical books of Scripture. In this book of Job, the poem commences at chapter three. Chapters one and two are not poetry, but an *historical prologue* to the poem. The poem ends at chapter forty two verse six, with Job's words-

I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear;  
But now mine eye seeth Thee:  
Wherefore I abhor myself  
And repent in dust and ashes,

The final eleven verses of the book are not poetry, but an *historical epilogue* to the poem. Thus, this book of Job may be fitly called "A Dramatic Poem frames in an Epic Story."

## Object and Message

In a general sense the design of this book is “to justify the ways of God to man,” by correcting certain misconceptions which arise from men’s imperfect knowledge: but the *special* object is to show that there is a benevolent Divine purpose running through the sufferings of the godly, and that life’s bitterest enigmas are the reconcilable with this benevolent Divine purpose, did we but know all the facts. Could Job but have seen into the counsels of heaven just before his trial came, as *we* are permitted to glimpse into them, in the prologue to the poem; and could Job but have foreknown the outcome of his ordeal, as *God* foreknew it, and as *we* now see it in the epilogue to the poem, how differently would he have reacted to it all!

But then that is just the point which gives the whole book its meaning for us- Job did *not* know; and, simple as this point may seem, it is through failure to appreciate its significance that most readers miss the message of the book. Get the picture. Between the prologue, which shows how Job’s trial *originated* in the counsels of heaven, and the epilogue, which shows how Job’s trial *eventuated* in enrichment and blessing, we have a group of patriarchal wiseacres theorizing and dogmatising from incomplete premises and deficient data. They knew nothing about the counsels of heaven which had preceded Job’s trial; and they knew nothing about the coming epilogue of compensation. They were philosophizing in the dark. It is in this that the book has its message to us. We are meant to see that there *was* an explanation, even though Job and his friends did not know it, so that when baffling affliction comes to ourselves we may believe that the same holds good in our own case- that there is, indeed, a purpose for it in the counsels of heaven, and a foreknown outcome of blessing.

### Job not meant to know

The fact is, Job was *not* meant to know the explanation of his trial; and on this simple fact everything hangs. If Job *had* known, there would have been no place for faith; and the man could never have come forth as gold purified in the fire. We are meant to understand that there are some things which God cannot reveal to us at present, inasmuch as the very revealing of them would thwart His purpose for our good. The Scripture are as wise in their *reservations* as they are in their *revelations*. Enough is revealed to make faith intelligent. Enough is reserved to give faith scope for development.

In this, we repeat, lies the message of the book- that there *was* an

explanation, but that Job did not know it and *was not meant* to know it. Because of failure to appreciate this adequately the book has been said to present a problem without a solution. Certainly, if we misjudge the subject of the book to be the problem of suffering *as a whole*, then the book *does* present a problem without a solution: but when we see that the subject is really *one aspect only* of that problem—namely: why do the *godly* suffer?—then the book is far from being a problem without a solution. The solution is found in the explanation of the *prologue* and the consummation of the *epilogue*. This solution, we admit, is not the *final* solution even of this one aspect of suffering. It is an *interim* solution, in which the godly heart may find rest until the full and final solution is given in a day yet to be. The purpose of the book is to show that the final solution is as yet withheld, and that an interim solution is provided, namely, that suffering fulfils a Divine purpose and exercises a gracious ministry in the godly. *Behind* all the suffering of the godly is a high purpose of God, and *beyond* it all is an “afterwards” of glorious enrichment. Such suffering, as we learn from this Book of Job, is not judicial, but remedial; not punitive, but corrective; not retributive, but disciplinary; not a penalty, but a ministry. This is the interim solution. The final solution will be given in that promised day when, instead of seeing through a glass darkly, we shall see “face to face” and shall “know even as we *are* known.”

### BLESSING THROUGH SUFFERING

The central message of Job, then, may be expressed as: “*BLESSING THROUGH SUFFERING.*” Through bitter calamity comes blessed discovery. “Self” is slain and God is known through trial. The book is a grand illustration of Paul’s words: “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28), and of that other word, in Hebrews 12:11: “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” As the late Dr. J.L. Porter says: “All things—the sorest trials, the bitterest persecutions, the private sorrows that sometimes wring the very heart, and seem calculated to surpass patience, and to quench hope— all these, under the guidance of God infinite in wisdom and in power, cooperate for the real, because the eternal, welfare of God’s people. This the grand lesson taught by the Book of Job.” As William Cowper’s well-known couplet put’s it —

*Behind a frowning providence  
God hides a smiling face.*