

# Discussion Notes for the Book of Job

Hello,

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We are going to have a great time at this first Hot Spot Bible Study in just 2 WEEKS (Wednesday, September 22nd) and I hope you can be there. Hot Spot Bible Study is an opportunity to combine two of my favorite things – discussing God’s Word and enjoying great food, coffee, and friends. Our time together for this discussion will be from 6:30 to 8:00pm.

This month’s Hot Spot Bible Study will be at Gelateria Del Leone – 3197 South Grand in St. Louis, MO 63118. This fantastic spot serves some of the best gelato (Italian ice cream) in the area. They also have wonderful coffees and teas. For those who want to park at the Lodge we will be taking the church van there and back. The church van will pull out of the parking lot at 6:00pm sharp.

This month’s Hot Spot Bible Study will be a survey and discussion of the book of Job. This amazing book of the Bible has long been heralded as one of the world’s greatest pieces of literature. Job certainly is that. However, it is so much more! Please take some time to review the discussion notes I have attached to this email before printing them off to bring with you to this wonderful Hot Spot Bible Study. Wednesday, September 22nd, is just around the corner!

Strength and peace,  
Pastor Steve

## Why Is Everyone So Excited About Job?

- Job has always been viewed as a literary masterpiece. Consider, for example, the following quotes:
  - *"Tomorrow, if all literature was to be destroyed and it was left to me to retain one work only, I should save Job."* Victor Hugo
  - *"...the greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature."* Tennyson
  - *"The Book of Job taken as a mere work of literary genius, is one of the most wonderful productions of any age or of any language."* Daniel Webster

# Discussion Notes for the Book of Job

- Job provides much more value to us than simply a great piece of literature. Before reviewing some of the outstanding ways in which Job enriches the lives of every follower of Jesus consider again the simple fact that it is part of Scripture.
  - ***“For whatever was written before was written for our instruction, so that through our endurance and through the encouragement of Scriptures we may have hope.”*** Romans 15:4
  - ***“All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*** 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Job has an important place in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament.
  - Job is first in a list of five books in the Old Testament known as “*Wisdom/Poetry Books*”. This list goes Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.
  - These five gained this designation because of their poetic style and because of the insight they give to living wisely. Oswald Chambers (most famous for his devotional work, *Mornings and Evenings*) gives a great summary of these five poetic/wisdom books:
    - Job shows us how to suffer.
    - Psalm shows us how to pray.
    - Proverbs shows us how to act.
    - Ecclesiastes shows us how to enjoy.
    - Song of Solomon shows us how to love.

## Where Did Job Come From?

- Job obviously didn't fall out of the sky and land on the earth written in King James English. Where did this amazing book of wisdom, poetry, and theology come from?
- Author
  - No one but God really knows who wrote the book of Job.
    - Jewish traditions gives credit to Moses.
    - However, other authors have also been suggested. People such as:
      - Job himself (my personal opinion).

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- Elihu.
- Solomon.
- Isaiah.
- Hezekiah.
- Baruch (Jeremiah's scribe).

## ➤ Date

- Dating this book to an exact year is somewhat difficult without having an author to whom it can be contributed.
  - Some think it was written down before Moses – before 1,500 BC (my personal opinion).
  - Some think it was the time of Solomon – 900 BC.
  - Some think it was written during the time of the Babylonian Exile – after 600 BC.
- What is key for our purposes is to fully grasp the fact that while the author/date may not be fully known until we get to heaven, the fact that it is inspired by God is fully known!
  - Paul quotes it AS SCRIPTURE in 1 Corinthians 3:19 (Job 5:13).
  - Paul quotes it AS SCRIPTURE in Romans 11:35 (Job 41:11).

## Is Job Fact Or Fiction?

- There are some who view Job, as they do most of the rest of Holy Scripture, as a fanciful fable intended to teach simple moral lessons. This view is incorrect.
- The book of Job describes the historical events of Job's life to the reader.
  - The entire style – especially the opening and closing of Job – match perfectly with other biblical historical literature. Consider 1 Samuel 1:1 and Luke 1:5 as examples.
  - Job is mentioned as a real person alongside Noah and Daniel – two other very real people in history in Ezekiel 14:14.

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- Jesus' half-brother, James, writes about Job as a real person in his letter – James 5:11.

## When Did The Events Of Job Take Place?

- The historical events of Job took place, most likely, between the time of the flood and the giving of the Law by Moses.
- This is known as the “Patriarchal Period” by scholars.
  - The flood is mentioned in Job 22:16.
  - Job operates as the priest for his family in Job 1:5 just as Abraham did in Genesis 12:7.
  - There is no mention of the Law by Job, his friends, or by God Himself.
  - Job's long life fits well with what was typical for the patriarch.
    - Job 42:16.
    - Compare with Genesis 11:22-32.
- Most conservative biblical scholars place the events of Job around 2,000 BC.

## Why Was Job Written?

- Job was written to show God's absolute authority over creation.
  - God is worthy of praise and honor for who He is apart from the blessings and gifts He provides.
  - See Job 1:20-22 and 2:10 for example.
- Job was written to answer the question, “Why the righteous suffer?” Well, Kind of anyway.
  - The book never really gives an answer to this question that fully satisfies human curiosity.

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- The answer given – if it is an answer – is simply God has His purposes.
- Job was written to reveal that suffering is not always the result of personal sin.
  - Job’s suffering wasn’t the result of him being unrighteous.
    - The author of Job says he is righteous – 1:1, 1:22, 2:10.
    - God Himself says Job is righteous – 1:8, 2:3.
    - Job’s wife admits Job is righteous – 2:9.
    - Job confesses his righteousness – 31:1, 31:16-20, 24:28.
  - This fits perfectly with the New Testament’s teaching on this subject.
    - Luke 13:1-3.
    - James 1:2-4.
    - 2 Corinthians 6:4-10.
- Job was written to remind us of the transitory nature of wealth.
  - Job’s blessings in life are seen, in part, in Job 1:3-4, 9-10, 2:11, 29:1-25.
  - Job’s loss is seen, in part, in Job 1:13-19 and 30:1-31.
- Job was written to help us understand how people deal with tragedy.
  - Job’s wife 2:9.
  - Job’s friends – 2:11-13, and chapters 4-28.
    - Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.
      - Eliphaz - 4:1-5:27, 15:1-35, 22:1-30.
      - Bildad – 8:1-22, 18:1-21, 25:1-6.
      - Zophar – 11:1-20, 20:1-29.
    - Elihu – 32:1-37:24.
- Job was written to answer the question, “How should the righteous deal with suffering?”
  - Things are transitory – 1:20-22.
  - God is a Being with total integrity – 2:10.
  - God’s plans are not always known – 3:1-26.

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- Human wisdom is not sufficient to understand God's dealings with humanity – Chapters 29-31.
  - There is an afterlife – 19:23-29.
  - God is great – 26:5-14.
- Job's primary lesson is that there is a God and we are not him – 38:1-42:9.

## What Is A Good Outline For Job?

### 1. 1-3 Job's Distress

- a. 1:1-5 His prosperity.
- b. 1:6-2:13 His adversity.
- c. 3 His perplexity.

### 2. 4-37 Job's Defense.

- a. 4-14 The first round.
  - i. Eliphaz (4-5) and Job's reply (6-7).
  - ii. Bildad (8) and Job's reply (9-10).
  - iii. Zophar (11) and Job's reply (12-14).
- b. 15-21 The second round.
  - i. Eliphaz (15) and Job's reply (16-17).
  - ii. Bildad (18) and Job's reply (19).
  - iii. Zophar (20) and Job's reply (21).
- c. 22-31 The third round.
  - i. Elphaz (22) and Job's reply (23-24).
  - ii. Bildad (25) and Job's reply (26-31).
- d. 32-37 Young Elihu speaks.
  - i. 32 Contradicting Job's friends.
  - ii. 33 Contradicting Job himself.

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iii. 34-37 Proclaiming God's justice, goodness and majesty.

### 3. 38-42 Job's deliverance.

a. 38:1-42:6 God humbles Job.

i. 38:1-41:34 Through questions too great to answer.

ii. 42:1-6 Job acknowledges his inability to understand.

b. 42:7-17 God honors Job.

i. 42:7-10 God rebukes Job's critics.

ii. 42:11-17 God restores Job's wealth.

## Are There Really Dinosaurs Mentioned in Job?

➤ Job 40:15-24 Behemoth.

• Description.

▪ It "*eats grass like an ox.*"

▪ It "*moves his tail like a cedar.*" (In Hebrew, this literally reads, "he lets hang his tail like a cedar.")

▪ Its "*bones are like beams of bronze, His ribs like bars of iron.*"

▪ "*He is the first of the ways of God.*"

▪ "*He lies under the lotus trees, in a covert of reeds and marsh.*"

• Some bibles will translate the word "*behemoth*" as "elephant" or "hippopotamus." Others will put a note at the edge or bottom of the page, stating that behemoth was probably an elephant or a hippopotamus.

▪ An elephant or hippopotamus can eat grass (or lie in a covert of reeds and marsh).

▪ Neither an elephant or a hippopotamus has a "*tail like a cedar*" (that is, a tail like a large, tapered tree trunk).

• The behemoth is large.

▪ A key phrase is "*He is the first of the ways of God.*"

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- This phrase in the original Hebrew implied that behemoth was the *biggest* animal created.
  - Although an elephant or a hippopotamus are big, they are less than one-tenth the size of a Brachiosaurus, the largest (complete) dinosaur ever discovered.
- Job 41 – Leviathan.
- Description.
    - *“No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up.”*
    - *“Who can open the doors of his face, with his terrible teeth all around?”*
    - *“His rows of scales are his pride, shut up tightly as with a seal; one is so near another that no air can come between them; they are joined one to another, they stick together and cannot be parted.”*
    - *“His sneezing flash forth light, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lights; sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke goes out of his nostrils, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. His breath kindles coals, and a flame goes out of his mouth.”*
    - *“Though the sword reaches him, it cannot avail; nor does spear, dart, or javelin. He regards iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee; slingstones become like stubble to him. Darts are regarded as straw; he laughs at the threat of javelins.”*
    - *“On earth there is nothing like him, which is made without fear.”*
  - Further description .
    - Psalm 104: 25-26 - Leviathan *“played”* in the *“great and wide sea.”*
    - Isaiah 27:1 - Leviathan is a *“reptile [a] that is in the sea.”*
      - The word translated *“reptile”* here is the Hebrew word *tanniyn*.
      - This shows that *“Leviathan”* was also a *“tanniyn”* (dragon).
  - Leviathan is ferocious and terrifying.
    - Many references (we have not listed them all) refer to the sea, so Leviathan is probably a sea creature.

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- Although some bibles translate to Leviathan as an alligator or crocodile (and both of these are fierce) neither of these is a sea creature.
- The question “*Who can open the doors of his face. . .*” implies that nobody can open Leviathan’s jaws. Although an alligator’s jaws cannot normally be forced open, a punch to their sensitive snout or poke in eye might startle them enough to release their grip.
- The description of the scales is interesting.
- Fire?
  - It is hard to read Job 41:18-21 without realizing the Bible is telling us that Leviathan breathes fire. That alone will eliminate *almost* every living animal.
  - *Yes, there is one animal like that in today’s world.* It is called a bombardier beetle. This beetle is a native of Central America, and has a nozzle in its hind end that acts like a little flame thrower. It sprays a high-temperature jet of gas (fueled by hydroquinones and hydrogen peroxide with oxidative enzymes) for protection