



# JOB

Disappointment With God



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**HOLY TRINITY ADELAIDE**  
**INTEGRATED BIBLE STUDIES**  
For Individuals & Small Groups

## How to get best value out of these studies...



Welcome to a new series of Old Testament studies in the book of Job. These Study Guides are designed in a three part format...

- 1 Opening questions to get you thinking are listed as **Appetisers**.
- 2 Those which get you to investigate the text are contained in the **Main Course**.
- 3 The **Take Away Value** section prompts you to reflect on what you've looked at and consider how it will change you and those in your group.

**If you're using these Guides in a Small Group**, it is vital that you have done preparatory work *before* you get to your meeting. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but to the other members of your group.

**If you're doing these studies individually**, make sure you let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

If you're after good commentaries or resources to complement your looking into the bible, speak to your Small Group Leader or one of the staff, and we'll try to be as helpful as possible. Most people aren't going to spend lots of dollars on theological works, so we're constantly on the look out for good quality titles that will result in money well spent.

We trust you'll find the guides helpful, and we welcome any feedback you can give us as you use them.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with **prayer**, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God's people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Recommended Reading:**

D. Atkinson, *The Message of Job (Bible Speaks Today Commentary)*

## Take Away Value...

- 7 Comment on this statement: *"It is not always possible to know why, but Job shows us it is always possible to be wise"*
- 8 Reflect back over the territory we have covered in the last five studies. What misunderstandings has it corrected? What changes has it brought about in your daily living?
- 9 If you had to sum up the lesson of Job in one sentence, how would you do so? Could you think of a better title than the one we used for this Study Guide series?



## 1

**From Rags To Riches****Job 1-2**

*Chapter 1 introduces us to the man Job who is blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil (1:1). In the space of a few minutes, he loses everything. There is a spiritual background to Job's experience (unbeknown to him). Satan has been allowed to test him on the basis that he suspects Job only trusts God because of what he (God) has given him (1:9-11). This of course is a slur against God as much as it is against Job. Satan suggests that God has to buy followers with bribes and prizes.*

*By the end of chapters 1-2 Satan is already proved wrong. After losing all his prosperity and family, Job does not curse God, rather he praises him (1:21-22). Satan, however, remains unconvinced, and the rest of the book reveals Job's righteousness in the midst of extraordinary suffering and oppression.*

**Appetisers...**

- 1 Many social commentators espouse that the Aussie 'laid-back' approach to life has the advantage of not taking things too seriously. Would you say this cultural assessment (if it is true) is an advantage or a disadvantage? Has this helped or hindered us in dealing with the suffering we experience?
  
- 2 In the Psalms and Proverbs we find many of the biblical writers adopting metaphors to relate their experiences (e.g Psalm 84:5; 92:12). What metaphors would you use to describe your experience of life?

## 5

**The Only Response...****Job 42**

*At the end of the book Job still does not know why his life has been made a misery. Half way through the last chapter, things turn good as quickly as they turned bad. Eventually Job dies "old and full of years" (42:17) which is a commentary that his life was met with much blessing despite his times of despair and misery.*

*The ending to Job is happy even if it is a little confusing. No reason is given for Job's return to fortune. Interestingly, Satan is given no mention, despite being the perpetrator of Job's sufferings. Yet Job's friends are held responsible for their faulty counsel and directed to repent of it. We are left in no doubt that their wisdom was not God's, and there is a distinct difference between the two.*

*Job is a book about suffering. It asks lots of questions, but we ought not to expect that it gives all the answers. The wise way to live is not by knowing why everything happens, because we'll never work that out (would that not make us God?). The way through the struggles and changes of life is to know the God who knows everything. The way to negotiate life is to know Jesus Christ. The main question we must address is not "Why is this happening to me?", but "Since this is happening to me, how can I use it to know God better through Jesus Christ?"*

*The book of Job is about remaining faithful to God, and trusting him, even when bad things happen, because knowing God is more valuable than not suffering.*

**Appetisers...**

- 1 Comment from your own experience on this statement: "God doesn't always give us the answers we expect?"

- 3 God places a direct challenge to Job in 40:6-14. What is the personal issue he takes up with Job (see esp. vv 8-9)?
  
- 4 Job gives no response to God's question, yet God says that he will have to eventually (40:7). God then continues his speech through to the end of chapter 41. How does what God has to say here relate to his basic criticism of Job?
  
- 5 Are there any surprises for you in God's speech i.e. are there things you thought God might have addressed in response to Job's predicament that he has not spoken of?

### Take Away Value...

- 6 How can suffering shrink our horizons and cause us to lose perspective on life?
  
- 7 What are some of the practical things we can do which might help us to deal with an attitude of bitterness when we are enduring suffering?

### Main Course...

#### Read Job 1

- 3 Describe Job's character and his social setting. Read Proverbs 3:1-8 and identify how this relates of Job. Summarise the picture we are given of Job as the book begins.
  
- 4 What is the accusation Satan makes to God concerning Job (vv 9-12)?
  
- 5 How does God respond?
  
- 6 What are some of the ways Satan is clearly under God's control?

**Read Job 2**

7 How is Satan's challenge to God advanced in chapter 2?

8 How much does Job understand about his own suffering?

**Take Away Value...**

9 Satan accuses Job of only being interested in God's gift rather than God himself. Have you found yourself in this position, and what steps could you take to avoid this temptation?

10 What have you learnt about suffering in these first two chapters in Job?  
What comfort and encouragement have you gained from what you've learnt?

**4**

## God Doesn't Always Give Us The Answers We Expect Job 38-41

*After 37 chapters of debate about why Job is suffering, God finally speaks. He asks a series of questions about nature, which are powerful testimony to his character. They remind Job of who is God and who isn't. We must never forget that we are the creatures and he is the creator. We have no claim against him that he must pay. No matter how difficult things may seem, it is never an excuse for being disrespectful or presumptuous with God. We are not the judge; God is.*

*In the midst of all that takes place we are reminded that God's priority is to restore relationship with Job rather than to explain everything about Job's suffering (Job is never let in on the divine stage that sets the scene for the book (chapters 1-2). God is more concerned that Job relate to him properly, rather than Job know all things. The fear of the Lord – that is wisdom (Job 28:28). The key to wisdom, to making the best of life, is not to know why things happen. The key is to know the God who knows why things happen.*

**Appetisers...**

1 Up until this point the book of Job has been something of a court case, where Job's friends and Job himself have been mounting their cases for assessing Job's suffering. If you were a reporter asked to give an account of the case to date, how would you describe the events of the 'trial' to this point? (Hint: Job gives a summary of his feelings in 30:15-31 & 31:5-12. A new character, Elihu, sums up the case of Job's friends in 32:1-33:12)

**Main Course...****It will be worth reading Job 38-41**

2 God speaks from his heavenly court and brings down his verdict on what has transpired. How would you summarise his 'decision'?

- 4 What can Proverbs 3:1-20 teach us about wisdom and the recipe for wise living?
- 5 Each of the three sections of Job 28 are separated by the phrase 'Where is wisdom?' (vv 12 & 20). In vv 1-11 what is being affirmed?
- 6 What does the author turn to focus on in vv 12-28? How does it compare with what was spoken of in vv 1-11?
- 7 What does it mean to fear the Lord?
- 8 Read 1 Corinthians 18-31. How does Jesus help us to understand where true wisdom is found? What impact does this have on the significant decisions you face in living a life in fear of the Lord?

### Take Away Value...

- 9 From what you have observed of the life of Job, do you think he has been a model for the wisdom Chapter 28 speaks of?

10 "In this world of suffering the most important thing is not to know why we are suffering, but to know God better while we are suffering"

Do you agree? Have you experienced this reality and how has it helped you mature as one of God's people? Have you seen or experienced it at a community level amongst God's people?

## 2

### The Cry Of A Frustrated Faith Job 19

*So many Christians just want to eradicate pain and present Jesus as the great Panadol tablet. We just want to fix things up for people, and sometimes we are not prepared to consider their pain. Yet suffering is a part of growing. The great dilemma is that even after a person becomes a Christian, pain remains the reality of life. It is just that our perspective on it has changed. Job's friends have been rambling on between chapters 4-18 with all sorts of advice. Eliphaz has told him that all suffering is a result of sin, and so concludes Job's done something terribly wrong. Bildad suggests Job's children may have been the cause, while Zophar tries to suggest God is actually kind and the situation could be a lot worse. But Job has a rebuke for his friends in chapter 19.*

*Job's friends know about his suffering but they don't know suffering. They haven't listened to what he's said. Job said that he is innocent. He says he is in a living hell...but they won't accept it. Why? Because their set of beliefs about God logically tell them that God doesn't let innocent people suffer. These fellows know about God, but they don't know God. They have their formula of beliefs about God and cling to them.*

*But Job clings to God. He has much more – he has confidence and faith in a just God.*

### Appetiser...

- 1 People try and pin down reasons for suffering. From your own experience, what are some of the reasons people give?

### Main Course...

#### Read Job 19

- 2 In vv 1-6, what is the rebuke Job has for his friends?

- 3 List the frustrations Job experiences in vv 7-22.
- 4 In vv 23-27 where does Job's hope lie?
- 5 What is Job's timeframe for God's deliverance from his present circumstances?
- 6 Summarise the message of chapter 19 in your own words.

### Take Away Value...

- 7 What are the dangers of not allowing people to lament or trying to provide solutions as the friends of Job did?
- 8 Think back to a time when you have suffered. What was your attitude towards God at the time. Has it changed since, and if so, how?

## 3 Wisdom & Suffering Job 28

*Chapter 27 concludes a lengthy discourse that involves exchanges between Job and his three friends. Despite some variations in emphasis, Job's friends all agree that Job's suffering is as a result of unconfessed sin. Job must have done something wrong to deserve the trouble he is experiencing. But Job knows of no sin bad enough to warrant the degree of suffering he is going through, and this leads to a stalemate.*

*In the flow of the book, chapter 28 gives a profound reflection on true wisdom from God's perspective (for Job is in desperate need of the same). From the outset of the book we have known Job as a righteous man, and nothing has changed. We have been alerted to the reality that suffering can happen to anyone, even those who don't deserve it. In this fallen world, it seems even the innocent suffer. Job's friends make the mistake of reducing God to virtually an impersonal system of cause and effect. Good things happen to good people: bad things happen to bad – simple as that. But a true understanding of the wisdom of God will not allow such simplistic conclusions, for he is a personal God who acts in the world and in our lives, and ultimately in the cross of Christ. Here is true wisdom that denies the shallow view of life Job's friends espoused.*

### Appetisers...

- 1 Begin by sharing some homespun piece of wisdom that has been passed down to you from a previous generation.
- 2 From your observations, from what sources do your unchurched friends and family seek wisdom? In what sorts of situations do they seek it?

### Main Course...

#### Read Job 28

- 3 Why do you think this chapter has been referred to as an interlude?