



THE BOOK OF JOB



Job 1

INTRODUCTION: INTRODUCING JOB

1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. 2 He had seven sons and three daughters, 3 and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

4 His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

SATAN AND GOD: THE MEETING

6 One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. 7 The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the Lord, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."

8 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. 10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

12 The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

THE CAPTURE OF JOB'S OXEN AND DONKEYS

13 One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

THE MURDER OF JOB'S SHEEP AND SERVANTS

16 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

THE MURDER OF JOB'S SERVANTS AND THEFT OF HIS DONKEYS

17 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

THE MURDER OF JOB'S CHILDREN

18 While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 19 when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

JOB STILL DOES NOT BLAME GOD!

20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship 21 and said:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart.

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."

22 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.



The book of Job is in the Old Testament. It is therefore both a Jewish and Christian story.



Job 2: He still does not sin!

"Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason."

4 "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. 5 But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."

6 The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. 8 Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

9 His wife said to him, "Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!"

10 He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

The Meaning of Suffering is a Mystery

For Catholics, the meaning of suffering is a MYSTERY and it might be the case that God uses suffering to bring about GREAT GOODS that would not have been possible without it.

In the biblical Book of Job, God tells the long-suffering Job that he is just not capable of understanding the reasons why God chooses to do, or not do, certain things.

A summary of the friends' judgement

ELIPHAZ – Job never really understood the pain of others because he had it so good. Job must have done something bad and deserves to suffer (we know he doesn't!)

BILDAD – Job's children brought their deaths upon themselves

ZOPHAR – Whatever Job has done wrong probably deserves greater punishment than what he has received

ELIHU – You might not have done wrong, but you still have no right to question God

God responds

"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?" (Job 38: 4)

Job repents

My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. 6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42: 6)

Job is blessed with more than he had before!

12 The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. 13 And he also had seven sons and three daughters. 14 The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. 15 Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers.

16 After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. 17 And so Job died, an old man and full of years.

Job 3: Job Sins!

11 When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. 12 When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. 13 Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.

After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. 2 He said:

3 "May the day of my birth perish,

and the night that said, 'A boy is conceived!'

4 That day—may it turn to darkness;

may God above not care about it;

may no light shine on it.

Job Curses the day he was conceived

God ignores Job

"I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer; (Job 30: 20)

Knowledge Check

1. What does Job own at the beginning of the story?
2. Why does Satan suggest Job has never sinned?
3. What is taken from Job?
4. How does Job's wife react to his suffering?
5. What causes Job to curse God?
6. What are the names of Job's four friends?
7. What causes Job to realise that he is in the wrong?
8. How is Job rewarded at the end of the story?

Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

Exam Question

b) Describe the suffering Job experiences in the book of Job [5]