

# JOB



### 3 MODERN VIEWS OF HOW GOD RUNS THE WORLD

1. God cannot do all the good he would want to do because of the ongoing spiritual war.
2. God is sovereign and ordains suffering. He has a reason for everything.
3. God is sovereign but doesn't ordain suffering. He allows suffering as part of the fallen world.

# WHEN?

- *"There was a man in the land of Uz..." (1:1)*
  - 2 Sam 12:1: *"There were two men in a city..."*
  - Jer 26:20: *"There was another man..."*
- Ezek 14:14, 20: *"...even if Noah, Daniel, and Job, these three, were in it, they would save only their own lives by their righteousness."*
- James 5:11: *"You have heard of the endurance of Job..."*
- Suggestions from 2000 - 300 B.C.
- Probably an old story anyway, even if the book was written later.

# WHERE?

- Uz is connected with Edom in Jer 25:20 and Lam 4:21, but with Aram in Gen 10:23 and 22:21.
- Gen 36:28 mentions a person whose name is Uz - who lives in Edom
- "The East" (1:3) can be anything east of the Jordan river
- Sabeans (1:15) in South-Arabia, Chaldeans (1:17) by the Tigris
- We don't know if he was an Israelite outside of Israel, or if he just believed in the God of Israel.

# JOHN WALTON & TREMPER LONGMAN III

*We therefore adopt the position that, though Job himself may have been a real person who actually lived, the rest of the book is a literary work of art providing a wisdom discussion that is framed by extremes... This is important for some readers because it is easy to get distracted by this picture of a God who is "making wagers with the devil" or has no knowledge of what Satan is doing or of what motivates Job's righteousness. Instead we should take this scenario as a hypothetical one: What if we imagine...? In this view, the truth of the message of Job is preserved while potential concerns about the nature of God are avoided... Whether we label it a thought experiment or simply a hypothetical scenario built around extremes, we can encounter the God-given message of the text undistracted from incidental curiosities and without the angst that comes with wondering why God killed Job's children.*

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“In all toil there is profit, but mere talk leads  
only to poverty.”

– *Proverbs 14:23*

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“I am guaranteed a profit if I work hard.  
Nothing can go wrong then.”

– *Proverbs 14:23*

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“A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand  
of the diligent makes rich.”

– *Proverbs 10:4*

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“If you’re poor, you can’t complain.  
You’re just lazy.”

– *Proverbs 10:4*

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“The blessing of the LORD makes rich,  
and he adds no sorrow with it.”

– *Proverbs 10:22*

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“All rich people are blessed by God.  
No poor people are blessed by God.”

– *Proverbs 10:22*

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“God likes Norway more  
than all poor countries.”

– *Proverbs 10:22*

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“The reward for humility and fear of the  
LORD is riches and honor and life.”

– *Proverbs 22:4*

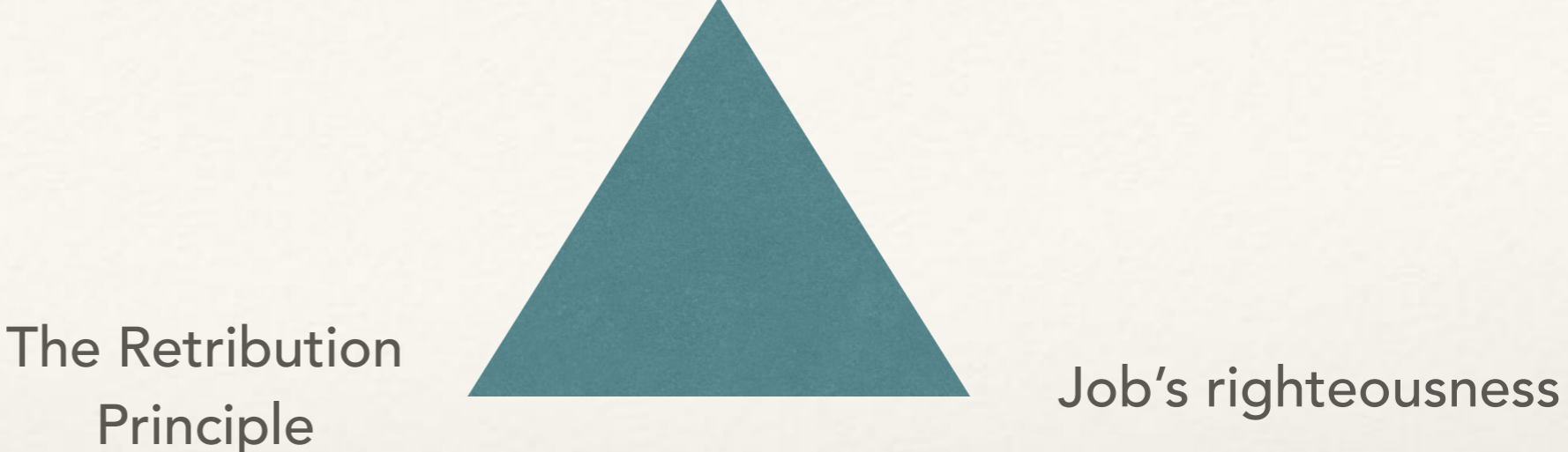
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“If somebody dies young, the reason was  
that he didn’t fear God.”

– *Proverbs 22:4*

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1-2	Prolog	God says that Job is blameless
3-27	Dialog	<p style="text-align: center;">God is just</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">The Retribution Principle      Job's righteousness</p>
28	Wisdom Poem	The voice of the author as a transition to the speeches?
29-31	Job	Final speech. Ends with demanding that God answers (31:35)
32-37	Elihu	God can use suffering to get people's attention. The righteous will repent, while the ungodly will not and will perish.
38-41	God	Answers the accusations about his justice and his way of running the world. God sees everything, Job sees only a small part. God's apparent injustice has to be seen in a bigger perspective.
42	Epilog	Job realizes that there is much he doesn't understand and regrets what he has said in his frustration. God still says Job spoke the truth about him and gives him double of what he had before.

# HOW DOES JOB VIEW GOD?

- What motivates his behaviour described in 1:4-5?
- Many translation have past tenses in 3:25. NIV: "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me." Did Job fear that this would happen?
- Does 7:17-20 and 10:5-7 tell us anything?
- "For I was in terror of calamity from God, and I could not have faced his majesty." (31:23) Context: His good deeds.



# SATAN?

- Most translations: Satan
- NO11: Anklageren (The Accuser).
- JPS Tanakh (1985), Young's Literal Translation (1898): "The Adversary"
- LXX: "diabolos"

# SATAN?

- Human beings
  - 1 Sam 29:4 - David
  - 2 Sam 19:22 - sons of Zeruiah
  - 1 Kings 5:4 - human enemies of Solomon
  - 1 Kings 11:14 - Hadad the Edomite
  - 1 Kings 11:23, 25 - Rezon the son of Eliada
  - Ps 109:6: parallelism: a wicked man (LXX: diabolos)
- Heavenly beings
  - Job 14x - def. art. throughout
  - Num 22:22, 32 (possibly verbs) - the angel of the Lord
  - 1 Chron 21:1 - an adversary/Satan incited David (LXX: diabolos)
  - Zech 3:1-2 (3x): def. art.

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JOB IS IN IT FOR THE BLESSINGS.  
REMOVE THE BLESSINGS AND YOU'LL  
SEE THAT HE DOESN'T FEAR YOU.

— *The Satan's accusation (1:9-11)*

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WHY IS JOB RIGHTEOUS?

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**SO WHAT'S THE  
BOOK ABOUT?**

- If it's about the problem of evil and why the innocent suffer, why doesn't God answer that clearly?
- The question is, "Why is Job righteous?" not "Why is Job suffering?" Is the book more about the reasons for righteousness?
- The role of the bet between God and Satan is to show that Job's suffering is not the result of anything he has done.
- Sometimes suffering comes for no reason but simply to justify God's claim that humans can serve him without thought of rewards.

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JOB IS THE TEST CASE FOR  
CONSIDERING HOW GOD RUNS  
THE WORLD AND HOW WE  
SHOULD THINK ABOUT GOD  
WHEN LIFE GOES HAYWIRE.

— *John Walton & Tremper Longman III*

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# THE DIALOG (CH 3-27)

ELIPHAZ	BILDAD	ZOPHAR
Mystic	Traditionalist	Rationalist
Personal experience	Wisdom of the ages	Black & white system
Human experience	Human tradition	Human merit



## The dialog (ch 3-27)

Cycle 1

Advice. Generalizations + exhortations

Cycle 2

Attention on the fate of the wicked. They insult and humiliate Job with insinuations.

Cycle 3

Direct accusation of Job

*They play the role of the Satan's philosophical representatives.*

# CH 9-10

- 9:17: He thinks that God is not doing the right thing.
- 9:22: "he destroys both the blameless and the wicked". God doesn't really care about who is blameless or not, since Job is blameless and is suffering.
- 9:23: "When disaster brings sudden death, he mocks at the calamity of the innocent." Takes it even further...
- 9:24: "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he covers the eyes of its judges-- if it is not he, who then is it?" God actively stops justice from happening.
- 9:28: "I become afraid of all my suffering, for I know you will not hold me innocent (acquit me)." Because he thinks God is unjust.
- 9:29-31: "I shall be condemned; why then do I labor in vain?" God has made up his mind regardless of Job's lifestyle.
- 10:1-8: God should know better than to make Job suffer when he knows that Job is not guilty.

# 12:9

- “Who among all these does not know that *the hand of the LORD has done this?*”
- “...so that all may see and know, all may consider and understand, that *the hand of the LORD has done this*, the Holy One of Israel has created it.” (Is 41:20)
- Only two places in the OT with this exact phrase.
- YHWH is used only here in the dialogue section. (Elsewhere: Ch 1-2, 28:28, ch 38-42.)
- Possibly a quote from Is 41:20, which would date Job to the 8th century as the earliest.

# ELIHU (CH 32-37)

- Redefines the retribution principle to also include discipline beforehand.
- 36:8-17
  - If the righteous suffer, God wants to show them their transgressions and arrogance (v. 9) and to open their ears to instruction and to repent (v. 10).
  - If they listen, they will return to prosperity (v. 11). If they don't listen, they will perish (v. 12). Discipline or punishment.
  - God is calling Job out of his situation (v. 16), but Job is focusing on the wrong things (v. 17). He is in danger of perishing like an ungodly person.
- Represents "the prophetic wisdom"? He is young and gets the wisdom through revelation and not age and experience. Still he comes too short.

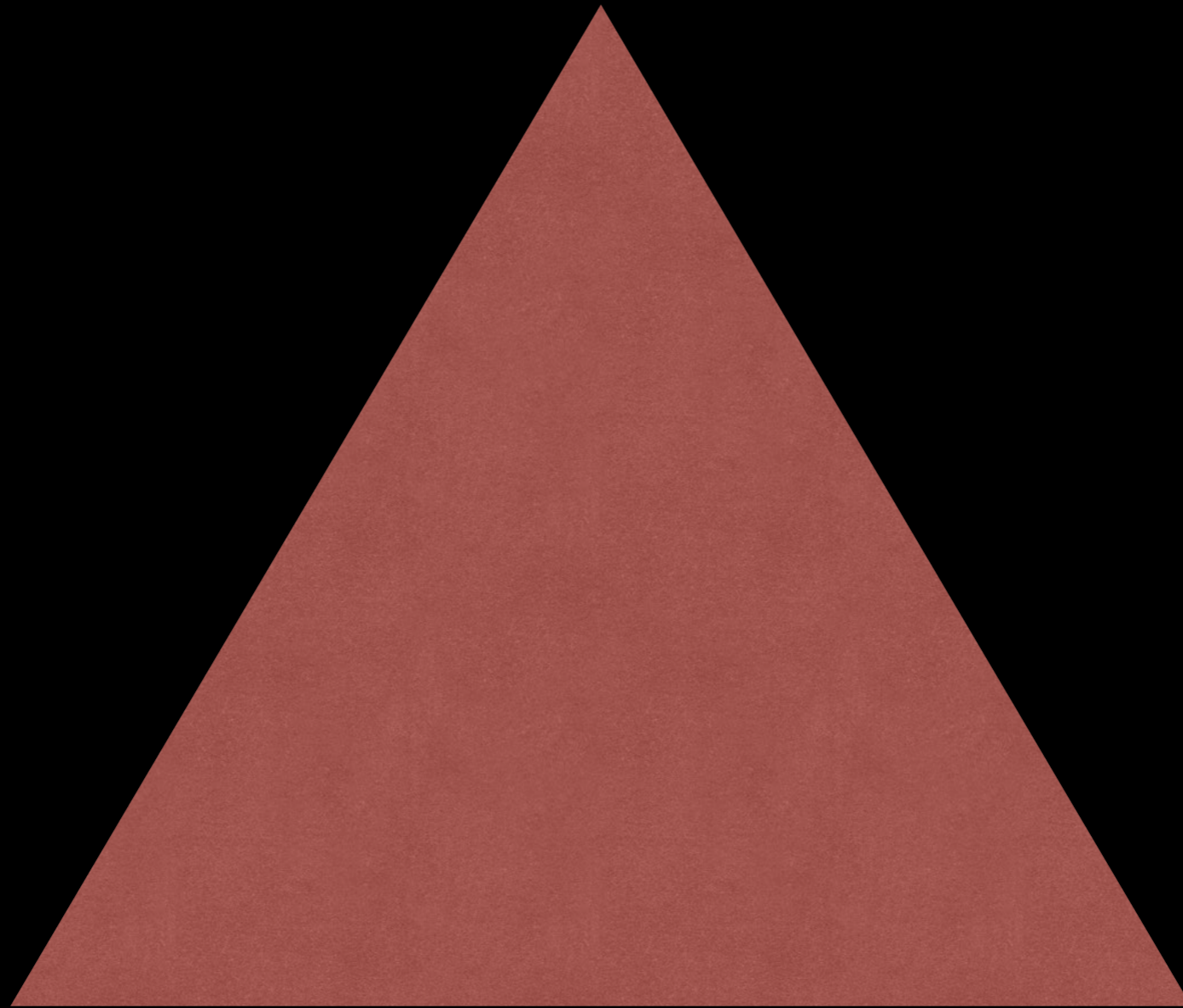
# GOD'S ANSWER (CH 38-39)

- God speaks only to Job, but God's answer is not what Job asked for (either an indictment [e.g. 31:35] or a declaration of innocence [e.g. 23:7]).
- 38:2 - Job has made God's way of running the world less clear because he doesn't have all the knowledge needed?
  - This cannot contradict 42:7, where God will say that Job spoke rightly about him.
- The natural order is parallel to the moral order of the universe. Job sees only a small part of the world, God sees the full picture.

# GOD'S ANSWER (CH 38-39)

- 28:23-24: Only God knows where wisdom is, because he sees everything under the heavens.
- 38:36-37: *Who has put wisdom in the inward parts, or given understanding to the mind? Who has the wisdom to number the clouds?*
- 39:26-27: *Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars, and spreads its wings toward the south? Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes its nest on high?*
- God answers another question which has been in the background throughout the book: What is the source of wisdom? God alone is wise.
- God doesn't run the world according to justice, but according to wisdom.

God is just



The Retribution  
Principle

Job's righteousness

# GOD'S QUESTION (40:2)

- As in a court case, God is inviting Job to reply to what God has just said.
- 'contend' used several times by Job, as in:
  - 13:6 - listen to the pleadings of my lips
  - 13:19 - Who is there that will contend with me?
  - 23:6 - Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power?
  - 31:35 - Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary!
- 'argue':
  - 13:3 - I desire to argue my case with God
  - 13:15 - I will defend my ways to his face
  - 23:7 - There an upright person could reason with him
- God is answering Job's own wish. He has clearly said that he wants to contend with God and argue his case with him.



## JOB'S 1ST REPLY (40:4-5)

- *"See, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but will proceed no further."*
- Is this only humility? Then why does God continue on?
- Job knew all the time that the power of God overwhelms anyone who tries to stand before him (9:12-15, 13:20-22, 23:15-16). Job doesn't come up with a reply, maybe because it is impossible.
- But he does not admit anything either, or take anything back. He could be saying "I rest my case." He has said all he wants to say, and inviting God to go on.

# 40:8-14

- v. 8: God gets close to answer Job directly...
  - 27:5: - *Far be it from me to say that you are right; until I die I will not put away my integrity from me.*
- v. 11-13:
  - Can Job judge all evil? Could he do a better job than God in running the world?
  - *"Only one with power like God and in physical control of the universe can have the authority to make judgments in the moral sphere also. Vindication of a human being is a divine task, and Job has been trying to do God's task by demanding vindication."* (David Clines)

## BEHEMOTH (40:15-24)

- ❖ Plural of 'animal' or 'cattle'. Used only here about a single animal. Could mean a large land animal.
- ❖ God made it (v. 15), it's very strong (v. 16-18), 'behema' mentioned first in Gen 1:24 (v. 19), it's not frightened (v. 23) and can't be domesticated (v. 24).
- ❖ Real or mythical? Fancy poetry or literal?
- ❖ Hippo since 17th cent. In Ugaritic literature the 7-headed dragon appear with El's calf, Atik.



# LEVIATHAN (CH 41)

- A crocodile? Modern Hebrew: Whale (NEB)
- Seven-headed sea monster called Lotan/Litan in Canaanite mythology. A common symbol of chaos in the Ancient Near East.
- Ps 74:13-14 - *You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the dragons in the waters. You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.*
- Ps 104:25-26: *Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.*
- Is 27:1 - *On that day the LORD with his cruel and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea.*

# WHAT'S GOD'S POINT?

1. Only God can control the hippo and the crocodile?
2. Only God can control the chaos monsters (even though they don't really exist..)?
3. The world is amazing but dangerous?
4. Warfare view: There is still chaos, and evil does not come from God, as Job thinks, or from human behavior, as his friends claim. God is in continuous combat with evil as manifested in these chaos creatures. Even God has to handle them carefully. It takes all his craft and power to keep them in subjection and prevent them from destroying all that he has achieved. (?)

# 5. SYMBOLS OF JOB AND GOD?

WALTON & LONGMAN

- "After the description of Behemoth, the only point made concerns its stability in surging waters (40:23). Behemoth cannot be moved, and Leviathan cannot be challenged. Humans should respond to raging rivers with security and trust (as Behemoth does) and should not think that they can domesticate or challenge God (like with Leviathan, who is inferior to God)."
- "Job is explicitly compared to Behemoth at the initial introduction to the beast (40:15). Job, like Behemoth, is the first of God's works (15:7) and withstands all turbulence."
- "Yahweh does not speak of Job doing anything *to* Behemoth, but when the discussion switches to Leviathan, the first 8 verses use the 2nd person. This switch suggests that Leviathan is to be compared to God (41:3, 10-11, 34)."
- "Job needs to find stability in rough waters and have more respect for Yahweh. This is the message of the book and therefore is appropriately found in God's last speech."

## GOD'S ANSWER (CH 38-41)

- God is fully in control of the world he created.
- Although God's answer is surprising and not a literal reply, it seems like God holds nothing against Job. Which means Job was right about his blamelessness.
- An explanation why this happened to Job would destroy the purpose of the book: Suffering can happen for no good reason and we will never know why it happened.



## JOB'S 2ND REPLY (42:1-6)

- v. 2: He already know that God can do all things, but now he also knows that God has a purpose with all that he does.
- v. 3: Repeats God's question in 38:2. Admits he spoke out of limited knowledge.
- v. 4: Quotes God in 38:3 and 40:7. He didn't answer last time, but now he will.
- 5: Job doesn't get to see everything, but he sees God.
- v. 6: *"therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."*
  - "Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes." (NASB, NJB, NO11, NB88)
  - "Therefore I melt away..." (he will die because he has seen God)

# "I AM COMFORTED IN DUST AND ASHES"?

42:6

- 2:11 - They met together to go and console and comfort him.
- 7:13 - My bed will comfort me, then you scare me with dreams.
- 16:2 - Miserable comforters are you all
- 21:34 - How then will you comfort me with empty nothings?
- 29:25 - I lived like a king among his troops, like one who comfort mourners.
- 42:6 - I am comforted in dust and ashes.
- 42:11 - They showed him sympathy and comforted him

## 42:7-8

- “for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.”
- The friends’ view of God led astray, while Job’s view was right.
- Job’s theology wasn’t correct, but he did not reject God even when his theology told him he should.
- God was not insulted by anything Job said?
- “spoken *to*”: Refers only to 42:1-6 and not everything Job said. His friends never say anything to God, they only talk *about* God.

**APPLICATION**

# WHAT'S THE MESSAGE?

- The book does not give us a reason for suffering. The bet with the devil is not the reason for the suffering in the world. The bet shows that there does not have to be a reason.
- The book doesn't offer relief from why we suffer, but it offers relief from the quest for explanations and from the suspicion that God has let us down or even become our enemy.
- Not an answer to the problem of evil, but an answer to how we should react when suffering happens.
- Only God is wise and sees the full picture, including the whole course of history. He does not need to be defended, he wants to be trusted. Also when we don't understand.
- Talk to God, don't become bitter and silent. The comfort is in the relationship.

# THE THEOLOGY OF SUFFERING IN THE BOOK OF JOB

WALTON & LONGMAN

1. **Suffering is the lot of all humanity.**
2. **Suffering is a contingency of the creation in process.** Nervous system for protection means we can feel pain. Capable of love means vulnerable to pain. "Normal" cannot be defined as a life free of suffering.
3. **Suffering is not intrinsically connected to sin.**
4. **Suffering should lead us into the arms of God's love.** The Bible's strongest counsel is to trust in God's wisdom. That must be enough.
5. **Suffering is an opportunity to deepen our faith.** If we commit to honoring God in whatever circumstances. Rom 5:3. Not a reason for suffering, but a response.
6. **Suffering is an opportunity to participate in Christ's suffering.** Matt 5:10-12 and the blessings of being persecuted. 2 Tim 3:12.

# JESUS IN JOB

- Job was righteous and suffered for no reason, but he was not sinless. Jesus was sinless but still suffered. In addition he makes it possible for the unrighteous to become righteous, because he who was righteous suffered unrighteously.
- Job does not find rest in the middle of his suffering, only after he is restored. We can find a deeper rest in Jesus even in the middle of chaos around us.
- God took part in our suffering to fix things. He embraced and absorbed the undeserved consequences of all evil.
- Only God is wise, and Jesus is the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:30 etc). We can have a relationship with God's wisdom.



# HOPE AFTER DEATH FOR JOB?

- 3:13, 17-19: death as quiet rest, sleep
- 3:20-22: death as something to look forward to when suffering
- 10:21-22: death as darkness
- 14:12 - *so mortals lie down and do not rise again; until the heavens are no more, they will not awake or be roused out of their sleep.*
- Nobody ever suggests that Job will be rewarded in eternity even if he is suffering now, and that justice will be done after death.



# DO WE FEAR GOD FOR NOTHING?

1. Do we “fear” God at all? Do we have the “healthy respect” the Bible talks about? Do we realize what God is saying about himself in his speeches?
2. What if we lost all evidence of God’s blessing in our lives and had no hope of heaven? Would we still remain faithful to God and serve him with our lives? Do we fear him because he is God or because we think we will be rewarded for our relationship with him?

“

BUT IF HEAVEN NEVER WAS  
PROMISED TO ME... IT'S BEEN WORTH  
JUST HAVING THE LORD IN MY LIFE.

— *Andrae Crouch*

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