

The Book of Job

James J. Cassidy

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course seeks to cover a significant amount of biblical material in a short period of time. It will therefore be an overview of the book of Job and its theology. Special attention will be given to situating the book's theology in its redemptive-historical and canonical context. Therefore, the course will suggest ways to interpret Job biblically-theologically and therefore eschatologically and Christologically. There will be non-trivial pastoral application, particularly to the questions of care for the suffering and how to glorify God in the midst of "the fiery trial." Last of all, we will give brief attention to the question of theodicy and how Job speaks to key apologetic insights by Cornelius Van Til.

COURSE OUTLINE

- Lesson 1: Introduction
- Lesson 2: Prologue (Chapters 1–2)
- Lesson 3: Job and His Friends: 1st Cycle (Chapters 3:1–14:22)
- Lesson 4: Job and His Friends: 2nd Cycle (Chapters 15:1–21:34)
- Lesson 5: Job and His Friends: 3rd Cycle (Chapters 22:1–31:40)
- Lesson 6: Job and Elihu (Chapters 32:1–37:24)
- Lesson 7: Job and God (Chapters 38:1–42:9)
- Lesson 8: Closing Narrativ Framework (Chapters 42:10–17)

ABOUT THE TEACHER

Jim Cassidy is the pastor of [South Austin Presbyterian Church](#). He graduated in 2014 from Westminster Theological Seminary with the Ph.D in systematic theology writing on the theology of Karl Barth. He is the author of [God's Time For Us: Barth on the Reconciliation of Eternity and Time in Jesus Christ](#) (Lexham Press).



1. Introduction

I. PREFACE

II. INTRODUCTION

III. THEMES AND ISSUES

IV. OUTLINE/STRUCTURE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is common grace? Why is it important for understanding Job?
2. What are the two horns of Job's dilemma? Have you ever experienced this dilemma?
3. Why are Proverbs and Job not actually at cross-purposes?
4. God uses Satan for his purposes. What other examples in biblical history can you think of? How do you think that God commandeers Satan's efforts for his own divine purpose today?

2. Prologue (Chapters 1–2)

I. INTRODUCING JOB

II. INTRODUCING SATAN

III. SATAN ATTACKS

IV. JOB'S WIFE AND FRIENDS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the prologue of Job (chapters 1–2) is in a different literary form than the body? Why is this important for interpreting the book?
2. Job was “blameless and upright,” but he was not sinless. How can he be both “blameless” and a sinner? How do we know he wasn’t sinless?
3. What does the meaning of Satan’s name have to do with the plot of the book as it begins to unfold in chapters 1–2?
4. If God purposed and providentially brought about the raids of the Sabeans and the Chaldeans, why is he not the author of—and thereby culpable for—the murder of Job’s children?
5. How does Job react to the calamity? If such tragedy struck you, how would you respond?
6. Have you ever looked at someone suffering and wondered, “Wow, what did he do to deserve that?”
7. Put yourself in the place of Job, of someone suffering. How would you like to be comforted by others? Give specific examples of what they can say or do to truly comfort you in your affliction.

3. Job and His Friends: 1st Cycle (Chapters 3:1–14:22)

I. JOB'S LAMENT (CH. 3)

II. ELIPHAZ'S ACCUSATION (4–5)

III. JOB'S REPLY (6–7)

IV. BILDAD'S ACCUSATION (8)

V. JOB'S SECOND REPLY (9–10)

VI. ZOPHAR'S ACCUSATION (11)

VII. JOB'S (LENGTHY) REPLY (12–14)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is it right to lament one's very existence? Why or why not?
2. What is wrong with Eliphaz's reasoning in chapters 4 and 5?
3. In what ways can we "put God on trial" like Job does in chapter 7?
4. Bildad calls Job to repentance, which is a biblical thing to do. Is Bildad applying the right biblical thing here? Why or why not? Can you think of instances where biblical instruction can be wrongly applied?
5. Is Job right to maintain his innocence? How would you counsel Job who seems to be an example of someone who is righteous yet is suffering? Is God right to ordain the suffering of the innocent? Can you think of other biblical examples?
6. We often see the wicked prosper and God's people suffer. How do we make sense of this? Where else in Scripture do we see this happen?

4. Job and His Friends: 2nd Cycle (Chapters 15:1–21:34)

I. ELIPHAZ ACCUSES (CH. 15)

II. JOB'S SELF-DEFENSE (16–17)

III. BILDAD: THE WICKED ARE PUNISHED (18)

IV. JOB'S ANSWER (19)

V. ZOPHAR ON THE WICKED (20)

VI. JOB'S REPLY (21)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is Eliphaz correct about his description of what the wicked look like?
2. Ought we to believe that living rightly before God will result in temporal blessings? Why or why not?
3. In what way(s) do Job's friends side with Satan?
4. How does Job's perception of his redeemer differ from the way in which God really is his Redeemer?
5. Zophar says that the wicked receive God's justice in this life. Job says that they—according to his experience—actually do not. In fact, they seem to prosper. Who do you think is right, Zophar or Job? Why?

5. Job and His Friends: 3rd Cycle (Chapters 22:1–31:40)

I. ELIPHAZ ACCUSES (CH. 22)

II. JOB'S REPLY (23–24)

III. BILDAD'S TURN (25)

IV. JOB'S REPLY (26–31)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can the practice of sound theology ever yield bad fruit? If so, give some examples.
2. Can you have good theology without good application? Why or why not?
3. Should we expect the wicked to live long and prosper (like Job thinks), or that they will be cut down in the middle of life (as his friends think)?
4. In what ways do people who are sick experience isolation and loneliness in our society?
5. What are some of the things taught to us as we see the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer?

6. Job and Elihu (Chapters 32:1–37:24)

I. INTRODUCTION

II. ELIHU'S REBUKE OF THE FRIENDS (CH. 32)

III. ELIHU'S REBUKE OF JOB I (33)

IV. ELIHU'S DOCTRINE OF GOD I (34)

V. ELIHU'S REBUKE OF JOB II (35)

VI. ELIHU'S DOCTRINE OF GOD II (36–37)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Was Job right to defend his righteousness? Why or why not?
2. What kind of righteousness does God demand? Where do we find that righteousness?
3. How does the idea of common grace help us to understand the prosperity of the wicked?
4. How does the doctrine of total depravity help us understand righteous suffering?
5. What do you think of Elihu? Is he as clueless as Job's friends, or is he bringing a ministry of grace to Job?
6. How do the attributes of God aid in our comfort while suffering?
7. Does God always execute his justice immediately?

7. Job and God (Chapters 38:1–42:9)

I. THE LORD'S WHIRLWIND (CH. 38–40:2)

II. JOB'S SILENCE (40:3–5)

III. GOD THE CREATOR-SAVIOR, JOB THE CREATURE-REDEEMED (40:6–41:34)

IV. JOB REPENTS (42:1–6)

V. GOD REBUKES THE FRIENDS (42:7–9)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is it ever right to complain against God? Why or why not?
2. How does the idea of God's might and power bring perspective to our complaints?
3. What is the difference between condemnation and refinement? Which was God doing to Job? How do we tell the difference in our lives?
4. What does the silence of Job teach us?
5. What are our current "Behemoths" and "Leviathans" that we can look to understand the greatness of God?
6. Do believers still have unbelief? Explain.

8. Closing Narratival Framework (Chapters 42:10–17)

I. THE RESTORATION

II. RESTORED TO A HIGHER ORDER

III. LOOKING BEYOND JOB

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways did Job succeed in his ordeal? In what ways did he fail?
2. In what ways did Satan succeed in his attack on Job? In what ways did he fail?
3. Can you think of example of when we are tempted to play the arbiter between ourselves and God?
4. What good can possibly come from our suffering?
5. What is our greatest hope when we suffer? Can you think of ways we can be falsely comforted in our suffering?
6. How does the life, suffering, and restoration of Job point us to Christ?