



The Wisdom of Job

Script References

Introduction

00:00–00:49

Jon: There are three books in the Bible known as the wisdom literature: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job. The first, Proverbs, showed us that God is wise and just.

Tim: Yeah. We learned that God has ordered the world so that it's fair. The righteous are rewarded, the wicked are punished. In other words, you get what you deserve.

Jon: But then we met Ecclesiastes, who observes that people don't always get what they deserve.

Tim: Yeah. He said the world isn't always fair, that life is unpredictable and hard to comprehend just like smoke.

Jon: And this makes you wonder. Okay. Well, is God wise and just?

Tim: Exactly, and so it's that question that is being explored in the final book of wisdom, Job.

Jon: Alright. Let's dive in.

Job's Test

00:50–02:06

Tim: So Job begins with this strange story that takes place up in the heavens, which are described as something like a heavenly command center. So God is there with these angelic creatures called the sons of God, and they are all there reporting for duty.¹

1. Job 1:6-12

Jon: And God points out this guy Job, his servant, showing how righteous and good he is.

Tim: And then one of these angelic creatures approaches. He's referred to in Hebrew as "the Satan."

Jon: The Satan? Who is this?

Tim: Well, this word is actually a title, which literally means “the one who is opposed.” So out of this whole crew, he is the one questioning how God is running the world. And he proposes that Job might not actually love God, that he’s only a good person because God rewards him. If God were to take away all of the good things he gave to Job, then we would see his true colors.

Jon: So he thinks Job is just working the system?

Tim: That’s exactly right. Maybe he’s obeying just to get what he wants.

Jon: So God agrees to this experiment and allows the Satan to inflict suffering on Job.

Tim: And Job loses everyone and everything that he cares about. It is devastating. And remember, he deserves none of this. God himself said so.

Job’s Friends’ Response

02:07–03:32

Jon: The remarkable thing is that, in the midst of all this suffering, Job still praises God.²

2. Job 1:20-22

Tim: At least for chapters 1 and 2. But then in chapter 3, we find out how he’s really feeling inside. He unleashes this poem that reveals his devastation. It’s a long, elaborate curse on the day that he was born.

Jon: After this, some of Job’s friends come to visit him to offer their help, and all of them are like, “Job, you must have done something horribly wrong to deserve this. After all, we know God is just, and we know the world is ordered by God’s justice and fairness, so you must be getting what you deserve.”

Tim: And for the next 34 chapters, the friends and Job go back and forth in very dense Hebrew poetry. His friends keep speculating about why God might have sent such suffering. And they even start making up lists of hypothetical sins that Job must have committed. But after each accusation, Job defends his innocence.

Jon: And Job is innocent!

Tim: He is! He’s also on an emotional roller coaster. At some moments he’s very confident that God is still wise and just.

Jon: Yeah, and in other moments, he’s doubting God’s goodness.

Tim: He even comes to accuse God of being reckless, unfair, and corrupt. So by the end of the dialogues, Job demands that God come and explain himself in person. And God does so. He comes in the form of a great storm cloud.³

3. Job 38

God's Response to Job

03:33–04:40

Jon: Now, God doesn't give Job a direct answer. He doesn't tell Job about the conversation with the Satan.

Tim: Yeah. He does something very different. He takes Job on a virtual tour of the universe. He shows Job how grand the world is and he asks him if he's even capable of running it or understanding it just for a day. He shows Job how much detail there is in the world, things that we might see every day but really don't understand at all. But God does. He knows it all intimately. He pays attention to the beauty and operations of the universe in ways that we haven't even imagined and in places that we will never see.⁴

4. Job 38-40

Jon: And then to conclude, God shows Job two wondrous beasts and brags about how great they are.⁵

5. Job 41

Tim: Yeah. They are dangerous. I mean, they would kill you without even thinking about it. And God says they're not evil. They're actually a part of his good world.

Jon: And then that's it. That's God's whole defense. It's kind of weird. I mean, what was this all about?

God's Wisdom

04:41–05:07

Tim: It seems to be this. From Job's point of view, it looks like God is not just. But God's perspective is infinitely bigger. He's dynamically interacting with a whole universe of complexity when he makes decisions, and this is what God calls his wisdom.

Jon: So Job asking God to defend himself is actually kind of absurd.

Tim: He couldn't comprehend this kind of complexity even if he wanted to.

Living in Peace in the Fear of the Lord

05:08–06:16

Jon: So where does this leave us?

Tim: Well, it leaves Job in a place of humility. He never learned why he suffered, and yet he's able to live in peace and in the fear of the Lord.

Jon: But that's not where the book ends. Because after this, God restores to Job double everything he had lost.⁶ And this again is surprising. I mean, is this a reward? Is this God saying, "Congratulations, Job. You passed this elaborate test"?

6. Job 42:10-17

Tim: No. I mean, the whole book just made the point that Job losing everything was not a punishment, and so now getting it back isn't a reward.

Jon: So why does he get it back?

Tim: Apparently, God, in his wisdom, decided to give Job a gift. We don't know why. But what we do know is that Job's now the kind of person who, no matter what comes, good or bad, he can trust God's wisdom.

Jon: And that's the book of Job and the end of our wisdom series.

Tim: These biblical wisdom books are amazing. Each one offers a unique perspective on the good life, and you need to hear all of them together as you learn to live with wisdom and in the fear of the Lord.