

# God, Wisdom, and Difficult Times

A Study of Job

**Keys to Job and Job's Lament**

# Roadmap to Job

## Chapters 1-2

- ▶ **The Foundation of the book**
  - ▶ Foundation: Who Job is
  - ▶ Foundation: The events that occurred
  - ▶ Foundation: Job did not sin
  - ▶ Foundation: Job was a man of integrity

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- ▶ **Job's Friends**
  - ▶ There when Job needed them
  - ▶ Did not allow fear to keep them away

# Roadmap to Job

## Job's Friends Have a Problem

- ▶ **They Know Job is Righteous**
  - ▶ Eliphaz acknowledges that in 4:3
- ▶ **Prevailing Wisdom - Righteous People Simply Don't Suffer**
- ▶ **How to Reconcile these Two Things?**
- ▶ **If it Happened to Job it Could Happen to me...unless...**

# Roadmap to Job

## The Law of Retribution

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**A person gets what's coming to him. The  
wicked will suffer and the  
righteous will be rewarded.**

# Roadmap to Job

## Law of Retribution - What does Scripture Say?

**Thus you will walk in the ways of good men and keep to the paths of the righteous. <sup>21</sup> For the upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it; <sup>22</sup> but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the unfaithful will be torn from it.**

Proverbs 2:20-22

# Roadmap to Job

## Law of Retribution - What does Scripture Say?

The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous. <sup>34</sup> He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble. <sup>35</sup> The wise inherit honor, but fools he holds up to shame.

Proverbs 3:33-35

# Roadmap to Job

## Law of Retribution - What does Scripture Say?

The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast. <sup>23</sup> He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.

Proverbs 5:22-23

# Roadmap to Job

## Law of Retribution - What does Scripture Say?

**For surely, O LORD, you bless the righteous;  
you surround them with your favor as with a  
shield.**

Psalm 5:12

# Roadmap to Job

## Law of Retribution - What does Scripture Say?

**The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.**

Proverbs 20:7

# Roadmap to Job

## Wisdom Literature and Truth

- ▶ **Wisdom Literature sometimes expresses general truths about life.**
  - ▶ Principles which are true in most circumstances.
  - ▶ Good guides on how to live life wisely.
  - ▶ No ironclad guarantees.

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  - ▶ Can you think of examples where this is not true?
  - ▶ Exceptions do not invalidate the principle.

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**Ceteris Paribus**

# Keys to Understanding Job

## What is the Book of Job Really About?

- ▶ It is not here to explain why Job suffers.
- ▶ It explains what he does in the face of suffering.
- ▶ It helps us deal with our own questions regarding suffering.
- ▶ Ultimately it reminds us who God is.

**Faith in the face of tragedy  
and suffering.**

# Keys to Understanding Job

## Two Fundamental Questions

- ▶ **Does Job Fear God for Nothing? - 1:9**
  - ▶ What really is the relationship between God and man?
  - ▶ Do people do stuff only because they get stuff?
  - ▶ Do we love God for who He is, or for the benefits He provides?

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- ▶ **Where is Wisdom to Be Found? - 28:12, 20**
  - ▶ Can we let God be God?
  - ▶ READ JOB AS A ROADMAP TO FINDING WISDOM.

# Keys to Understanding Job

## God's Evaluation - 42:7-9

- ▶ “You (Eliphaz and friends) have not spoken of me what is right...”
- ▶ “...as my servant Job has.”

**Pay attention to who is speaking!**

# Keys to Understanding Job

## Job is Suffering

- ▶ He wishes he were dead (3:11); He laments that his life whizzes by so fast (7:6).
- ▶ He wants to be vindicated by God (13:18) even though he wishes he could die.
- ▶ He has no hope (7:7), yet he has confidence in God (19:25).

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**He is a sufferer expressing his feelings - seeming contradictory should be no surprise.**

# Keys to Understanding Job

## Outline of Job

### ▶ Introduction 1-2

- ▶ Not the message of the book, but set the stage for the book.

### ▶ Dialogue 3-27

- ▶ Job's Lament - chapter 3
- ▶ Three Cycles of Speeches - Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar and Job's Replies
- ▶ Job's Speech - chapter 27

### ▶ Wisdom Poem 28

### ▶ Three Monologues 29-41

- ▶ Job - 29-31
- ▶ Elihu - 32-37
- ▶ God - 38-41

### ▶ Conclusion 42

# Job's Lament - 3:1-26

## What is a Lament?

- ▶ A lament is a specific type of speaking or writing.
- ▶ It is someone pouring out their soul to God, or giving voice to their feelings.

# Job's Lament - 3:1-26

## 3 Sections

- ▶ **3:1-10**      **Job curses the day he was born**
  - ▶ He curses the day he was born - *but he does not curse God!*
  - ▶ *Leviathan - a mythological figure of speech (chaos monster) much like we might say Midas touch or Herculean effort.*

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- ▶ **3:20-26**    **Why can't I die now?**
  - ▶ Job had always known affliction could happen to him.
  - ▶ That enabled him to be compassionate.

# Two Viewpoints

## ▶ **Job's Viewpoint**

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## ▶ Heaven's Viewpoint

- ▶ *Undeserved suffering is not necessarily meaningless!*
- ▶ Should we have to see the meaning in suffering before we trust God?

# Ongoing Assignments

- ▶ Read the book of Job through twice. Use a different translation each time.
- ▶ Read at least one other book relating to suffering.

# Assignments

- ▶ If you haven't already done so, read what Eliphaz said (chapters 4-5, 15, 22) and ask yourself the questions below.
- ▶ Read Bildad (chapters 8, 18, and 25) and do the same thing.
- ▶ Read Zophar (chapters 11, 20) and do the same thing.
  - ▶ What do we learn about Eliphaz/Bildad/Zophar from what he said? What was his point of view?
  - ▶ What did he say, if anything, that was always true? Sometimes true? Not true?
  - ▶ What do we learn from him about relating to someone who is suffering? During times of suffering in your life, how would his words have affected *you*?