
FOR DEEPER THOUGHT

Following the Divine Speeches, Job has a change of heart and mind. He comes to recognize that how the world works is beyond human comprehension or imagination. In other words there is mystery, chaos, and unpredictability in the world in which we live. We are participants in a free, dynamic creation.

- This being the case, do you think there is a reason for suffering? Put another way, do you think everything happens for a reason?

In this final chapter, Job is validated, but his friends are said to have spoken wrongly about God. According to this story, then, what they believed to be true, that God is retributive, giving good for good and bad for bad, is not true.

- What do you think? Do you believe God blesses us or punishes us in this life based upon our actions? Why or why not?

While the idea of retribution was widespread, the Book of Job breaks tradition in another way. When Job has children again, only his daughters are named and they are given an inheritance. This is unusual for a time when men were heirs and women were undervalued and treated as property.

- Why do you suppose the author chose to only share the daughter's names, and name them as heirs?
- Lastly, at the heart of this story on the whole are the questions of theodicy, meaning if God is just and loving, why do bad things happen to good people. Now that we've completed the story, what do you think?

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JOB: *The Struggle for Truth*



SYNOPSIS

The Curtain rises in the ancient Land of Uz and on a man named Job. Job was a good man, an honest man, a servant of the Lord, even described as blameless. Job loved God and detested evil. Job was also a wealthy man, measured by his 7,000 heads of sheep and 3,000 camels. He was well known too, in fact the most influential man in all the East! Job was blessed with 7 sons and 3 daughters, and we are told that his was a family that loved to be together, gathered around lavish banquet tables. Yes, life was good for old Job.

In Act 1, a dialogue occurred in the Divine Court between God and the Adversary (or Accuser) about this Job fellow. He had a theory that Job's devotion and praise were dependent of Job's great abundance and good health. The Adversary told God that Job would be singing a different tune if he were to lose everything. So God consents to a test of this theory, asking only that Job's life itself be spared. And so, just like that, Job went from the top of the world to absolute rock bottom. He loses his livestock, his children, and his health, as he is covered in sores from head to toe. Job suffers greatly, and Job cries out to God.

In Act 2, we met Job's friends. First, they spend a week with Job in silence, but then begin seeking/offering explanations for Job's suffering. They begin, as most of us do in such times, to wonder why this is happening. As they see it, Job is being punished for some transgression. To them, God is retributive; a God who blesses or punishes us based on our service or sins. This was a predominant view of the time.

In Act 3, also known as the Divine Speeches, we finally hear from God as God responds to Job in two exchanges. God's words, though, never address Job's questions or accusations directly. Instead, God gives a lengthy description of creation in all of its diversity and intricacy. All of it feels like God asking Job, "Who do you think you are?!"

Today we are in Act 4; the final act. How will this ancient story conclude, and what will it speak to us now?

CAST

GodYahweh
SatanThe Accuser
JobA Good Man
ElihuSelf-Described Answerer
Job's WifeUnnamed, Non-Supportive
Job's 3 FriendsEliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar

SCENES

ACT 1: OCT 6-7

Job 1:1, 2:1-10.....The Test

ACT 2: OCT 13-14

Job 23:1-9,16-17.....With Friends Like These

ACT 3: OCT 20-21

Job 38:1-7 (34-41).....The Divine Speech

ACT 4: OCT 27-28

Job 42:1-6, 10-17.....What it is to be Human

SUMMARY FOR ACT FOUR

This week we come to the conclusion of the Book of Job. Over the last few weeks we have witnessed Job's loss and suffering, sat with him on the ash heap, heard bad advice from his friends, heard God speak to him from a whirlwind and carry him on a grand tour through creation. But what was this all about? What is the point of this story? This final chapter of Job contains the keys to the story. As we unlock the doors we glimpse something of the truth of the nature of God, creation, and what it means to be a creature in a complex and dynamic world.