**Harmony Church – Chronological Bible Study Guide – Intro and Chapters 1-2 in Job**

**Video:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQwnH8th\_fs**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQwnH8th_fs)

**Intro and Background: By John Piper**

The big picture of Job is that there was a man who was, in one sense, blameless in God's sight. He was leading a basically upright life. And there is a reality called Satan who challenges God that his man is not as good as he thinks he is. God gives Satan permission to attack Job, and he does so first through his family and possessions, and then through sickness.

Then there is Job's long illness, and his three friends come. At first they are quiet and offer some counsel, but then they begin to launch into an attack on Job that takes a true theology and distorts it all out of proportion.

Job has about 29 chapters of misapplied theology in the middle. It's very hard to navigate your way through those chapters and determine what is true and what is not, because these guys are mixing up truth and falsehood all over the place. I think you're supposed to get the big picture that God was not happy with these three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

And when Elihu shows up, he, I believe, begins to set it right. Finally, God speaks and he sets it completely right.

Then there is the last chapter that puts the closure on the whole thing. There it says that God brought all of this upon Job; and Job proves in the end to be a better man than these other men, even though Job himself sinned and had to repent in dust and ashes.

The lesson from the big book of Job is 1) that God is sovereign over all our suffering; 2) he permits Satan to come into our lives and do horrible things to us; 3) he means to prove our faith and purify our lives through it; 4) in the end he will make it good, either in this life or in the life to come; and 5) Satan does not have the last word in the lives of God's people.

**What do we learn about Satan in the book of Job, and how should that help us in our trials?**

The first thing we should learn is that Satan is subordinate to God.

Satan goes to God with a desire, and he must get permission to carry it out. This is an awesome thing to realize, that Satan does nothing in this world except by God's permissive will. At any moment God could stop Satan from doing what he is doing.

Anytime we think we can blame Satan for something that is happening, we must also reckon with the fact that God is permitting it, which is what Job remarkably does.

When Satan attacks Job's possessions, ruins them all, and then takes the lives of all ten of his children, we learn how terrible Satan can be. But Job says, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." And the writer says that Job did not sin in this statement. What we learn is that Satan can kill his kids, and yet Job can fall down, worship God, and say that God took his child. It's both/and not either/or.

Then Satan comes and strikes Job with a disease: boils from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. And his wife says, "Curse God and die." And even though it says explicitly that Satan did this, Job responds to his wife, "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord and not receive evil?" And again the writer says that Job did not sin with his lips.

Some people say that Job was wrong to say these things. They think he shouldn't have attributed to God those boils or the death of his children. I respond that, no, Job did speak the truth. I know this because if you go to the very last verse (42:11) it says, "Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and ate bread with him in his house. And they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him."

Now that is the inspired writer talking, not Job in one of his funks. Therefore, it is really clear that Job was right to say, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away," and "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord and not receive evil?" because the writer, at the end, says that he was comforted for all the calamity (evil) that the Lord had brought upon him.

So even though Satan is real and can do horrible things, he has to get permission. God is the governer of the universe. Satan does not have a parallel role to play with God. He has a subordinate role to play under God.

**Chapter 1**

***Key Verse: 9 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?***

***Quick Summary:*** *Job had ten children and he worked very hard to support them. He always prayed for forgiveness for his children because he knew that they were selfish and full of sin. He knew that his wealth, abundance of land, and huge amounts of cattle had given his children a lavish lifestyle. They had become accustomed to large feasts and parties. This is a life they enjoyed but did not appreciate.*

In Heaven, God had a conversation with Satan about Job and his faithful ways. God boasted of how righteous Job was. Satan told God that Job was only faithful because his life was full of wealth and splendor.

Satan challenged God and asked Him to allow him to destroy the many parts of Job’s life that were good. Satan suggested that Job would sin during this time and curse God for his life becoming one of loneliness and grief. God had faith in Job, so he allowed Satan to cause great destruction and strife in Job’s life.

After the conversation with God, Satan began to destroy Job’s life. He began by ruining his land, killing all of his cattle, and taking away all of Job’s riches. Satan then made sure that all of Job’s children were killed. This left Job’s wife and a few of his workers left to pick up the pieces.

Although Job was distraught and full of grief, he did not lose faith. During this time of mourning, Job did not commit any act of sin. Instead, he turned to the Lord for strength and remained devoted to Him. Job passed the initial test that was given to him because he understood that God can both give and take away.

**Chapter 2**

***Key Verses: Again, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.2And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.3And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.***

***Quick Summary:***

One day, the heavenly beings assemble before God, and Satan joins them. The LORD asks Satan what he’s been up to, and Satan says he’s been wandering the earth. The LORD again asks Satan if he’s considered Job who, despite Satan’s incitement against him, maintains his integrity. Satan replies that people will give up anything to save their own lives. He tells God to touch Job’s own body, and then Job will surely “curse you to your face.” God agrees to do this.

This second part of the prologue closely follows the structure of the first, starting with a gathering in heaven that Satan intrudes on; it’s unclear how much time has passed. God points out that despite Satan’s best efforts, Job did not curse God after all. So Satan proposes taking things a step further by causing Job to suffer physically—in his own body, not just through the loss of things dear to him—and God again permits Satan to do this. This is Job’s second test.

Satan afflicts Job with horrible sores all over his body. Job sits in ashes and scrapes his sores with a pottery shard. Then his wife asks Job if he’s still maintaining his integrity—it would be better for him to “Curse God and die.” But Job tells her that this is a foolish thing to say, and that people must receive both good things and bad from God’s hand. In all this, Job doesn’t sin.

When Job rejects his wife’s suggestion—which, given the severity of Job’s suffering, seems rather understandable—it shows that Job is a model of faithfulness in suffering: he refuses to curse God as if God has no right to deal with Job as he sees fit. By cursing God, Job would be acting like he knows better than God. Instead, Job continues to worship God, a point that will be important to keep in mind going forward. It’s also the case that Job’s wife essentially sides with Satan here (wanting Job to curse God) and fails to agree with God (that Job’s faithful worship is praiseworthy), making her a foil for Job. Also note that this is actually Satan’s last appearance in the whole book. This again underscores the idea that even though Satan is the being who directly afflicts Job, he’s more just an instrument for God’s testing of Job; he isn’t really that important himself.

When they hear about Job’s sufferings, three of Job’s friends come to visit—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. Their plan is to comfort Job. As they approach Job, they start weeping, tearing their robes, and throwing dust on themselves because Job’s appearance has changed so much. They spend the next seven days and nights sitting with Job in silence, seeing how terrible his suffering is.