

Intro to the Book of Job

Why are we reading the Book of Job now? As you moved into the book of Job, you may be asking this question. Many scholars believe that Job may be the first book of scripture ever written. I believe that the first five books of the Bible which is also known as the Pentateuch were written mostly by Moses. Moses compiled the stories of Genesis from the oral tradition of the people of Israel. Moses lived during the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which cover the years of Moses' life, but Genesis is the story of Creation and the establishment of God's covenant with Abraham who becomes the people of Israel. When we get back to Genesis 12 and the rest of the book I will give you more introductions then, but for now as you are reading Job, let me say that many believe Job was written before Moses and I believe Job probably lived before Abraham. But let me remind you that when Job lived does not really effect why God has placed this book in Scripture.

Job is a book that is one of the five Old Testament books called Wisdom Literature. Calling this Wisdom Literature is not so much about style or poetry, although there is much to that but it really is a broad term for collection of diverse and unlikely fellow travelers. What keeps the feet of these, what I like to call, Faith-travelers on common ground is Wisdom's unrelenting insistence that nothing in human experience can be omitted or slighted if we decide to take God seriously and respond to God believing.

God and God's ways provide the comprehensive plot and sovereign action in the Scriptures, but human beings-every last man and woman of us, including every last detail involved in our daily living-are invited and honored participants in all of it. There are no spectator seats provided for the drama of salvation. There is no "bench" for incompetent players. We are all in.

Job is a book dealing with suffering. Job suffered. His name is synonymous with suffering. He asked, "Why?" He asked, "Why me?" And he put his questions to God. He asked his questions persistently, passionately, and eloquently. He refused to take silence for an answer. He refused to take clichés for an answer. He refused to let God off the hook.

Job did not take his sufferings quietly or piously. He disdained going for a second opinion to outside physicians or philosophers. Job took his stance before God, and there he protested his suffering

As you read you will meet Job's friends who don't help much because they want Job to say what he did wrong and that he is being punished. But Job knows differently. Job is one who trust God, even reminding his wife that "We take the good days from God-why not also the bad days?"

In the end Job doesn't get all his questions answered but he comes to know that God is the creator and Job is not. Ask the Lord as you read these chapters "Lord, how I will be different today because I read your word?"