

# Bible-Reading Coach Podcast Transcript

## Week 23: Job 15-42 *God's Wisdom > Our Wisdom*

Welcome to Week 23 of the Bible reading coach podcast. My name is Karl Vaters and I'm here to help you read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks.

The Book of Job. Yeah, that's where we're going to be getting into this week. Before we get right into it, though, let's remind you from last week of some of the things we've learned about the book of Job already, first of all, Job is a strange book and it breaks down into three distinct parts. Chapters one and two set up the story where God allows Satan to inflict a godly man with unfathomable pain and loss. Then chapters 3 through 37 Job and his friends argue back and forth about what's going on here and that's where the bulk of our reading will spend this week from chapter 15 on. And then it'll end this week, with chapters 38 through 42, where God responds to their anger into their arguments, he tells them, you got it all wrong. And he really doesn't explain himself much more than that, because he doesn't need to. And we'll see more about that soon.

So also from last week, with the way we tried to describe it last week from a teaching that I got years ago from Murrie Dempster was, imagine that the story takes place on two stages, a lower stage that's out front, and an upper stage that's behind them, the people acting on the lower stage for the audience can't see that there's an upper stage up and behind them. But the people in the upper stage, those who are characters there, can see down on the lower stage and in fact, are controlling what happens on the lower stage. Job and his friends are living on the lower stage, and they can't see what's happening in the spiritual world above them. That's not a perfect analogy, but it's the best I've heard about how to understand what's happening in Job.

We also need to understand that Job's story takes place around the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so, long before Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, but it was written after the Torah, because it mentions Yahweh, the name of God, that was only known when Moses asked God in the book of Genesis. So, took place, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob long before Moses was written probably shortly after the time of Moses.

Now, in case you were unaware from last week, we have now entered a different section of the Bible. Up until the middle of last week, we were reading books of history, as of the middle of last week, and now for the next couple of months, we will be reading, well, not quite a couple of months, but several weeks at least, we will be reading a different section of the Bible, the wisdom books. In fact, it will be over a couple of months. Job Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, they're not narratives, they're not history, they're not story based. They are poetry. And in a couple weeks we'll, well next week especially we'll explain to you how we read poetry differently than history.

But as you read for the next few days in chapters 15 through 37, here's what to look for, as Job's and his friends' arguments go back and forth. First of all, notice, these are really smart people. Their arguments are not stupid, they're not nonsense, they, they're hard to refute. And they're believed by a lot of people because they're based in some real intelligent thought. In fact, just from a literary standpoint, Job is considered one of the world's great literary works. The language, the logic that's used is really, really stellar. They make their points, well, they

understand and they know about Job's suffering, and they know about God's sovereignty. The problem is they're on the lower stage, and they don't know something's happening on the upper stage.

And as we mentioned last week, they probably at this point, don't have any understanding that Satan exists as a being. And so they're trying to figure out how all of this can happen. If all they know about is humans and God, we still make that mistake today, we still often attribute to God things that in fact, God did not want God did not cause and in fact, are against God's will. Now, he allowed them, nothing happens without him allowing him. But that's his permissive will, that is not his necessary desire.

And they didn't even know how to have that conversation. Of course, as far as they know, there's only two actors here, God and Job. And so Job must have done something wrong. If you don't have an understanding of Satan, of the devil, that we have an enemy, that we have a temptor, that we have an accuser, we will have bad theology, or at least incomplete theology. And that's what happened here. We can't allow the devil to have too much space in our heads. But we have to understand that He exists and factor him in, especially when bad things happen.

So the arguments that we're going to be reading in chapters 4 through 38, this week, actually fall into three cycles. Let me give you the outline of the arguments because otherwise, it just goes on and on and on. And it's hard to understand what's happening. So the first section that we're going to read about in chapters four through 14, they're making the argument that God punishes the wicked and blesses the good and therefore, Job, if you're not being blessed, you must be wicked. That's chapters 4 through 14.

The second section, in chapters 15 through 21, they make the argument that the wicked suffer and perish because they are against God. So it's not just simply that you've done something wrong, Job, but in fact, you must have made yourself an enemy of God, why else would he punish you? So that's what we read. Those are the arguments that they'll make in 15 to 21.

The third section of arguments, in chapters 22, through 27, argue God is majestic, but Job, you're wicked. So it's just a contrast. If you can't get this, then you just aren't understanding the character of yourself and the character of God. God is majestic, but Job you must be wicked. And then Job in 28 to 31 gives what he thinks are his closing arguments because his three friends have stopped.

But after his closing argument in chapter 32, a fourth friend shows up, a man named Elihu shows up and he gives four speeches because he missed out on all the earlier stuff. And when Elihu shows up, his four speeches go like this. 32 and 33 he says, what God teaches, he talks about what God teaches us through pain. And 34 he tells us pain shows God's justice and wisdom. In 35. He talks about the advantages of being holy before God, and at 36 and 37 he tells Job, God is great and Job, you must just be ignorant about it.

All of this to a man in more pain than we can possibly fathom. So at least they had a compassion deficit. We know that for sure. Thankfully, however, this week ends with God showing up. And when he does, God goes on a rant. This is how the book ends in chapters 38 through 42. Take a look at what happens when God shows up in 38. One look for this when you come to it this week. 38 one then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said, "Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man, I will question you and you shall answer me." Okay, whoa, God is ticked off.

And then God even gets sarcastic Job 38:19, God says this. "What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside? Can you take them to their places? Do you know the path to their dwellings? Surely, you know, for you are already born, you have lived so many years." God is being straight up sarcastic. Where did darkness and light come from? Can you answer that for me? Tell me because I'm sure you have the answers. Because you're so wise, and you've lived for so long. That's what God is saying there. It's amazing.

And then he turns to Job's friends. And here's an example of what he says to his friends in job 42:7 "After the Lord said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'I'm angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me as my servant Job has.'" Now, Job got some things wrong, God gets angry at Job, but Job's theology was correct. Job spoke the truth by saying, I didn't do anything wrong here. This isn't happening to me because of what I've done wrong. And that was correct. He knew that was sure. And then God demands a sacrifice of them. He demands repentance of them. They give him that. And then after that, God restored Job to his wealth, He gives him a new family again.

But, and here's a big "but", God never tells Job about Satan, he never explains himself, he never says hey, by the way, while all this has been going on for you, you're just on the lower stage. Let me pull back the curtain and show you what's happening on the upper stage behind you. There's this other being named Satan, and we had this conversation, he never explains that the Job, Job is just left with God is God, God will do what God will do, I will not sin against him by my behavior or by my words, and it ends there. A more full understanding of Satan doesn't come till later and especially not until the life of Jesus, where Jesus talks a whole lot about the accuser, and about the tempter, and about Satan, and so on. And he reflects back to the Old Testament where we see the cues all the way through the Old Testament. But at the time of Job, which again, he lived before any of the rest of the Bible was written. He didn't even have an understanding of that. And God doesn't explain himself here. It's not time for Job to understand that yet. We have that insight. We haven't even in the first couple chapters of it. But God never gives it to Job.

So how do we conclude as we go into this week, here, a couple of things to take note, first of all, there is an accuser and he does have influence on this earth when we're thinking about the spiritual world. The spiritual world has both good and evil in it. It's one of the reasons why when people say, Oh, you just need to be spiritual, or Oh, they're so spiritual. It drives me crazy. Because which side of spiritual are you on? There's good and there's evil. So there is an accuser, he does have influence. But even that influence is only there because God allows for it, not because it's his will, not because it's his desire, but because he allows for it so that we have a choice.

So look for these four things as you read this Week. One, even the smartest people have limited knowledge. So we need to be humble. We never have all the facts. Secondly, we don't know what's causing a hurting, hurting person to be angry. So we need to have compassion. When somebody is angry in their pain. Don't argue, don't push back, sit, listen, be compassionate. Thirdly, be careful about second guessing why God does what God does. God knows what he's doing. He is always right. It may be hard to accept it because we don't have that full understanding. But we, like a faithful child to an adult, had to sit back and go, you know what mom and dad have been around a lot longer, maybe they know some stuff. And of course,

God has been around forever. And he knows what we don't know. So be careful about second guessing him. And then fourthly, as we read this week, recognize God can do whatever he wants, and he doesn't owe us an explanation. When he does explain some things, we ought to be grateful.

It's one of the reasons I love God's Word so much, because while all the explanations aren't in Job, because it's so old, and because it was pre our understanding of so many things, as we read through the Scripture, more and more truths will open up for us until when we get to Jesus, of course, he just blooms like a rose. But in the meantime, we're going to walk through the struggles that many other people had, who didn't understand as clearly as we do today, in the light of Christ. So take a look at it this week. Look for those things. It will come alive for you if you look for those things, and we'll get a blessing out of it. I hope you will. And I hope to see you next week. Thanks.

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