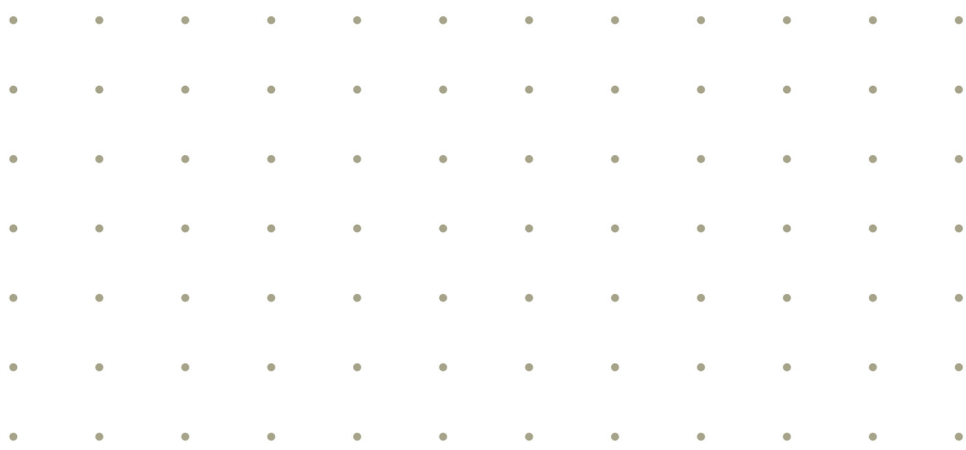




JOB

A 12-WEEK STUDY

Eric Ortlund



J. I. Packer

THEOLOGICAL EDITOR

Dane C. Ortlund

SERIES EDITOR

“This series is a tremendous resource for those wanting to study and teach the Bible with an understanding of how the gospel is woven throughout Scripture. Here are gospel-minded pastors and scholars doing gospel business from all the Scriptures. This is a biblical and theological feast preparing God’s people to apply the entire Bible to all of life with heart and mind wholly committed to Christ’s priorities.”

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KNOWING THE BIBLE

J. I. Packer, Theological Editor
Dane C. Ortlund, Series Editor
Lane T. Dennis, Executive Editor

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Genesis	Psalms	John	1–2 Thessalonians
Exodus	Proverbs	Acts	1–2 Timothy
Leviticus	Ecclesiastes	Romans	and Titus
Deuteronomy	Isaiah	1 Corinthians	Hebrews
Joshua	Jeremiah	2 Corinthians	James
Ruth and Esther	Daniel	Galatians	1–2 Peter
1–2 Kings	Hosea	Ephesians	and Jude
Ezra and	Matthew	Philippians	Revelation
Nehemiah	Mark	Colossians and	
Job	Luke	Philemon	

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A 12-WEEK STUDY



Eric Ortlund

Knowing the Bible: Job, A 12-Week Study

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



Series Preface: J. I. Packer and Lane T. Dennis	6
Week 1: Overview	7
Week 2: Job's Tragedy (1:1–2:13).....	11
Week 3: Job's Cosmic Lament (3:1–26)	19
Week 4: Round One of the Debate (4:1–14:22)	27
Week 5: Round Two of the Debate (15:1–21:34).....	35
Week 6: Round Three of the Debate (22:1–27:23)	43
Week 7: Job's Final Speech (28:1–31:40).....	51
Week 8: Elihu's Speeches (32:1–37:24)	59
Week 9: The Lord's First Speech (38:1–40:5).....	67
Week 10: The Lord's Second Speech (40:6–41:34).....	75
Week 11: Job's Restoration (42:1–17).....	81
Week 12: Summary and Conclusion.....	89

S E R I E S P R E F A C E

KNOWING THE BIBLE, as the series title indicates, was created to help readers know and understand the meaning, the message, and the God of the Bible. Each volume in the series consists of 12 units that progressively take the reader through a clear, concise study of that book of the Bible. In this way, any given volume can fruitfully be used in a 12-week format either in group study, such as in a church-based context, or in individual study. Of course, these 12 studies could be completed in fewer or more than 12 weeks, as convenient, depending on the context in which they are used.

Each study unit gives an overview of the text at hand before digging into it with a series of questions for reflection or discussion. The unit then concludes by highlighting the gospel of grace in each passage (“Gospel Glimpses”), identifying whole-Bible themes that occur in the passage (“Whole-Bible Connections”), and pinpointing Christian doctrines that are affirmed in the passage (“Theological Soundings”).

The final component to each unit is a section for reflecting on personal and practical implications from the passage at hand. The layout provides space for recording responses to the questions proposed, and we think readers need to do this to get the full benefit of the exercise. The series also includes definitions of key words. These definitions are indicated by a note number in the text and are found at the end of each chapter.

Lastly, to help understand the Bible in this deeper way, we urge readers to use the ESV Bible and the *ESV Study Bible*, which are available in various print and digital formats, including online editions at esv.org. The Knowing the Bible series is also available online. Additional 12-week studies covering each book of the Bible will be added as they become available.

May the Lord greatly bless your study as you seek to know him through knowing his Word.

J. I. Packer
Lane T. Dennis

WEEK 1: OVERVIEW



Getting Acquainted

The book of Job narrates the agony and faith of a great saint in order to teach us about the way in which the Lord governs his world, and how we can trust him when we suffer. Job was a deeply spiritual man who was greatly blessed for his faith (see Job 1:1–3), but when the motives for Job’s piety were questioned by the Accuser, the Lord allowed Job to lose every earthly blessing in order to prove the genuineness of his dependence upon God. Job’s friends visited him with good intentions (2:11; 33:32) but only caused him more pain (19:12) by insisting that he must have sinned in order to have provoked such brutal treatment from God. Job admits he has needed forgiveness many times but insists he has walked in integrity with God and has done nothing to deserve such suffering. As a result, Job finds himself forced to the terrifying but mistaken conclusion that God has treated him unjustly—that God is not fully just or good or trustworthy. Even while saying these dark things about God, however, Job will also express remarkable faith and a certainty that he will be reconciled to the Lord.

The debate between Job and his friends over the character of God and Job and, by extension, over the moral order of life only alienates and embitters Job. It is not until the Lord himself speaks to Job about the way in which he rules the universe—and what place he allows for evil—that Job is comforted. Having proved that he loves God for God’s sake, irrespective of any blessing God might grant, Job is restored to the full and blessed life that God desires for all of his children. (For further background, see the *ESV Study Bible*, pages 869–873; available online at esv.org.)

Placing Job in the Larger Story

The Old Testament has much to say about suffering and interprets it in various ways. In Deuteronomy, God warns that his destructive curse will fall on Israel if they break covenant with him and trust in other gods (Deuteronomy 28). Proverbs often states that sin brings about suffering as its natural consequence (e.g., Prov. 10:14). In the book of Job, on the other hand, the title character suffers *precisely because he is so devout*—and he suffers in a way that is unbearable and impossible for him to explain. The book of Job thus nuances and deepens how we are to think about suffering and about why God sometimes allows pain that seems to serve no purpose and have no explanation. The book shows us how to speak to extreme suffering and demonstrates the promises God makes to us in our suffering.

As we will see, Job prefigures Jesus in that both men suffer greatly because of their obedience to God in order to further God's purposes, to defeat the accusations of the Accuser, and to glorify the Lord.

Key Verse

“Does Job fear God for no reason?” (Job 1:9)

Date and Historical Background

Job lived outside of Israel: the “land of Uz” (Job 1:1) is either close to Edom or is another name for that country (see Lam. 4:21; Jer. 25:20). There are a variety of indications in the book that Job lived in the earliest stages of Old Testament history. For example, Ezekiel refers to Job as a well-known figure of remarkable piety (Ezek. 14:14). Further, Job and his friends refer to God most often with the archaic name *Shaddai* (see Ex. 6:3). They know some truths about God but never refer to the covenants between the Lord and Israel. Job also lives to a very old age (140 years; 42:16) and sacrifices without a priest, as Abraham did (Job 1:5). For these and other reasons, this story seems to take place around the time of the early chapters of Genesis.

The narrator of the story, however, refers in chapters 1–2 and in the Lord's speeches in chapters 38–41 to the covenant name *Yahweh*—the name by which God revealed himself to Israel (Ex. 3:12–14). Although the narrator does not identify himself, the fact that he narrates events that transpire in heaven, of which the human characters of the book are not aware, suggests that an inspired Israelite has shaped a story about a famous man in order to teach us about God's providence and loyalty to him in suffering. We do not know in which period of Israelite history this narrator lived.

Outline

- I. Job's Tragedy (1:1–2:13)**
- II. Job's Cosmic Lament over His Suffering (3:1–26)**
- III. The Debate between Job and His Friends over the Meaning of His Suffering (4:1–31:40)**
 - A. Round one (4:1–14:22)**
 - 1. Eliphaz (4:1–5:27)
 - 2. Job (6:1–7:21)
 - 3. Bildad (8:1–22)
 - 4. Job (9:1–10:22)
 - 5. Zophar (11:1–20)
 - 6. Job (12:1–14:22)
 - B. Round two (15:1–21:34)**
 - 1. Eliphaz (15:1–35)
 - 2. Job (16:1–17:16)
 - 3. Bildad (18:1–21)
 - 4. Job (19:1–29)
 - 5. Zophar (20:1–29)
 - 6. Job (21:1–34)
 - C. Round three (22:1–27:23)**
 - 1. Eliphaz (22:1–30)
 - 2. Job (23:1–24:25)
 - 3. Bildad (25:1–6)
 - 4. Job (26:1–27:23)
 - D. Interlude: Where can wisdom be found? (28:1–28)**
 - E. Job's final defense (29:1–31:40)**
- IV. Elihu's Speeches (32:1–37:24)**
- V. The Lord's Speeches (38:1–41:34)**
 - A. First speech: Creation and its inhabitants (38:1–40:5)**
 - 1. The architecture of creation (38:1–38)
 - 2. Different animals in creation (38:39–39:30)
 - 3. Job's first response (40:1–5)
 - B. Second speech: Behemoth and Leviathan (40:6–41:34)**
 - 1. The preparation of the divine warrior (40:6–14)
 - 2. Behemoth (40:15–24)
 - 3. Leviathan (41:1–34)
- VI. Job's Restoration (42:1–17)**
 - A. Job's second response and his spiritual restoration (42:1–6)**
 - B. Job's social and physical restoration (42:7–17)**

As You Get Started

What is your understanding of how the book of Job contributes to the Bible? What do we learn of in this book that no other book teaches us?

What is your current understanding of what the book of Job contributes to Christian theology? What does this book teach us about God, his character and action, and how we are to respond to him?

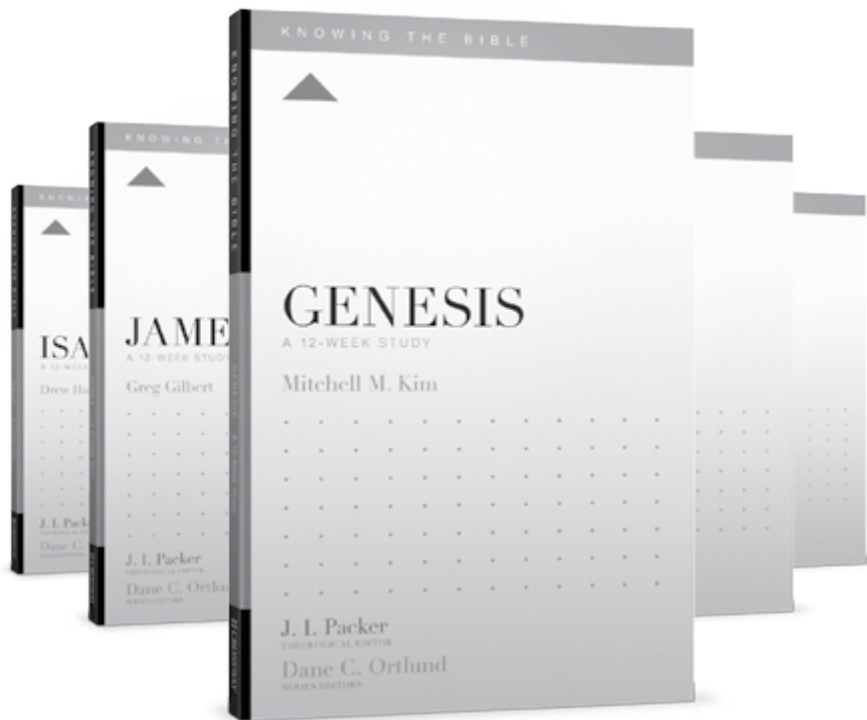
Job is perhaps the most difficult Bible book to understand. What questions do you have about it? What confuses you? What would you like to have clarified by the end of this study?

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a few minutes to ask God to bless you with increased understanding and a transformed heart and life as you begin this study of Job.

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THE BOOK OF JOB deals with the sovereignty of God and the problem of suffering. We, like Job, don't always understand the reasons behind our pain.

In this 12-week study, Eric Ortlund helps us see the trustworthiness of God in the midst of our trials. Through the agony and pain experienced by Job, we catch a glimpse of God's purposes for our suffering as we look ahead to the restoration of all things in the new creation.

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Over the course of 12 weeks, these studies explore books of the Bible and:

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- Tie the text in with the whole story of Scripture
- Illuminate the doctrines taught in each passage
- Invite you to discover practical implications
- Help you better understand and apply God's Word

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GRAEME L. GOLDSWORTHY

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