

Poetry – Lesson #1: “Job: God’s Faithfulness in Suffering”

“*Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him.*” [Job]
(Job 13:15)

“*Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me. ‘I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.’*”
(Job 42:5-6)

Question: Why do the faithful people of God suffer? This is the question of Theodicy.

I. Three (3) Kinds of Hebrew Poetry: Type 1 – Dramatic Poetry

- Job presents us with the first kind of Hebrew poetry, the **DRAMATIC POEM**. Both Job and Song of Solomon are of this type. Dramatic poetry uses dialogue between different persons in real situations to present the story being told. The dialogue between God and both Job and Satan give us insight into things we would otherwise not know.

“We ought clearly to understand, also, that the term “poetical” refers only to their *form*. It must not be thought to imply that they are simply the product of human imagination.... These books portray real human experience, and grapple with profound problems, and express big realities. Especially to they concern themselves with the experiences of the *godly*, in the varying vicissitudes of this changeful life which is ours under the sun ...”

J. Sidlow Baxter

II. Key People:

- Job
- Satan
- Eliphaz
- Bildad
- Zopher
- Elihu

III. Overview – The book of Job

Job, written during the time of the Patriarchs, tells the story of a righteous man named Job and the tragedy that befalls him. God allows Satan to test Job’s faithfulness by removing every earthly thing that he held dear. Through a series of friends his integrity is tested and various logical explanations are discussed as to the reason for his suffering. The LORD weighs in at the end of the book to rebuke Job for his spiritual pride. The book of Job may be divided as follows:

- The dialogue between God and Satan concerning Job
- The afflictions of Job
- The counselors of Job – 3 cycles of discussion
- The defense of Job
- The rebuke to Job
- The restoration of Job

Conclusion: Why do the righteous suffer? The book of Job does not give us the answer, it only tells us that God is the sovereign King of the universe. James says that the book shows us God’s compassion and mercy (James 5:11). The reason for our suffering is not always clear but we can rest assured that the LORD will use trying circumstances in the life of His saints to test and refine them for His purposes and glory (Rom. 8:28). Ultimately we must rest in the character of almighty God because only on the other side of eternity will be fully appreciate the wisdom of His plans. God never promises a trial-free life – but He *does* promise to be there with us in the midst of them.