



**FLOURISH  
BIBLE STUDY**

# JOB

TRUSTING GOD WHEN SUFFERING COMES



**LYDIA BROWBACK**

## Endorsements for the Flourish Bible Study Series

“The brilliant and beautiful mix of sound teaching, helpful charts, lists, sidebars, and appealing graphics—as well as insightful questions that get the reader into the text of Scripture—make these studies that women will want to invest time in and will look back on as time well spent.”

**Nancy Guthrie**, Bible teacher; author, *Even Better than Eden*

“My daughter and I love using Flourish Bible Studies for our morning devotions. Lydia Brownback’s faithful probing of biblical texts; insightful questions; invitations to engage in personal applications using additional biblical texts and historical contexts; and commitment to upholding the whole counsel of God as it bears on living life as a godly woman have drawn us closer to the Lord and to his word. Brownback never sidesteps hard questions or hard providences, but neither does she appeal to discourses of victimhood or therapy, which are painfully common in the genre of women’s Bible studies. I cannot recommend this series highly enough. My daughter and I look forward to working through this whole series together!”

**Rosaria Butterfield**, Former Professor of English, Syracuse University; author, *The Gospel Comes with a House Key*

“As a women’s ministry leader, I am excited about the development of the Flourish Bible Study series, which will not only prayerfully equip women to increase in biblical literacy but also come alongside them to build a systematic and comprehensive framework to become lifelong students of the word of God. This series provides visually engaging studies with accessible content that will not only strengthen the believer but the church as well.”

**Karen Hodge**, Coordinator of Women’s Ministries, Presbyterian Church in America; coauthor, *Transformed*

“Lydia Brownback is an experienced Bible teacher who has dedicated her life to ministry roles that help women (and men) grow in Christ. With a wealth of biblical, historical, and theological content, her Flourish Bible Studies are ideal for groups and individuals that are serious about the in-depth study of the word of God.”

**Phil and Lisa Ryken**, President, Wheaton College; and his wife, Lisa

“If you’re looking for rich, accessible, and deeply biblical Bible studies, this series is for you! Lydia Brownback leads her readers through different books of the Bible, providing background information, maps, timelines, and questions that probe the text in order to glean understanding and application. She settles us deeply in the context of a book as she highlights God’s unfolding plan of redemption and rescue. You will learn, you will delight in God’s word, and you will love our good King Jesus even more.”

**Courtney Doctor**, Coordinator of Women’s Initiatives, The Gospel Coalition; author, *From Garden to Glory* and *Steadfast*

“Lydia Brownback’s Bible study series provides a faithful guide to book after book. You’ll find rich insights into context and good questions to help you study and interpret the Bible. Page by page, the studies point you to respond to each passage and to love our great and gracious God. I will recommend the Flourish series for years to come for those looking for a wise, Christ-centered study that leads toward the goal of being transformed by the word.”

**Taylor Turkington**, Bible teacher; Director, BibleEquipping.org

“Lydia Brownback has a contagious love for the Bible. Not only is she fluent in the best of biblical scholarship in the last generation, but her writing is accessible to the simplest of readers. She has the rare ability of being clear without being reductionistic. I anticipate many women indeed will flourish through her trustworthy guidance in this series.”

**David Mathis**, Senior Teacher and Executive Editor, [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org); Pastor, Cities Church, Saint Paul, Minnesota; author, *Habits of Grace*

**J O B**



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**FLOURISH  
BIBLE STUDY**

# **J O B**

TRUSTING GOD WHEN SUFFERING COMES

**LYDIA BROWNBACK**

**■ ■ CROSSWAY®**  
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

*Job: Trusting God When Suffering Comes*

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To my precious mother,  
Wilma Lorraine Grunert Brownback,  
whose faith never wavers.

“For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
and at the last he will stand upon the earth.”  
Job 19:25



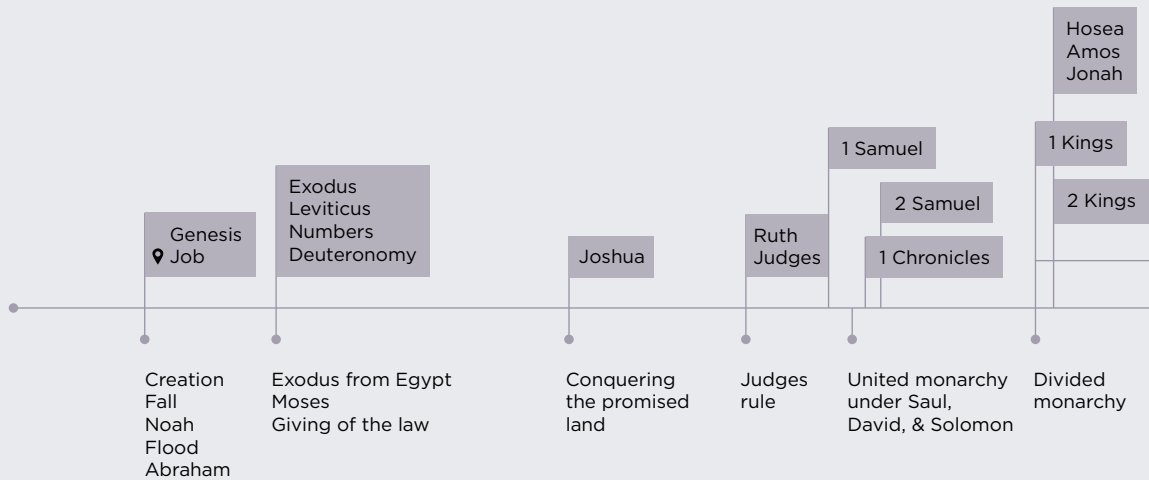


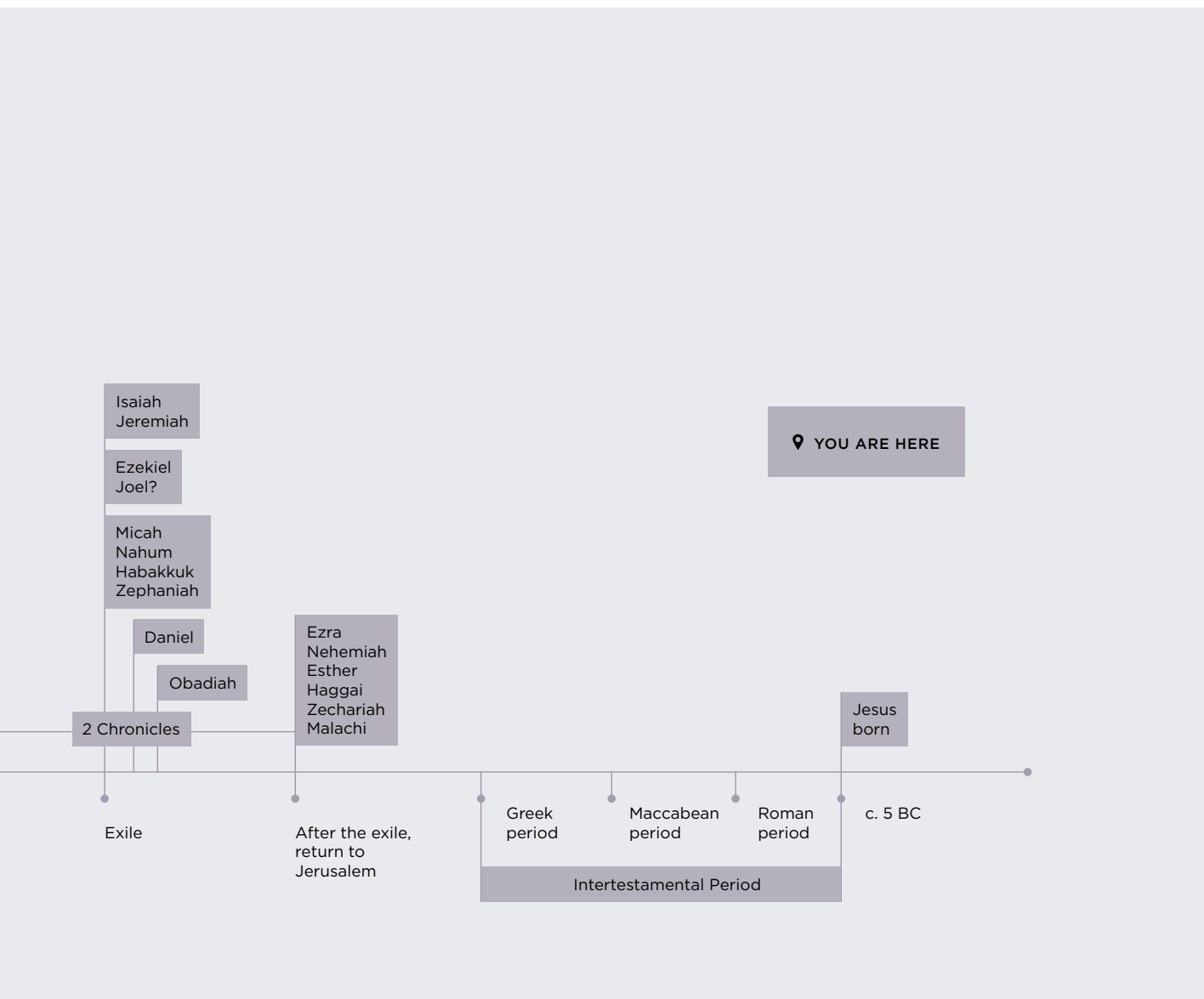
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## THE PLACE OF JOB IN BIBLICAL HISTORY





Isaiah  
Jeremiah

Ezekiel  
Joel?

Micah  
Nahum  
Habakkuk  
Zephaniah

Daniel

Obadiah

2 Chronicles

Ezra  
Nehemiah  
Esther  
Haggai  
Zechariah  
Malachi

📍 YOU ARE HERE

Jesus  
born

Exile

After the exile,  
return to  
Jerusalem

Greek  
period

Maccabean  
period

Roman  
period

c. 5 BC

Intertestamental Period



# INTRODUCTION

## GETTING INTO JOB

*Why?* There comes a time when each one of us asks that *why* question in bewildered, heart-searing pain. And it's a cry to God alone, because only he knows the answer. When a child dies or a husband betrays or a malignancy forms, we want answers. Have we done something to cause it? Is the Lord angry with us? Why does he seem so distant and uncaring? And in the darkness of what feels like divine indifference, we find ourselves questioning his power, his goodness, and his love. That's what happened to Job. He was a man who suffered the loss of everything he had—family, home, wealth, friends, success, prosperity, and health. But worst of all, God seemed indifferent. Some friends came to comfort Job, but they were unable to help him, and in fact, they only intensified his pain. In time, Job's suffering did end, and his losses were restored, but not until the Lord spoke to Job and radically changed his heart. From Job we learn that whatever we suffer, God is in control. And he is up to something good.



### WHO'S WHO IN JOB

First we meet Job, of course. He was a prosperous farmer and a family man who worshiped God. Job was highly respected far and wide not only for his prosperity but also for his integrity. There's also Satan, an adversarial being who opposes God and everything in God's creation, especially human beings. Other key figures in the story are Job's three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Later we meet a man named Elihu, a young friend who turns out to be wiser than Job's three older friends. Unnamed but everywhere in the story is the narrator, the one behind the scenes recounting all that happens to Job. We gather that the narrator lived a long time after the story takes place—his grasp of God's words and ways were not yet known in Job's lifetime but only much later. Finally, as we near the end of the story, the Lord reveals himself in all his power and majesty. The book of Job is primarily about him, the Lord of heaven and earth.

## Pronunciation Guide

**Job:** Jobe

**Eliphaz:** EL-la-faz

**Zophar:** ZO-far

**Bildad:** BILL-dad

**Behemoth:** Ba-HEEM-oth

**Elihu:** Ah-LEE-hoo

**Leviathan:** Lev-EYE-ah-thon



### SETTING

Job lived in Uz. Bible scholars aren't sure exactly where Uz was, but they are confident that this territory was not within Canaan, the land God promised to give to his people Israel. Uz might have been situated in the land of Edom. Most likely Job lived around the same time as one of the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob—who are found in the first book of the Bible, Genesis.



### THEMES

Suffering is the primary theme in Job, especially suffering that seems to make no sense. In keeping with this theme, we are given a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the spiritual realm and how it factors into suffering. As we follow Job through his pain, we learn how to think about God in the midst of overwhelming difficulty—how to understand and trust him. The book of Job also shows how we can help (or harm) a suffering friend. Overarching all of these themes is what the book of Job reveals about the Lord himself—his power, wisdom, and authority over everything, including evil.

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*“Job is about true worship, a person bowing down in the darkness to the one who is God, leaving even our most agonized unanswered questions at his feet.”<sup>1</sup>*

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### STUDYING JOB

During this ten-week study, we will read all forty-two chapters of Job. The reading is not spread out evenly over the ten weeks, so you'll find that some weeks necessitate a good bit more reading than others. Typically you'll want to read a week's entire passage before doing the lesson, but you might want to approach the Bible reading in this study on a "read as you go," section-by-section basis. If you are studying Job with a group, you can read select portions aloud together when you gather together. However you approach the reading, remember that *marinating in the Scripture text is the most important part of any Bible study*.



### GROUP STUDY

If you are doing this study as part of a group, you'll want to finish each week's lesson before the group meeting. You can work your way through the study questions all in one sitting or by doing a little bit each day. And don't be discouraged if you don't have sufficient time to answer every question. Just do as much as you can, knowing that the more you do, the more you'll learn. No matter how much of the study you are able to complete each week, the group will benefit simply from your presence, so don't skip the gathering if you can't finish! That being said, group time will be most rewarding for every participant if you have done the lesson in advance.

If you are leading the group, you can download the leaders' tips at <https://www.lydiabrownback.com/flourish-series>.



### INDIVIDUAL STUDY

The study is designed to run for ten weeks, but you can set your own pace if you're studying solo. And you can download the leaders' tips (<https://www.lydiabrownback.com/flourish-series>) if you'd like some guidance along the way.

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*Marinating in the Scripture text is the  
most important part of any Bible study*

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**Reading Plan**

	<b>Primary Text</b>	<b>Supplemental Reading</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	Job 1:1-2:13	Jude 24
<b>Week 2</b>	Job 3:1-26	Psalm 88
<b>Week 3</b>	Job 4:1-14:22	
<b>Week 4</b>	Job 15:1-21:34	
<b>Week 5</b>	Job 22:1-27:23	
<b>Week 6</b>	Job 28:1-28	Proverbs 2:1-4
<b>Week 7</b>	Job 29:1-31:40	
<b>Week 8</b>	Job 32:1-37:24	
<b>Week 9</b>	Job 38:1-41:34	
<b>Week 10</b>	Job 42:1-17	James 5:11





## WEEK 1

# A SHATTERED LIFE

JOB 1:1-2:13

Norah was voted “most popular” her senior year of high school. Four years later she graduated college with a near-perfect GPA, three job offers, and a marriage proposal from Lucas, the football MVP and class valedictorian. She chose marriage and settled with her new husband into a large suburban home set back on a tree-lined street. His career success kept pace with the growth of their family—three children in five years. In the midst of it all, the young family took an active role in church life because they loved the Lord. Norah was a sought-after friend known for her listening ear, compassionate heart, and life-of-the-party personality. People flocked to Norah in hopes that her charmed life might rub off on them. What had she done to get so blessed? Was it her kindness or her faithfulness at church or choosing to be a stay-at-home mom? They stopped wondering a year later when Norah’s life fell apart. On a dark November night, Lucas was killed by a drunk driver, leaving Norah a single mother with three kids and another on the way.

It’s tempting to think that personal prosperity is a sign of God’s favor, isn’t it? The reverse is also true—we can find ourselves hunting for a direct link between suffering and sin. But stories like Norah’s debunk those ideas. The answers we need for stories like Norah’s are found in the Bible, and that’s where we encounter Job, a godly man who suffered the loss of absolutely everything he had. This week we are given a glimpse into the secret happenings in heaven, and it’s there we find out something that Job wanted desperately to know—a reason for his suffering.

## 1. A FAMILY MAN (1:1-5)

When the story opens, Job is living the sort of life everyone dreams of. By worldly standards, he had it all.

Four traits are attributed to Job in verse 1: (1) he is blameless; (2) he is upright; (3) he fears God; and (4) he turns away from evil. In case you were wondering, “blameless” certainly doesn’t mean *sinless*, as we will see. The Hebrew word that our Bibles translate as “blameless” has to do with integrity and transparency. You also might wonder about Job’s fear—he feared God. But this fear isn’t about terror or stressful anxiety. It has to do with reverence and respect. Job lived his life with an eye to pleasing God in everything.

✦ Based on the way Job is described in verse 1, summarize his character in a sentence or two, using your own words.

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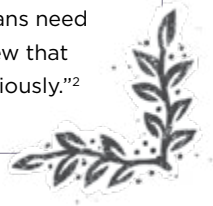
✦ In verses 2–3 we get an idea of the scope of Job’s people and possessions. He has seven sons and three daughters as well as seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels. In addition, there are five hundred each of oxen and female donkeys and an enormous staff of servants. The actual numbers are significant. In the Bible, the numbers seven and three often communicate *completion*. And when you add together seven plus three, the number ten that results is also significant. Ten also stands for completeness, or fullness. As you consider the significance of these numbers here in these verses, what do they communicate about Job’s life?

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### Satan

“Satan’s origins are mysterious. . . . At times, this spiritual being of immense power and cunning works his mischief as an angel of light. Other times he is like a ravenous lion on the prowl. He is a spoiler. He is a disuniter. He is the enemy of the interpersonal. Temptation is his specialty from the beginning. Christians need to have a worldview that takes the devil seriously.”<sup>2</sup>



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We get a glimpse into Job’s family life in 1:4–5. They gather for family dinners on special occasions, very likely the sons’ birthdays. We also notice that they live in houses rather than tents, which is another indicator of the family’s great wealth. After these family gatherings, Job would offer sacrifices for his children, concerned that perhaps they did not reverence God or desire to serve him. Here we see Job’s heart for his kids, his fatherly concern for their spiritual welfare. He might be able to provide them with everything on a material level, but when it comes to spiritual matters, he could only petition the Lord.

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*“If we love God only for what he gives us in this life and not for himself, we are serving ourselves, not him.”<sup>3</sup>*

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## 2. WHEN SATAN COMES CALLING (1:6-12)

For just a moment, the veil lifts, and we are given a glimpse of things hidden. In this case, it’s a gathering of the divine council—a group of heavenly beings centered on the Lord God. Into this gathering comes a being called Satan. From the way his entrance is described here, he doesn’t seem to be a part of the council. He’s more of a gate-crasher. The term *satan* means “adversary,” and the word was used not only for this particular being but for adversaries of all kinds. The being who appears here, though, carries the term *satan* as a title. He is actually not just Satan, but *the* Satan.

✦ As Satan enters the council, who initiates the conversation about Job?

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✦ What does Satan suggest about Job in 1:9–12?

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Satan claims that the Lord has put a hedge around Job's life (v. 10). The hedge concerned Job's prosperity, the Lord's protection over Job's farm and his wealth and his family. The hedge image is a way of talking about how the Lord guides, guards, and directs everything that happens in the lives of people.

✦ The Lord's hedge of protection around Job and all that was dear to him is a picture of much fuller hedges of protection that the Lord puts around his people. What do we learn about these fuller *hedges* from the following passages?

• Luke 22:31–32

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• John 10:28–29

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• Romans 8:38–39

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• Jude 24

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✦ What does the Lord permit Satan to do in 1:12, and what does he forbid?

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**3. WIPED OUT (1:13–22)**

Job’s life changes in a matter of minutes when four messengers come, one at a time, each with terrible news.

✦ Jot down in your own words the news each messenger brings:

• Messenger 1:

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• Messenger 2:

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• Messenger 3:

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• Messenger 4:

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✦ It's hard to imagine experiencing even one of these losses, much less all four in the same day! When the messengers depart, Job tears his robe and shaves his head—a sign of great grief and mourning—but at the same time, he worships God. What do Job's words in 1:21 reveal about the nature of true faith?

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#### 4. SKIN FOR SKIN! (2:1-10)

The divine council reconvenes, and once again, Satan shows up and seeks a seat at the table.

✦ What argument does Satan make in 2:4-5?

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✦ What limits does the Lord set on Satan this go-round?

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We don't know how much time has passed since Job's tragic losses. No matter, the pain of those losses is still overwhelming, and now added to his grief is an itchy, painful skin condition. Plus it's clear that Job's wife has had enough. This is the only time she comes into the story, and no doubt her bitter words in 2:9, while certainly understandable, given her own suffering through all these losses, just heap more pain on Job.

✦ How do the words of Job's wife in 2:9 serve to further the agenda of Satan that was revealed in 2:5?

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✦ How is what Job's wife does here in 2:9 similar to what Eve, the very first wife, did to her husband back in Genesis 3:1–7? On the other hand, how is Job's response to his wife in 2:10 different from Adam's response to his wife Eve?

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**5. THE COMFORT OF FRIENDS (2:11-13)**

It's not surprising that a man of Job's wealth and success had made connections in places both far and near, and some of those associates had become good friends. Three



of those friends, receiving word of Job's great tragedies, come to visit him. Eliphaz comes from Teman, a city in Edom that was known for wisdom (see Jeremiah 49:7). We know very little about the other two friends—Bildad, who came from Shuah, and Zophar from Naamah—except for a few clues based on what is known about their hometowns.

✦ The three friends had a plan for their visit to Job. What was it?

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✦ Why do you think Job's friends struggled to recognize him at first?

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✦ How do the friends carry out what they had planned to do during their visit?

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Much later in the Bible, in the New Testament, someone else suffered while friends sat nearby. It was Jesus. But the suffering of these two was radically different. Jesus suffered not for his own losses but for ours. When sin entered the world back in Genesis 3, human beings lost life—happy, unbroken, eternal fellowship with God—and thereafter faced death and eternal separation from God. Jesus suffered to restore us to the life we lost through sin. So while Job didn't choose to suffer, Jesus did, willingly,

for us. The one similarity we’re going to see is that both Job and Jesus were let down by their friends.

✦ Read Matthew 26:36–45. How did Jesus’s friends actually increase his suffering rather than comfort him in it?

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*“There is something desperately extreme about Job. He foreshadows one man whose greatness exceeded even Job’s, whose sufferings took him deeper than Job, and whose perfect obedience to his Father was only anticipated in faint outline by Job.”<sup>4</sup>*

**LET’S TALK**

1. When Job learned of his great losses, he responded, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (1:21). And then when his wife tempted him to renounce God and just die, he said, “You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?” (2:10). Describe how your response to past or present suffering is similar to Job’s or radically different. What would it take for you to respond like Job?

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2. Job's friends came to sympathize and comfort him. It's exactly what the apostle Paul tells us to do in Romans 12:15: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." What might that look like when you approach present sufferers in your own life? If you are suffering, describe how friends could most help you right now.

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