



8

Job's Suffering

Key Themes

- God tests the faith and obedience of His children.
- God is sovereign over all things—even our sorrow and pain.

Key Passages

- Job 1:1–22, 2:7, 38:4, 38:8, 38:17, 38:22, 38:28, 38:35, 38:39

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Recognize that God is sovereign over every circumstance.
- Describe the faith and trust of Job.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 5

Children will unscramble the words from the memory verse on the Acts 17:26–27 Word Scramble activity sheet and then color the picture on the sheet.



Studying God's Word

page 5

The account of Job proclaims the sovereignty of God over all things—both good and bad. Job's faith and trust in God remained firm through much affliction. We can find comfort in knowing that, as children of God, He works everything in our lives according to His good purpose.



Activity 1: Job Loses All

page 8

Children will act out the biblical account of Job's servants coming to tell him he has lost all of his riches, his family, and his health.



Activity 2: God's Omnipotence

page 9

Children will fill out the worksheet as you read and discuss that God is all-powerful and rules over the entire universe.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Print one Word Scramble activity sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Word Scramble activity sheet for each student
- Pencils and crayons



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print the Lesson Board Work outline from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use in planning your lesson.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Lesson Board Work outline



JOB LOSES ALL

- Print and cut out one set of the Job Loses All cards from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- One set of Job Loses All cards



GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

- Print one God's Omnipotence worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- God's Omnipotence worksheet for each student
- God's Omnipotence answer key
- Pencils



Memory Verse

Acts 17:26–27 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Read the following passages to prepare your heart and mind for this week's lesson: Job 1:1–2:10, 38–42; James 5:11; Romans 8:28–31.

"Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?'" (Job 1:8). Thus begins this epic account of God's blameless servant turned over to the devices of Satan by God Himself. Oh, the sovereignty of God! It is too deep for any human to grasp—yet it is the very power that upholds all things in the universe (Hebrews 1:3).

God's sovereignty is the theme of the book of Job. The book opens allowing us a glimpse into the relationship between God and Satan. God controls Satan and uses him to accomplish His purposes on the earth. Satan can do only what God allows him to do—and in this account, God allowed Satan to test Job (Job 1:6, 1:8, 1:12, 2:6).

Job quickly discovered through his messengers that in one day he had lost his livestock, servants, and children (Job 1:13–19). And what a lesson we can learn from Job's faithful response as he tears his robe, shaves his head, falls to the ground, and worships the one who has taken every blessing from him in one day (Job 1:20). His worship and prayer in this desperate time provide a solid example of steadfast trust in the sovereign, almighty hand of God.

Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1:21).

God was not finished with Job yet, and He permitted Satan to again afflict Job—this time in his body and health (Job 2:7). With grace that could only come from God Himself, Job stood true to His Creator as he responded to his wife who suggested Job curse God and die (Job 2:9). Job plainly understood God's sovereignty as he asked her, "Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" (Job 2:10).

Job's friends approached to comfort him, but they only served to confound him with their accusations that it was because of his iniquity against God that he was suffering in this way (Job 4:7–8). They insisted that if Job would only repent of his sins, God would remove his suffering (Job 11:13–19). But if he refused to repent and continued in his wickedness, he would die (Job 11:20).

In chapter 19, we find Job clinging in his suffering and despair to the one thing he knows for sure—that his Redeemer lives! How Job yearned for what his heart knew to be true—that he would one day behold the Redeemer God with his very eyes (Job 19:25–27). Within the midst of this long Old Testament book, God gives us a foreshadowing of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and the gospel of forgiveness and redemption He would provide.

Job's suffering and the accusations of his friends continued. And finally, Job begged that the Almighty would answer him and reveal the purpose, wisdom, and reason behind his pain. In answer to Job's question, the Lord began a tirade of rhetorical questions—questions meant to humble Job by the demonstration of God's power, wisdom, knowledge, and greatness (Chapters 38–41).

In the end, God did not intend to answer Job's questions about the purpose of his suffering, but meant to draw Job's focus to Himself—the sovereign Ruler, Creator, and Sustainer of the entire universe. Job learned his lesson well when he answered the Lord by saying, "I know that you can do everything, and that no purpose of yours can be withheld from You" (Job 42:2).

Our God is in control. We know that all things work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28); that our God is in heaven and does all that He pleases (Psalm 115:3); that He works all things according to the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11); and that no one speaks and it will come to pass unless the Lord has commanded it. Both woe and well-being proceed from the mouth of the Most High (Lamentations 3:37–38).

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Throughout this account Job continues to argue his innocence, and his friends continue to tell him he must be guilty because bad things don't happen to good people. This is a very popular misconception even today, and one that Jesus's disciples held to, but one that Jesus flatly rejected (see John 9:1–3; Luke 13:1–5).

Many today insist that a loving God would not let innocent people suffer. They have no concept of their own sinfulness nor do they understand the holiness of God—that He can't tolerate any disobedience against Him. Instead, these people make a god in their imaginations to suit their own desires and reject what the Bible clearly teaches—there are no innocent people (Ecclesiastes 7:20); all of mankind has sinned (Romans 3:23); and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

But is the suffering we experience on earth the direct result of our sin? Is the suffering a manifestation of God's punishment? Scripture tells us that God disciplines His children. However, this discipline is exhibited out of the Lord's love for us—we are not perfect, and consequently we need training from our heavenly Father (Hebrews 12:5–7). Paul also explains that our suffering may be a consequence of a sinful decision, choice, or lifestyle—God is not mocked by our rebellion; we will reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7–8); our suffering and trials often test our faith and produce patience (James 1:2); we can be humbled by affliction brought on by God (2 Corinthians 12:7); and often our trials give us the wisdom and understanding to comfort others in their troubles (2 Corinthians 1:3).

We often will not be given a clear answer as to why we are suffering—just as Job's question was never answered by God. However, we must remember that God is our sovereign, holy God and He is able to work all things together for good for those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). His desire for His children is not to necessarily make us happy—but to make us holy (1 Peter 1:15) while conforming us throughout our lives to the image of His own Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The book of Job has often been praised as a masterpiece of literature.

Victor Hugo wrote, "Tomorrow, if all literature was to be destroyed and it was left to me to retain one work only, I should save Job." Alfred Lord Tennyson called Job "the greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature." Daniel Webster said that "the Book of Job taken as a mere work of literary genius is one of the most wonderful productions of any age or of any language." And Martin Luther said that this book is "more magnificent and sublime than any other book of Scripture."

When was the book of Job written and who is its author? Except for the first eleven chapters of Genesis, the book of Job is probably the oldest book in the Bible.

Most likely, Job himself was the original author (Job 19:23–24), writing down an account of his life after the restoration of his health and prosperity. He probably lived around the time of Abraham, and because there is no mention of the laws given by Moses or even of Israel—it is believed he definitely lived before Jacob.

Job was considered "the greatest of all the men of the East" (Job 1:3) and he "dwelt as a king in the army" (Job 29:25). Job lived in the land of Uz, which is believed to be the land of Edom (see Lamentations 4:21). Uz, who perhaps settled there first, was a grandson of Shem (Genesis 10:22–23).

Job is not a fictional character in a great dramatic poem, as many have suggested. He was a real man who served a real God, and as James said, a man who persevered and experienced the compassion and mercy of God: "You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful" (James 5:11).



BEFORE THE THRONE

Oh dear Lord, as I prepare for this week's lesson, I thank you for your sovereignty in all things. I thank you too, Lord, that you have given me the gift of faith—a faith that knows that you are in control of all that happens in my life. And as I journey through this life, I pray that even as the difficult times continue to come, I will be able to stand on the foundation of your Word, your sovereignty, and your omnipotence—knowing that through it all you are working for my good because I love you and I am called according to your purpose. Lord, please bring the tender hearts of my students to a faith that stands on the rock of your sovereignty and the truth of the gospel, so that as they encounter hardships they will do so knowing that your perfect plans are being worked out for their salvation.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will unscramble words from the memory verse on the Word Scramble activity sheet.
- They will color the picture on the sheet.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme posters from previous weeks, quickly review the lessons with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you review the Lesson Theme posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

We are going to read from the book of Job. We don't know for sure who wrote the book of Job, but we think it was Job himself. Job probably lived about 200 years before Abraham. Job is listed on our timeline right here—about 2150 BC. *Refer to the Seven C's Timeline. Discuss briefly the history before Job and right after.*

OK. Let's start by reading Job 1:1–5. The book of Job is in the Old Testament right before the book of Psalms. *Refer to the Books of the Bible poster and help children to find the book of Job in their Bibles. Then assign readers if you have children who can read this or read it to them after they have found it in their Bibles.*

Job 1:1–5

EXAMINE THE WORD

So, what does this passage tell us about Job? What kind of a man was he? Let's ask some questions and see if we can understand what God's Word is telling us.

► Print the Lesson Board Work outline from the Resource DVD-ROM for easier planning.

Observe the Text

Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God's Word by asking the right questions.

? What is the man's name in verse 1? *Job. Write "Job" on the board.*

? Good. What kind of man was Job? I'll read verse 1 again. Listen carefully. *Blameless, upright, feared God, stayed away from evil. List these on the board as the children answer.*

I think Job probably pleased God or God wouldn't have said these nice things about him. He was obedient to God and had faith in Him.

? God blessed Job with a lot of things. Those things are listed in Job 1:2–3. Who can look at those verses and tell me what some of those things were? *7 sons, 3 daughters, 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 oxen, 500 donkeys, and many servants! List these on the board as the children answer.*

Verse 3 also tells us that he was the greatest of all the people of the East. He was a great man with a lot of wonderful blessings. He loved God, had faith in Him, and obeyed Him. Verse 5 says that Job would worship God by making offerings to Him of his animals. These offerings also pleased God. *Write on the board, "Great man" and "made sacrifices to God."*

Discover the Truth

So what God wants us to know is that Job loved God. Job had faith and trust in God. And he was blessed by God with a large family and a lot of possessions. Job pleased God, didn't he? *Write on the board, "Job pleased God."*



READ THE WORD

? Now we are going to see what happened to Job. Does anyone have any ideas? *Allow the children to answer. Some may know some parts of this account.*

Look at Job 1:6–12 in your Bibles. I want to read this to you. Can you follow along with me? *Help children find the passage and then read it to them.*

Job 1:6–12

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

This is a conversation between God and Satan.

? Where do you think this conversation took place? *In heaven.*

? Do you think Job could have known about the conversation that was going on in heaven? *No.*

No. I don't think Job knew about this conversation. But God and Satan were talking about him.

? Look in verse 8 and tell me what the Lord said to Satan. *Re-read the verse if necessary. The Lord said, "Have you considered Job?"*

God is telling Satan to think about Job. God is giving Satan permission to test Job. Satan thought that Job would stop loving God if he lost all the wonderful blessings he had. *Refer to your notes on the board.*



- ? Will someone read verse 12 for me again? *Assign a reader or read it to them again.*
- ? What did God say to Satan? *All that Job has is in your power, but don't touch his person.*

In other words, God gave Satan permission to take all of Job's blessings—all the things we listed on the board here, but God did not allow Satan to touch Job's health or his body—yet. And listen to what happened.

Now I want you to look at Job 1:14–19. I am going to read these verses to you. Listen carefully. *Read the verses. As you read, put an X through Job's blessings you have listed on the board as they are taken from him. Verses 14–15—oxen, donkeys, servants; verse 16—sheep and servants; verse 17—camels, servants; verse 19—Job's sons and daughters.*

There was still one more thing God allowed Satan to take from Job. After all of this was gone, what was still left? Listen to Job 2:7 for the answer.

- ? What did God allow Satan to do to Job now? *He got painful boils all over his body. Put an X through "Great man."*

Discover the Truth

Oh my! Everything Job had—gone. And God allowed Satan to do it. God even suggested that Satan pick Job to attack. Remember? God said to Satan, "What about my servant Job?" All of his children gone, all of his possessions gone, and his body was covered with painful sores or boils. What a terrible time for Job.

But do you know what? God was in complete control of this. God knew it was going to happen, and God allowed it. God has control over Satan. God has control over everything that happens in the universe. God is sovereign.

- ? Do you see *sovereign* on the Attributes of God poster? Let's read the definition together. *Refer to the Attributes of God poster and read the definition of sovereign.*

But we might say, "Job had faith and trust in God. Job loved God. It doesn't seem right!" But we don't always know what God is doing or why. Bad things happen and we often wonder why they happen. We can be sure that God is in control. And He has a perfect plan in everything—because everything God does is perfect and always right.

This is a very difficult lesson because we think if God loved us, He wouldn't let us suffer. But sometimes we just have to trust God, and trust that what He is doing is for our good. You see, we are people created by God—God is the Creator of the whole universe, and He is so smart! He knows everything that is going to happen. He is also wise—He does everything perfectly without making mistakes. That means what He did in Job's life—no matter how hard it was for Job—was perfect in God's eyes.

And it means whatever He does in our lives—no matter how hard it is for us—is perfect in God's eyes. And to believe that takes a lot of trust and faith in God and His Word. Job had that trust and faith, and we need it too!



Job 1:14–19

Job 2:7

SOVEREIGN

(Refer to Attributes poster)



Job Loses All

MATERIALS

- The five Job Loses All cards from the Resource DVD-ROM

INSTRUCTIONS

Using the Job Loses All cards, have the children act out what you have just taught. Choose one child to be Job and five others to be Job's messenger servants. Have Job sit on the floor or a chair in the center of the room. Pass one card to each child. The children will run up to Job and tell him what he has just lost. Have the children throw the cards at Job and run away!

We are going to act out what we just heard about poor Job who lost everything! I need six volunteers to help me. Assign parts and pass out cards.

Look at the card and run up to Job and tell him what he just lost. For example you might say, "Oh my, Job, your oxen and

donkeys were stolen and all of the servants were killed!" Then throw the card at Job and run away! You can do this once and if time allows do it again to let more children participate with someone else playing Job.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Job was a good man who had faith and trust in God. Yet God allowed Satan to take everything away from him. The things God allows do not always make sense to us, but we must trust that God's plan is perfect—that God sees the entire picture. His purposes are right and good. He is sovereign over everything that happens to us. If we are His children we can be sure that even if the things that happen to us seem terrible, we can trust Him. He wants what is best for us.



READ THE WORD

OK. Let's move on. Job was left with nothing, not even his health. It is very hard to lose one thing—but imagine losing everything. Everything you owned and all of your children in one day! Refer to the notes on the board.

We are going to find out what Job did when he found all this out. We will read Job 1:20–22. Assign readers or read the verses to the children.

Job 1:20–22

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? What did Job do first? It is in verse 20. Let the children look in their Bibles or you can read the verse to them again. He stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head.
- ? And what does verse 20 say he did after that? He worshipped God. Write on the board, "Tore his clothes, shaved his head, and worshipped God!"
- ? Good. Can someone read verses 21–22 again? Assign a reader or read it again.
- ? Who gave Job all the blessings he had? The Lord.
- ? And who does Job say took them away? The Lord.

That's right. Job said the Lord gave, the Lord took away. And blessed be the name of the Lord. Write on the board, "The Lord gave; the Lord took away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

? Did Job blame God for taking his blessings away? Look in verse 22. No. Job did not sin or blame God. Write "Job did not sin or blame God" on the board.

Discover the Truth

When the Bible says that Job tore his clothes and shaved his head we know that he was very sad. That is what people did back then when they were very upset. And wouldn't we be if these things happened to us? Everything he had was gone—except his wife. All of his children and all of his animals and all of his servants were killed or stolen in one day. And he was in so much pain from the terrible boils all over his body. Refer to the board work.

And we know that God allowed it to happen—in fact God is the one who suggested to Satan that he could tempt Job. God is sovereign over everything—both the good things and the bad things that happen. Refer to the Attributes of God poster.

Yet the Bible says that Job did not get angry at God or sin against God. Job knew that God had given him the blessings. And Job was willing to allow God to take them away. In fact, even though Job was so sad—and probably crying—he was still able to worship God. Remember what he said? "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Refer to the board work.



► The following activity will be done with the section below covering Job 38.



God's Omnipotence

MATERIALS

- God's Omnipotence worksheet for each student
- God's Omnipotence answer key for your use
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Before you proceed, pass out the God's Omnipotence worksheets from the Resource DVD-ROM and pencils. As you discuss Job 38 below, the children will complete the worksheet.

How do you think this all ends? We are going to find out. You will be completing

these worksheets as we discover how God answered Job when he asked God why he was suffering like he was.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

We are going to see in Job 38 that God stops Job's questions—and begins to question him. God teaches Job that He is the all-powerful one and can do whatever He wishes. We must never forget that. God is the one in control—He is sovereign over everything.



READ THE WORD

As Job continued to suffer, he asked God why. Why was he suffering? Why did this happen? How long would he have to suffer? He just didn't understand it. God was patient with Job—but finally God stopped him from asking why. And God asked Job a few questions. We are going to see now what God had to say to Job.

Job 38:4, 38:8, 38:17,
38:22, 38:28, 38:35,
38:39

Turn to Job 38 in your Bibles. I am going to read the verses from Job 38 that are on your worksheets. Follow along with me and you will fill in the worksheet and see that God is in control of everything.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

Listen carefully. As you read each verse, discuss it with the children. Then have them complete their God's Omnipotence worksheets by filling in what God is telling Job He has complete power and control over.

Discover the Truth

► Write each word on the board to make it easier for them to fill in the blanks.

Let me say it again. Sometimes God does things that we don't understand. Job did not know why he was made to suffer like he did. But, God made it very clear to Job—and makes it clear to us in His Word—that He is the Creator. He is in control of everything—He is sovereign. And He has power over all things—He is omnipotent. He is also good. And what He does is always perfect, whether we understand it or not. We need trust and faith in God to believe this—trust and faith like Job had.

But this isn't the end of the story for Job! We are told in Job 42 that "the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning." After his suffering ended, God was gracious to Job, and He restored Job's possessions, gave him 10 more children, and allowed him to live many more years. *If you have time, read Job 42:12–16.*



Job 42:12–16



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

This has been a very good—but difficult—lesson. Job was a good man who obeyed God and had trust and faith in Him. Yet God allowed Satan to test Job by destroying his children, all his animals, and his servants, and then allowed Job to get terrible boils all over his body. Satan could not have done any of it if God had not said it was OK to do.

Job remained faithful to God even when all those terrible things were happening. He showed this by worshipping God after he lost everything. He realized that the Lord gives and the Lord takes away, and he continued to bless the name of the Lord.

Do you see how this true account about Job teaches us that God is sovereign over everything? God has control over all good things that happen—which we all like and don’t have a hard time believing. But He is also in control of all the bad things that happen to us—and that isn’t so easy to understand. God allowed Satan to test Job by taking away everything he owned and taking away his children. And we need to remember that because God is perfect and good, whatever He does is perfect and good. That’s the hard thing to understand.

GOD’S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

You know, sometimes when bad things happen like a terrible earthquake, or a tornado, or a death—anything that seems really bad—people ask, “Why did that have to happen? Those people were so nice—they were just innocent bystanders.” And that does seem true. But remember, there are no innocent people at all. The Bible says that we are all sinners against God. We live in a world that is cursed because of sin. It is not the way God created it—but it is the way we made it. God warned Adam and Eve. They did not listen but sinned against Him. Because of that sin and the sins of all people, bad things happen. Death came into the world because of sin.

But the good news is that for those who are in Christ, we can rest in knowing that God works all things—both good and bad—together for our good. And if we know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are children of God, and He will always give His children the grace we need to get through whatever it is He brings our way.



► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Acts 17:26–27 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Pray that God will help them to see that He is sovereign—in control of all things—and that they can trust Him to work everything out for our good.
- Pray that they will have the faith and the trust in God that Job had to help them get through the hard times in their lives.

