

## THE LEGEND OF THE BOOK

The rabbis instance over a thousand verbal statements of Job in the book by his name. The “comforters” join in three attempts each to analyse the reason for calamities that came upon Job. The book begins with God’s remarkable tribute to a holy life as He confronted Satan with the words, “Have you considered my servant Job that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that reverences God and hates evil?”. The book also ends with God as the wise creator unwinding a scroll of 70 questions teaching Job that from the dullard ostrich timid grasshopper to the dangerous crocodile, from the dullard ostrich to the elite sons of the morning He is the sovereign creator who fully understands and loves all that He has made.

But what is the central message of the book? If it is suffering is it the suffering of tragic human loss? Is it the inhumanity of man to man where the bitter tongue multiplies of sorrow and pain or the youthful theological know-it-all whose scintillating theology was flawed by careless and indeed unfeeling misapplication?

The critique of the LORD on the huge mass of analysis by Job’s three aged comforters is “You have not spoken **of me** the thing that is right”. The theology of Eliphaz Zophar and Bildad was invalid and devoid of love. This short critique highlights the pure theology of Job and makes no comment on Elihu whose words like the curate’s egg were in places good and others not so good. The LORD commends the truth Job expounds about his redeemer along with his humble attitude expressed and to demonstrate His love for Job he answers his prayer converts his comforters and renders him as happy as a returned exile with a 140 year long life to demonstrate to the world the truth of divine redemption and grace which super-abounds where sin and death have entered.

Job is unquestionably the saint of his time which I believe was the era following Joseph’s day (circa 16<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) Had it been earlier he would have had great peers “like him” as Abraham or Jacob or Joseph. Were he to have lived in the period before Abraham 2000-3000 BC Shem whose life spanned that entire period was most certainly more than his peer. As a holy person he endured unequalled and concentrated suffering of spirit and body. Satan pursued him. God raised him from all of this to be a judge and chieftain and made him an intercessor for people of different nations. In all of this he pre-figures the Christ.

So the legend of the book of Job is **the latter day suffering of Redeemer** foretold in the glorious Life -Torah of Job and pointing to what Elihu called “the extreme suffering”. This suffering of the sinless Saviour is the perfect riposte to Satan’s fostered rebellion of the heart and yields spiritual wealth and alone can bring men to peace with God through intercession. Its testimony deals with “brokenness” (Jemima) through Grace (Kezia) and takes humanity onwards to holiness Keren Happuch (a powerful ray or horn of beauty) in the Christian family which bears testimony to the suffering one and his kingship in the entire world.

Through the book of Job one must not be so affected by the poignant sorrows as to fail to pick up the vibes of divine and theological truth as Job counters the error of the comforters at whom he sometimes claps and laughs and listens to the competent Elihu develop his theological approach silent but often with his mouth open. The

LORD Himself through Job is teaching us all not merely His sovereignty which is everywhere plain but also His purpose in Redemption and a righteous judgment that is exalted over sin and Satan and can conduct good men through the valley of suffering to greater usefulness on earth and into the kingdom of the latter days when in flesh that cannot be touched with sin and suffering we see God and share with Christ who will return to this earth in glory (19.25-26).

**Bob Coffey**  
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