

Roots

Resources for Proper 24 (20-27 October 2024)

Share the Word: Present the Old Testament

A brief guide to the story of Job

The first we know of Job is that he is a righteous and upright man. A man of great wealth. But when God meets with some spiritual beings, they challenge him to take all this away from Job. They suggest that he is only righteous because God has looked favourably upon him. God knows that Job's faith is not due to his circumstances, so he allows Satan to inflict disaster and catastrophe upon him.

Job is now suffering intensely but he refuses to curse God, despite the advice of his friends. Job and his friends argue at length about this. The friends maintain that God is a God of justice and retribution. If you're wise and honour God, then he will reward you accordingly. If you are suffering, then you must have done something to deserve it. Throughout, Job refuses to accept that he has done anything to cause God's judgement. So, God must be punishing him for no cause. His friends disagree – and so the arguments continue. Eventually, Job tires of his friends' argument going round in circles and takes all his grief and pain to God, pouring out his agony. But then he realises that can't be right. God is just and fair – but that doesn't answer his questions.

Another friend appears in the form of Elihu, who is a bit more helpful. Maybe, he suggests, God is using this time of distress as a warning to Job? Or could it be that it is character-building? Elihu tries to speak on behalf of God, concluding that God is beyond our reach.

It is at this point in the story that God speaks...

For more background see:

<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-job/>

<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-job/#dialogue-of-job>