

## Chronological Bible Study

Week 33:

**Even in Suffering, God is Sovereign**

Isaiah 52:1-55:13

2 Chronicles: 36:22-23

Proverbs 22:17-24:34; 30:1-31:31

Job 1:1-21:34

# Opening Prayer

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFbtaaFYr2k>





## **Introductions**

Based on our sermon yesterday, what do you consider to be one of your talents and how are you using this talent?

# Questions?

# Comments?

## **Summary of This Week's Readings**

- The Suffering Servant
- Hope for the Future
- Words of the Wise
- Job

## Isaiah 40-55

[Video Link](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRNQsUd7LnQ&list=RDCMUCL4SUOSUEOq8v-aaw3GQ7Tw&start\\_radio=1&rv=KRNQsUd7LnQ&t](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRNQsUd7LnQ&list=RDCMUCL4SUOSUEOq8v-aaw3GQ7Tw&start_radio=1&rv=KRNQsUd7LnQ&t)



## Grace and Deliverance

- The theme of grace and deliverance continues
- God delivers his people by means of his ministering servant's self-sacrifice.
- Israel must listen and have faith in God's ability to deliver not only Israel, but the whole world, from the alienation of sin.
- God's justice and salvation will be offered to the whole world and outlast the physical world. The hour for Jerusalem to rise up has come.
- Israel's redemption (and the world's) depends on whether God can find a way to restore the relationship with humanity that sin has ruptured.

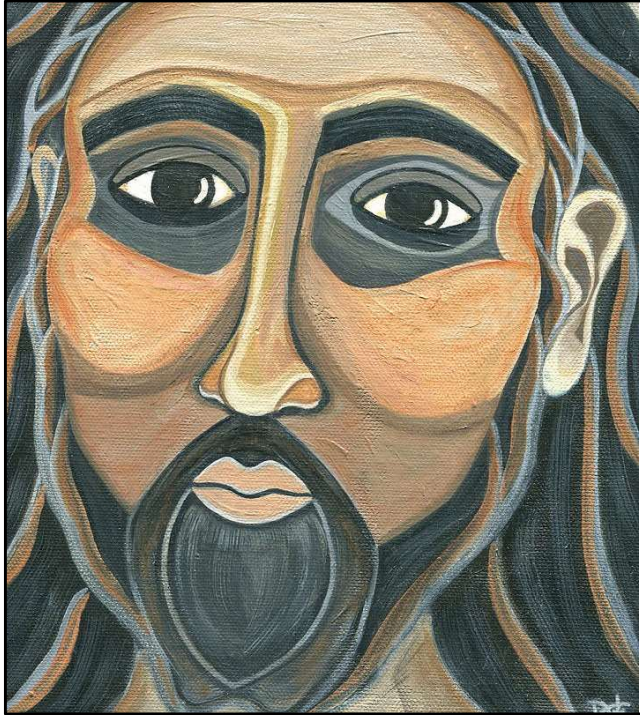


The prophecies of consolation and hope, begun in Isaiah 40, continue. We will read the final prophecies in a few weeks. Isaiah 52-55 continue with the theme of God's grace to cleanse Israel to serve him. The holy spirit gives Isaiah a vision of the distant future that encompasses Judah's exile and return. There is no explicit references to Babylon in these verses.

Beginning in Verse 52, God will deliver Israel from the sin that separates them from him through the ministering servant. Israel is called to listen to and act upon what God is saying. They must have faith in God's ability to deliver not only them, but the whole world, from the alienation of sin.

Isaiah first addresses those who "trust in the name of the Lord." God's justice and salvation will be offered to the whole world and will outlast the physical world. The people should not allow fear of mortals to cause them to lose faith in what Yahweh will do for them through his servant. God is ready to save them; their punishment is at an end; the hour for Jerusalem to rise up out of the dust has come.

Israel's redemption (and the world's) depends on whether God can find a way to restore the relationship with humanity that sin has ruptured.



## The Suffering Servant

- Israel called to behold God
- 650 years before Jesus' life, Isaiah saw a glimpse of the Messiah and his death
- The servant is the "arms of the Lord" but an unexpected one.
- The servant's power is in surrender, both to God and to his abusers. That self-sacrifice for the sins of his people and all people will make victory over the sin that holds the world in bondage possible.
- God is committed to suffer for our salvation
- The servant is scorned, substitutional, silent, and sovereign
- Pronouns in this section important:
  - I refers to God
  - He refers to the servant
  - We, us, our refer to the prophet
  - You refers to the broad audience this addresses

To behold something is to stop in awe and admire its beauty. It's not merely to look, observe or view, but is more – it makes us say WOW! It's something that takes our breath away. We are in awe of the beauty before us. The bible uses the word behold as a divine highlighter to draw our attention to the beautiful things before us. This is how Isaiah 52 begins: Behold, Zion, clothe yourself with strength – behold God.

650 years before Jesus' life, Isaiah saw a glimpse of the Messiah and His death. It was breathtaking and filled with awe and beauty. This portion of Scripture moves us to behold, to treasure, and savor all that Jesus would do for us on the cross. We see that even 650 years before the cross, God was committed to suffering for our salvation.

Chapter 52-53 are the fullest statement in Isaiah of the means by which Yahweh would restore his people to himself. Isaiah describes a servant who is scorned, substitutional, silent, and sovereign.

The servant is "the arm of the LORD" but a very unexpected one. His power for deliverance is in surrender, both to Yahweh and to his abusers. But that self-sacrifice for the sins of his people and all people will make victory possible over the sin that holds the world in bondage. It is apparent both from Jesus' own statements and those of the NT writers that all of them understood this passage to be speaking of Jesus' life and ministry.

The pronouns in the passage are very important: “I” generally refers to Yahweh; “he” refers to the servant; “we,” “us,” and “our” refer to the prophet and his audience; “you” refers to the audience. There is no reason to limit the scope of the audience. As noted above, the servant’s work is not only for “Jacob” but for all the nations



## Scorned, Substitutional, Silent, and Sovereign

- Scorned: a slave to God's will (Isaiah 53:1)
- Substitutional: Jesus died for our sins (Isaiah 53:4)
- Silent: Jesus remained silent before his accusers (Isaiah 53:7)
- Sovereign: The sovereign will of God was that Jesus be crucified as God's program to save the world. God was sovereign and Jesus was submissive (Isaiah 53:10)
- Jesus willingly laid down his life on the cross because he was committed to his suffering for our salvation



The scorned servant is a slave to God's will. The Hebrew word EBED was used in the OT for prophets and kings who placed themselves under God's leadership. Moses was referred to as a slave by God in Numbers 12:7-8. The word denotes a submission, not an ownership. Loneliness, despair, and shame that would take place on the cross, but He went anyways because He placed Himself under the will and care of the Father as His Servant. The Servant would be "despised and rejected." Even though Jesus would reveal God's heart and saving purposes, people would reject and hate Him. Since Jesus' ministry began people were amazed at His authority but also filled with disdain toward Him. The people scorned the Servant of God. Isaiah projects that the Messiah will be hated, rejected, and scorned by the people. The New Testament affirms that Isaiah was right. Behold, stand in awe, that Jesus was rejected by men so that men could be accepted by God.

Isaiah next writes about the death of the Servant. With pinpoint accuracy, Isaiah begins to unveil what Jesus would accomplish on the cross. It is of utmost importance that we understand that all of Jesus' life was aimed toward the cross. He was born to die – for us. He was pierced for our transgression. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace. He went to the cross for us. Wounded to bring healing. Crushed to bring life. In the New Testament we see the Apostle Peter repeating the prophecy of Isaiah and proclaiming that it has come true in Jesus Christ in 1 Peter 2, 24 He Himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to

righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” (1 Peter 2:24-25) Jesus’ death was substitutionary. He stood in our place. He died for our sins. John Stott, in his classic work *The Cross of Christ* wrote, “Before we can begin to see the cross as something done for us we have to see it as something done by us.” It was our sin that motivated Jesus to go to the cross. It was for our guilt that the innocent suffered. It was for our shame that Jesus was hung naked on the cross. Our hands were dirty, but yet He took the nails. John Stott wrote, “At the cross in holy love God through Christ paid the full penalty of our disobedience Himself. He bore the judgment we deserved in order to bring us the forgiveness we do not deserve. On the cross divine mercy and justice were equally expressed and eternally reconciled.”

Isaiah explains that though the Messiah would be falsely accused, afflicted and punished for crimes He did not commit, “He opened not His mouth.” The New Testament confirms that as Jesus was on trial He remained silent before His accusers. No one ever deserved suffering less than Jesus, yet He bore the great suffering we deserve. The stamp that God put on Jesus’ life according to Hebrews 4:15 is one “without sin.” Jesus was the only person throughout history that didn’t deserve to suffer yet suffered the most. If anybody deserved to object to the injustice it was Jesus, yet He stood silent and submissive to the will of the Father.




The word “crushed” in the Hebrew (DAKA), means to literally crush into a fine dust. In extrabiblical Hebrew literature, the word was used to describe mortar being broken down into a fine powder, to literally beat to pieces. Jesus Christ was pulverized by the cross. It was a hideous death. The physical torment of the cross was a pulverizing “crushing” of the Son of God. The weight of the shame, distress, and pain was unbearable. When we think about the pain of the cross, one word comes to mind, “excruciating”. In fact, the word, excruciating, comes from the Latin word, *excruciare*, to crucify. The word means, “a pain like the pain of the crucifixion”. The very metric by which we measure adverse pain comes from the cross. We must remember that “it was the will of the LORD to crush Him.” It was the sovereign will of God the Father that Jesus be crushed and crucified. When we think about the cross we often blame the Jewish religious elite, the Roman soldiers who tortured Him, or Judas who betrayed Him. But we must recognize that the cross had always been the Father’s plan for the Son. As Isaiah peered through the corridors of history he saw the New Testament reality, “Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. (Acts 2:23) The suffering of Jesus was God’s program to save the world. Jesus’ suffering on the cross was suffering by design. It was God’s sovereign design that Jesus should be crushed for our salvation. It was the Father’s sovereign will and the Son submitted to it. The remarkable thing about the cross was that Jesus knew full well how terrible it was going to be, but He submitted His life and His will to the will of God. God was sovereign, and Jesus was submissive. In John’s Gospel, Jesus states in John 10:18, “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” (John 10:18) Jesus willingly laid down His life on the cross. He was committed to His suffering for our salvation.

The incredible paradox of the Kingdom of God is that its Sovereign King is a Suffering Servant. Jesus, who reigns in heaven yet served us on earth by laying down His life. God's Kingdom is inaugurated on the cross. All those who enter the Kingdom of God must enter by the way of the cross. It is where we realize that all the world has to offer is dead to us, and we to it. Behold, the cross that brought our Lord to die brings us to live.

- God’s strength is manifested in weakness.
- The suffering that caused us to despise the servant was in fact ours.
- Atonement is not achieved through a mere religious sleight of hand; it is a matter of death.
- It appears on the surface the servant suffered in vain.
- These things happened because it was God’s will to express his love for a lost world.
- The victory is in intercession for the sins of mankind.

## Christ and the Crucifixion

*Isaiah 52–53*

 <p style="font-size: small;">He will be disfigured beyond recognition 52:14</p> <p style="font-size: small;">He will be despised and rejected by people 53:3</p> <p style="font-size: small;">He will not defend himself 53:7</p> <p style="font-size: small;">He will be led like a lamb to the slaughter 53:7</p>	 <p style="font-size: small;">He will be raised and lifted up 52:13</p> <p style="font-size: small;">He will bear the pain and suffering of humanity 53:4</p> <p style="font-size: small;">He will be punished, stricken and afflicted by God 53:4</p> <p style="font-size: small;">He will be crushed and pierced for the sins of humanity 53:5–6,8,10,12</p>	 <p style="font-size: small;">He will die as an innocent man 53:9</p> <p style="font-size: small;">He will be buried with the wicked and in a rich man’s grave 53:9</p>
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The suffering that caused us to despise the servant was in fact ours. Everything that happened to the servant was in fact what should have happened to us. We” thought he was being “punished by God” (v. 4), but we were wrong; it was our “punishment . . . on him” (v. 5). Not only did he take our punishment, but in taking it, he made us whole (“brought us peace,” v. 5). He was beaten, and we became healthy. Pierced, crushed, punishment, wounds ... all speak of the agony that the servant had to undergo because of our sins. Atonement is not achieved through a mere religious sleight of hand; it is a matter of death.


It appears on the surface that the servant has suffered in vain (cf. 49:4). “He was oppressed and afflicted” (v. 7), but no one spoke up on his behalf—neither he himself (v. 7) nor anyone else (v. 8). He was denied a fair trial (the phrase “by oppression and judgment” in v. 8 is likely “oppressive judgment”). He was “cut off” (v. 8) without children, and no one seemed to recognize what he was actually doing. The final insult was that he was buried with the rich (v. 9). The context here shows that this was not a place of honor. The Bible often associates the rich with wickedness, because many times their wealth was acquired through oppression or dishonesty. This prophecy was fulfilled when Joseph of Arimathea, himself a righteous man, buried Jesus among the rich.

These things happened not accidentally or merely because this is an unjust world but

because “it was the LORD’s will” (v. [10](#)). On the surface this seems terrible. But this expresses not cruelty but love for a lost world. When “his life” is made “an offering for sin” (v. [10](#)), then the children and the long life that he was deprived of will be amply repaid, because he will have progeny in faith over the whole world (v. [10](#)). This accomplishes Yahweh’s will and satisfies the servant (v. [11](#)). The mission ends in victory since the servant divides “the spoils with the strong” (v. [12](#)). The victory is surprising: the victor “poured out his life unto death,” but in dying he carries the “sin of many” and intercedes “for the transgressors” (v. [12](#)), thereby justifying “many” (v. [11](#)). Therein is victory. Jesus’ trial, passion, and resurrection (chs. [18–20](#)) are the climax of John’s Gospel.

## Messianic Prophecies in ISAIAH

The book of Isaiah has more prophecies about Jesus' birth, life and ministry than any other Old Testament book



### Part 1

- He will be born of a virgin**  
7:14 (fulfilled Matt. 1:20-23; Luke 1:26-35)
- He will cause those who don't believe in him to stumble**  
8:14 (fulfilled Luke 2:34; Rom. 9:32-33)
- His ministry will begin in Galilee**  
9:1 (fulfilled Matt. 4:12-15,23)
- His kingdom will last forever**  
9:7 (fulfilled Luke 1:32-33)
- He will be a descendant of Jesse (David)**  
11:1,10 (fulfilled Matt. 1:1,6,17)
- He will be followed by Gentiles**  
11:10; 56:6-8 (fulfilled John 10:16; Acts 10:34-35,45,47)
- He will be considered the chief cornerstone**  
28:16 (fulfilled 1 Pet. 2:6-7)
- He will heal the sick**  
35:5-6 (fulfilled Matt. 11:4-6; John 9:6-7)
- He will be preceded by a messenger**  
40:3 (fulfilled Luke 1:17,76-77)

## Messianic Prophecies in ISAIAH

### Part 2

- He will be humble yet bring forth justice**  
42:1-6 (fulfilled Matt. 12:15-21)
- He will endure people spitting on him and beating him**  
50:6 (fulfilled Matt. 26:67)
- He will be rejected and despised**  
53:3 (fulfilled Matt. 13:57; Mark 6:4)
- He will suffer**  
53:3,10 (fulfilled Matt. 27:26,29)
- He will be punished and die for our sins**  
53:4-5,8,11-12 (fulfilled 2 Cor. 5:21)
- He will not defend himself**  
53:7 (fulfilled Matt. 26:62-63; 27:11-14)
- He will be buried with the rich**  
53:9 (fulfilled John 19:38-42)
- He will be anointed by God's Spirit**  
61:1 (fulfilled Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10)
- He will minister in public**  
61:1-3 (fulfilled Luke 4:16-21,43)

Jews do not regard any of these as having been fulfilled by Jesus, and in some cases do not regard them as messianic prophecies at all. Old Testament prophecies that were regarded as referring to the arrival of Christ are either not thought to be prophecies by biblical scholars, as the verses make no stated claim of being predictions, or are seen as having no correlation as they do not explicitly refer to the Messiah.

The author of Isaiah wants us to see that the hope for a faithful king who would bring the Kingdom of God has deep roots going all the way back to David. It appears that this promise stood as a potential reality for each generation of David's descendants, but one by one they all struck out. Hezekiah came close, but in the end, even he was disqualified by his selfishness and sin. The future promise keeps getting delayed and kicked out into the distant future.

This a very different conception of messianic prophecy than the popular conception of the prophets (think Nostradamus), who looked into a crystal ball and predicted events far removed from their own day. That isn't how the biblical prophets worked. Rather, they looked to God's promises in the past (to Abraham and David) to generate hope for their own day and beyond. The prophets believed that God's covenant promises called every generation of Israel and its kings to repentance and faithfulness. But as the story turns out,

none of David's descendants lived up to this call. And then the exile happened. This is how the promise of the Messiah became a hope for the distant future once the kingdom of David was hauled off to Babylon.

This was the story Jesus was born into. The basic claim of the four Gospel stories in the New Testament is that Jesus was that faithful king from the line of David. He was the one to whom this entire story had been pointing all along. Not because of Isaiah's predictive prophecy, but because Jesus arrived and began doing things that made people realize this man is doing all the things God promised to David and Abraham. Those ancient poems and prophetic stories created a giant "help wanted: Messiah needed" sign, Jesus arrived to apply for the job, and successfully. But how Jesus fulfilled these ancient promises also surprised many people.

Isaiah Prophecy	Theme	Fulfilled by Jesus
He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted [ISA 52:13]	Jesus' exaltation	Therefore, God highly exalted him to the highest place [PHP 2:9]
He was despised and rejected by men [ISA 53:3]	Jesus was despised	The people stood watching, and the rulers sneered at him [LK 23:35]
He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows [ISA 53:4]	Jesus' work of healing	This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases [MT 8:17]
He was pierced for our transgressions [ISA 53:5]	Jesus was pierced	One of the soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. [JN 19:34]
The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all [ISA 53:6]	Jesus took our sin	He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree [1 PE 2:24]
He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth;...he had done no violence nor was any deceit in his mouth. [ISA 53:7,9]	Jesus' example of suffering	Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him he did not retaliate. [1 PE 2:21-23]
He was assigned a grave with the wicked. [ISA 53:9]	Jesus died with evil people	The robbers who were crucified with [Jesus] also heaped insults on him. [MT 27:44]
He will see the light of life [ISA 53:11]	Jesus' resurrection	[Christ] was raised on the third day [1 CO 15:4]
He ...was numbered with the transgressors. [ISA 53:12]	Jesus himself claimed to fulfill this prophecy	"It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment. [LK 22:37]
He bore the sins of many [ISA 53:12]	Jesus bore our sins	Christ was sacrificed to take away the sins of many [HEB 9:28]
He...made intercession for the transgressors [ISA 53:12]	Jesus prayed for those who nailed him to the cross	Jesus said, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." [LK 23:34]





## **Discussion**

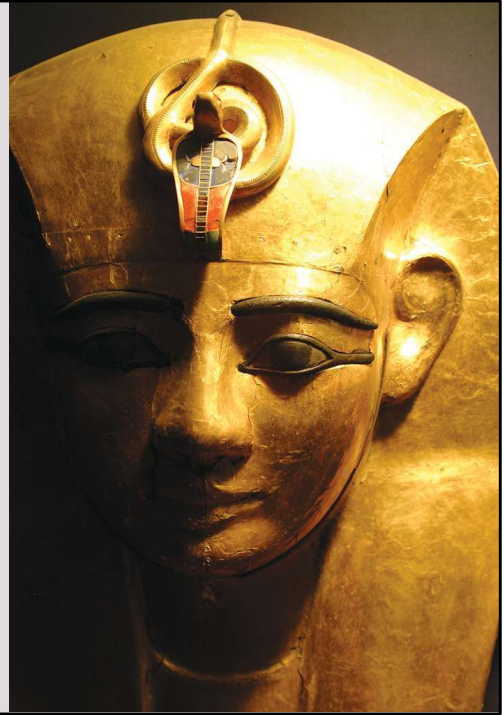
How does the message of the suffering servant in Isaiah 52-55 help strengthen your faith? How/when does it apply today?

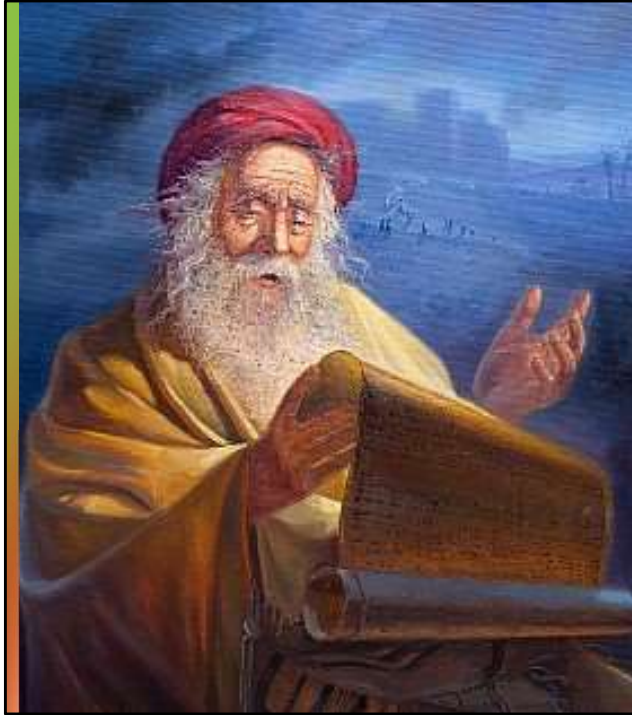
## **The Thirty Sayings of the Wise (Proverbs 22:17-24:34)**

- 30 sayings of a Wise Man
  - Similar to the Egyptian “Sayings of Amenemope” which consists of 30 chapters. Key topics include:
    - Framing proverbs to: Trust in the Lord (Proverbs 22:19) and Fear the Lord (Proverbs 24:21)
    - Speak the truth (Proverbs 22:21) – transform the character and speech of the person hearing the proverb toward justice
    - Economic vulnerability of the marginalized should not be exploited (Proverbs 22:22)
    - God will avenge the marginalized with Israel’s judicial system fails (Proverbs 22:23)
    - Ancient boundary stones marked the age of the family’s property and its boundaries. Land served as the fundamental source of their livelihood and security and was transferred to subsequent generations (Proverbs 22:28)
    - An exhortation to excellence in their work (Proverbs 22:29)
    - Don’t be a workaholic to achieve riches; riches are fleeting (Proverbs 23:4-5)
    - Be careful who you associate with (Proverbs 23:6-10; 22-35)
    - Be disciplined (Proverbs 23:12-14)
    - Don’t envy sinners (Proverbs 23:17)
    - There is future hope with God (Proverbs 23:18)
  - Solomon creatively adopted and adapted the “sayings of the wise” to Israel’s covenant teaching, especially by calling for devotion to the Lord, the God of Israel. Solomon gives distinctive treatment to the Egyptian sayings.

## Who was Amenemope?

- Ancient Egyptian author of *The Instruction of Amenemope*
  - A scribe and sage, Son of Kanakht,
  - Text composed during the late New Kingdom (~1100BC), which pre-dates the Hebrew Bible
  - Influenced Hebrew thought in Proverbs, Job, Samuel and Jeremiah in ideas, figures, moral standards, spirit of kindness.
  - He drew on older text: *The Maxims of Ptahhotep*
- Instructions were similar to earlier written wisdom literature of Babylon and Israel
  - 30 chapters; father instructs son on the moral life
  - Collection of maxims and admonitions for practical advice on living
  - Counsels on modesty, self-control, generosity, honesty and discourages against pride, impetuosity, self-advancement, fraud, and perjury





## Proverbs of Agur

- Considered oracles or originating from God as a divine utterance.
- Declares himself weary, capturing the intellectual and psychological exhaustion associated with efforts to attain knowledge of God and wisdom by mere human ability.
- Wisdom is to be found not only in the world but also in God's revelation to Israel.
- Divine revelation is needed for the acquisition of true wisdom.

Though Agur is otherwise unknown, his superscript introduces his sayings as an oracle and son of Jakeh. The oracle is an inspired utterance that suggests the sayings originated from God and have divine authority. The author declares himself weary, capturing the intellectual and psychological exhaustion associated with efforts to attain knowledge of God and wisdom by mere human ability.

He addresses a son or disciple, Ithiel. His prophetic burden falls into three parts: (1) introduction: an autobiographical confession (vv. [1-9](#)); (2) body: six numerical sayings (vv. [10-31](#)); (3) conclusion: a warning to Ithiel not to rebel (vv. [32-33](#)).

This collection of proverbs functions to provide a theological perspective on the pursuit of wisdom. For Agur, wisdom is found not only in the world but also in the Lord's revelation to Israel (vv. [1-6](#)). Divine revelation is needed for the acquisition of true wisdom.

# Proverbs of Agur

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75buYaZAahw>



## Proverbs of King Lemuel

- Two poems his mother taught him about the noble king and the noble wife. They concern the nature of responsible leadership.
- Warned not spend his strength on women
- The wife of noble character is described
- True wisdom and the fear of the Lord are not mere intellectual qualities; they are a way of life.



The superscript introduces two poems by King Lemuel, which his mother taught him: the noble king (vv. [1–9](#)) and the noble wife (vv. [10–31](#)). They concern the nature of responsible leadership.

The king is urged not to spend his strength on women. Unrestrained sexual gratification distracts the king's attention from serving the people, blunts his wit, undermines his good judgment, exposes him to palace intrigues, and squanders the national wealth.

The wife is described with terms and expressions used elsewhere only for Lady Wisdom. She is the incarnation of wisdom in everyday life, the embodiment of the book's virtues, and a concrete example of what it means to fear the Lord. Ruth in the book of Ruth, which in many Hebrew Bibles follows [Prov 31](#), is this kind of wife. The wife uses her strength and wisdom totally and unselfishly for others. She is a gift from God.

True wisdom and the fear of the Lord are not mere intellectual qualities; they are a way of life.



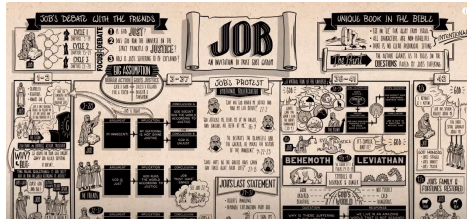
## Discussion

How does the teaching of Proverbs 31 help shape our understanding of success and worthiness in the eyes of God --- for both men and women?

# Book of Job

[Video Link](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQwnH8th\\_fs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQwnH8th_fs)





## Overview of Job

- There is no historical time or setting for this story and the author is not known.
- Job's faith was known by both God and Satan.
- Job suffered while innocent
- Job questioned God
- Job's friends and family didn't help



There is no historical time or setting for this story and the author is unknown. Many scholars believe the book of Job is one of the oldest in the Bible. That does not mean that Job himself lived before anyone else in the Bible—he most certainly came after Adam! But there are hints that Job lived in a truly ancient time: Job offered sacrifices himself for his family, instead of relying on a priest and his wealth was measured in livestock, not gold. It is likely that Job lived sometime between the flood and the time of Moses. Many scholars place Job in the patriarchal period, around the same time that Abraham lived and believe it was written between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. The story takes place in the land of Uz, far from Israel.

Job's ability to believe was so impressive that he garnered the attention of God and also Satan. In this first chapter of Job, we read an account of God questioning Satan about his schemes. Job's story continues to be relevant to Christians today because of his ability to believe despite suffering. His season of loss is a reminder that no possession or relationship on this Earth is guaranteed to last forever. Not even our health. Job found himself losing all that he owned, all except for his faith. However, Job's story is not limited to suffering or maintaining faith amid trials.

The speeches in Job are written in poetic form and the prologue and epilogue are written in prose.

Job is said to be “blameless and upright;” a god-fearer/one who turns from evil. He was a man of integrity who trusted God as his redeemer, sincerely worshipped God, loved his family, and was consistent in his walk with God. According to conventional wisdom, those who live like Job should be blessed, not cursed. God uses the example of Job to show that He will sometimes allow people to suffer even when they have done nothing specifically wrong to “deserve” the suffering. Sometimes, suffering is part of God’s plan to purify and mature us. James 5:11 uses Job’s life as an example of how to endure suffering patiently: “As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.”

The friends’ understanding of God and the world changes little amid a variety of topics they introduce and reintroduce, while Job remains steadfast on some issues and advances in understanding on others. On one hand Job is steadfast in claiming his innocence, that God is acting like his enemy, and that God eludes him. But, Job’s understanding of why tragedy struck him moves from complete lack of understanding to the recognition that God is trying to expose his true character. Watch for this in next week’s reading.

### Job's Many Afflictions

*Job*

**Afflictions to Job's Household and Property**

Theft of oxen, donkeys, camels 1:14-15, 17

Murder of servants 1:15, 17

Burning of sheep and servants 1:16

Death of sons and daughters by a collapsed house 1:18-19

**Afflictions to Job's Mind and Spirit**

Misery, bitterness, longing for death, hopelessness, broken spirit 3:20-21; 7:3, 6, 15; 17:1

Lack of peace and rest 3:26

Meaningless existence 7:3, 16

Sleeplessness, frightening dreams, terrifying visions 7:4, 14

Shame and fear of God's terror 9:34-35; 10:15

Torment, scorn and hostility from everyone 12:4; 16:10; 17:2, 6; 19:2-3, 18

Shattered plans 17:11

Alienation by his wife, relatives, friends, guests and servants 19:13-17, 19

Loss of dignity 30:15

**Afflictions to Job's Body**

Painful sores over entire body 2:7

Broken, festering, black and peeling skin with worms and scabs 7:5; 30:30

Gaunt body 16:8; 19:20

Red face from weeping; dark shadows around eyes 16:16

Unending pain 30:17

Fever 30:30

## Job's Suffering

- Job was said to be blameless and upright; a God-fearer or one who turns from evil.
- The question of why Job suffered is complex and never directly answered
- Job complained to God but never cursed him – he worshipped God after his affliction, just as Jesus accepted God's will for his own suffering
- Job's friends serve to provide general philosophical thinking on the question of suffering.

The book of Job in the Old Testament explores the nature of human suffering and God's role in the world's tragedies. Job's suffering is often interpreted as foreshadowing Jesus Christ, the Suffering Servant, who suffered bodily pain and affliction on behalf of others:

- Uprightness: Job's uprightness is similar to Jesus Christ's excellence.
- Blamelessness: Job's blamelessness foreshadows Jesus's sinlessness.
- Suffering: Job's physical and mental suffering, including the loss of his children and property, boils, and his wife turning on him, anticipates Jesus's suffering.
- Response: Job never cursed God, but instead worshipped him after his affliction. Similarly, Jesus never charged his father foolishly.

Job is said to be “blameless and upright;” a god-fearer/one who turns from evil. He was a man of integrity who trusted God as his redeemer, sincerely worshipped God, loved his family, and was consistent in his walk with God. According to conventional wisdom, those who live like Job should be blessed, not cursed. God uses the example of Job to show that He will sometimes allow people to suffer even when they have done nothing specifically wrong to “deserve” the suffering. Sometimes, suffering is part of God’s plan to purify and mature us. James 5:11 uses Job’s life as an example of how to endure suffering patiently: “As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of

compassion and mercy.”

Job's suffering also has other purposes, including demonstrating God's value and glory, and refining Job's righteousness. Job's story can also remind Christians that innocent suffering is a proper Christian experience, and that God recognizes a range of human emotions, including pain, grief, and despair.

The major theme of the book has traditionally been articulated as underserved suffering, an issue that strikes a chord in many human hearts. And definitely that is at the heart of the book. Yet when the Lord addresses the book's hero at the end of this literary masterpiece, he does not explain to Job why Job has suffered. While many readers may view this as a deficiency, it may be at the same time one of the earmarks of the book's literary genius. Rather than God responding to Job's demands with a simple and forthright answer, the book puts together a literary configuration that elucidates an answer.

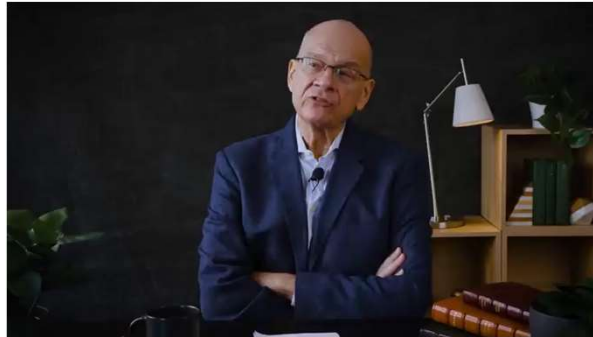
The question of why Job suffers is not an easy one. Even if the Lord were to provide a simple answer, at least from his point of view, its complexities would be so challenging that even a wise man like Job would perhaps find them incomprehensible. Eliphaz began such an explanation in his first speech ([5:17](#)), which was more fully developed by Elihu ([33:14–30](#); [36:8–11](#), [15–17](#); [37:13](#)). Yet the idea that suffering is designed to bring one back on to the right track is only one possibility, and it is by no means entirely satisfactory. Yet Job's interaction with his friends, the reprimand he receives from Elihu, and the humbling power of God's speeches help Job come to understand that his relationship to God is ultimately the main issue and that suffering, while extremely important, is secondary. Thus, we ought to see the major issue of the book of Job more like a complex series of issues rather than a single one. It is about the suffering of the innocent, the testing of the righteous, and Job's relationship to God—all bound together in the totality of the book. The complex of issues is not theoretical but practical, which makes the book all the more relevant. Job's world is real, not a hypothetical “ivory tower” where these questions can be bandied about among the participants without anyone feeling the hurt.

There are three cycles of speeches, each written in poetic form. Each cycle is composed of three speeches, one by each of Job's three friends, followed by Job's response. The speeches do not touch like rectangles set side by side; they are more like circles, some concentric, some partially overlapping, some disjointed. From time to time the disputants seize upon each other's arguments and turn them on the anvil of their own theological platform to give them a different meaning.

## The Gospel in Job

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vp9hV8bOjk>





## Discussion

Sometimes when we are faced with trials, it is hard to remember that God will not desert us. What are some things you do to remain focused on God during difficult seasons of life?



**Return to the Promised Land**

Job 22-42  
Ezra 1-5  
Haggai 1-2:23  
Zeccariah 1-6

## Closing Hymn

[Video Link](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=GnLurhYRHYg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnLurhYRHYg)



Isaiah 53:5



# Even in Suffering, God is Sovereign

ISA 52-55; 1 CH 36; PR 22-24; 30-31; JOB 1-21

June 18-24, 2024

Trust in the Lord! When the omnipresent God leads, he securely hems us in, moving both before and behind us. We are natural wanderers – we would rather go our own way, even if it leads to destruction. But Isaiah presents a picture of a shepherd leader who is wholly loving, compassionate and willing to suffer on our behalf. When we take refuge in God, he promises us peace beyond human comprehension. We should not fear, for no battle is too fierce for God. When our focus shifts from God we must remember that God is in control. We must focus on His sovereignty and faithfulness to face the many storms of life.

## Weekly Reading Plan

Day 1: ISA 52:1-55:13  
Day 2: 2 CH 36:22, 23; PR 22:17-24:34  
Day 3: PR 30:1-31:31; JOB 1:1-2:13  
Day 4: JOB 3:1-7:21  
Day 5: JOB 8:1-11:20  
Day 6: JOB 12:1-17:16  
Day 7: JOB 18:1-21:34

## Outline

The Suffering Servant [Day 1]  
Priestly Account: Hope for the Future [Day 2]  
Words of the Wise [Day 2]  
The Wisdom of Agur and Lemuel [Day 3]  
The Suffering of Job [Day 4-7]

## Key Characters

Agur	Jakeh
Lemuel	Job
Job's Family	Satan
Messengers	Angels
Eliphaz	Bildad
Zophar	

## Key Locations

Jerusalem  
Uz

## Key Terms

Redeemer	Hope
Compassion	Suffering
Righteous	Justice
Comfort	Sovereignty

## Key Verses

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. [ISA 53:4-5]

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. [ISA 55:8]

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. [PR 31:8-9]

“Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.” [Job 1:21]

But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God. [JOB 13:3]

# Even in Suffering, God is Sovereign

ISA 52-55; 1 CH 36; PR 22-24; 30-31; JOB 1-21

June 18-24, 2024

## Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Isa52: Awake, O Zion! How beautiful are those who bring good news. The LORD has redeemed Jerusalem. Behold, my Servant will be lifted up.

Isa53: He was despised and rejected. He was pierced for our transgressions. By his wounds we are healed. Out of anguish he will see light.

Isa54: Sing, O barren woman! Your offspring will inherit the nations. Your Maker is your husband. No weapon formed against you will prosper.

Isa55: Come, all you who are thirsty. I will make an everlasting covenant. My word will not return void. The mountains will burst into song.

2Ch36: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah ruled. Then Nebuchadnezzar burned the temple and took Judah captive for seventy years.

Pr22: A good name is better than riches. Train a child and he will not go astray. Incline your ear and apply your heart to my teaching.

Pr23: Do not wear yourself out to get rich. Do not move a boundary marker. Buy the truth, and do not sell it. Do not linger long over wine.

Pr24: Do not envy the wicked. Wisdom is sweet to the soul. Fear the LORD and the king, my son. I saw thorns in the field of the sluggard.

Pr30: Every word of God is pure. Give me neither poverty nor riches. Four things are never satisfied: Sheol, a barren womb, earth and fire.

Pr31: Speak up for the speechless. Who can find an excellent wife? She buys a field, she makes garments, she watches over her household.

Job1: Job was blameless. The LORD allowed Satan to test him. Job's servants and children were killed. He tore his robes and worshipped.

Job2: Satan struck Job with boils. Job's wife told him to curse God. But Job did not sin. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar came to comfort him.

Job3: Job said, "Curse the day I was born! Why did I not die at birth? Why is light given to him who suffers? I have no rest, only turmoil."

# Even in Suffering, God is Sovereign

ISA 52-55; 1 CH 36; PR 22-24; 30-31; JOB 1-21

June 18-24, 2024

## Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

**Job4:** Eliphaz said, "Will you become impatient? When did the innocent ever perish? I heard a voice: 'Can a man be more righteous than God?'"

**Job5:** "Who will answer you? Man is born to trouble. As for me, I would seek God. Do not despise his discipline. He wounds, but he binds up."

**Job6:** Job said, "My misery would outweigh the sand of the seas! You have proved no help. Show me how I have been wrong! Would I lie to you?"

**Job7:** "O God, my life is but a breath! Therefore I will speak out. What is man, that you examine him? Why have you set me as your target?"

**Job8:** Bildad said, "Does God pervert justice? Learn from past generations. He will not reject the blameless, nor will he uphold evildoers."

**Job9:** Job said, "How can a man dispute with God? His power is vast! But he destroys the innocent. If only there were a mediator between us!"

**Job10:** "God, why do you reject the work of your hands? You know that I am not guilty! Why did you bring me out of the womb? Leave me alone."

**Job11:** Zophar said, "Should your babble go unanswered? God exacts less than your guilt deserves! Reach out to him and you will find hope."

**Job12:** Job said, "Who does not know all these things? With God are wisdom and power. He brings darkness into light. He destroys nations."

**Job13:** "I want to argue my case with God. Be quiet and I will speak. Though he slay me, I will hope in him. God, why do you hide your face?"

**Job14:** "Man is like a fleeting shadow. If a tree is cut down, it will sprout again, but will a man live again? You overpower him forever."

**Job15:** Eliphaz said, "Your own mouth condemns you! Why do you turn against God? The wicked will be like a vine stripped of unripe grapes."

**Job16:** Job said, "You're miserable comforters! God has torn me and shattered me. But my prayer is pure. Even now, my advocate is on high!"

## Even in Suffering, God is Sovereign

ISA 52-55; 1 CH 36; PR 22-24; 30-31; JOB 1-21

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Job17: "My spirit is broken. He has made me a byword. But come again all of you! I will not find a wise man among you. Where is my hope?"

Job18: Bildad said, "Why are we stupid in your sight? Indeed, the light of the wicked goes out. His roots dry up and his branches wither."

Job19: Job said, "How long will you torment me? God counts me as an enemy. My closest friends abhor me. But I know that my redeemer lives!"

Job20: Zophar said, "My understanding inspires me to answer. The triumph of the wicked is short. His food will turn sour in his stomach."

Job21: Job said, "Listen to me. Why do the wicked grow mighty? How often do they have trouble? Who repays them? Your answers are empty!"

# Even in Suffering, God is Sovereign

ISA 52-55; 1 CH 36; PR 22-24; 30-31; JOB 1-21

June 18-24, 2024

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## Teachings About God

- God provides help and hope to his people.
- There is a tension between God's judgment and comfort.
- The Spirit will empower both the servant and the servants of the Lord.
- The conflict between God and Satan must in the end demonstrate the righteousness and supremacy of God.
- God's glory is served even when evil is permitted.
- God must reveal himself to man for man's understanding.

## Teachings About Humanity

- Job explores the issue of human suffering despite God's goodness and power and treats the question of why people suffer and why evil continues.
- Human behavior is on display before supernatural powers.
- Human reasoning alone can never penetrate to the mind of God. Human wisdom alone is inadequate.
- Job's friends were heartless and arrogant.

## Teachings About Salvation

- Job shows a family head offering sacrifices for the sins of his own family members.

## Reflections of Christ/Holy Spirit

- Foretells the death of the Messiah as a suffering servant (ISA 52-13-53:12)
- Job's expectation of a coming Redeemer (Job 19) was fulfilled in Jesus.
- Job's personal confession of faith anticipated both the coming of Christ and the resurrection.

## Literary Genres/Techniques

- Isaiah is mostly Hebrew poetry
- 1 Chronicles written as narrative history
- Proverbs are wisdom literature written as Hebrew poetry
- Job is wisdom literature written as Hebrew poetry with a narrative prologue and epilogue.
- Job written as "speculative wisdom," which explores the great questions of human existence.

## Author/Date of Writing/Audience

- Isaiah prophesied c 740-700 BC and the book was likely compiled c 680 BC. The author has been called "the Evangelist of the Old Covenant."
- Many believe chapters 40-66 of Isaiah were written after Isaiah's lifetime.
- 1 CHR likely written by Ezra c450 BC to the Israelites after they returned from Babylon
- Unnamed wise men wrote PR 22-24. Agur credited with writing PR 30 and King Lemuel wrote PR 31.
- Events in Job likely took place during the time of the Patriarchs (2000-1500 BC) and was perhaps written in Solomon's time (c950 BC).

# Even in Suffering, God is Sovereign

ISA 52-55; 1 CH 36; PR 22-24; 30-31; JOB 1-21

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## What did I learn about God?

- ISA 53 is applied in the New Testament to Jesus. From this song, how would you explain the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection? How does it bring reassurance to you of God's forgiveness and love?
- In Job 1, what does it mean that the Lord, not Satan, initiates the testing of Job? What limits does God place on Satan? What does Satan want to prove? Whose integrity is really at stake here: Job's? Satan's? God's?
- What is the proper role of faith and reason in solving the mysteries of life, such as the one faced by Job? Does prayer reveal answers to the otherwise unexplainable? Or, is prayer itself a mystery? Explain.
- What does it mean to "know" God as Job does? How is it different than knowing "about" God, as Eliphaz does? Which knowledge do you possess?

## What did I learn about human nature?

- In what ways are the "Sayings of Agur" (PR 30) like Solomon's proverbs? How are they different? Which ones are more like the Psalms, addressed to God? What is the point of the literary style and device that compares three and four items with one another?
- Job's friends help him, but then they go off on long rants about the nature of life and how badly Job must have messed up. Are these real friends? What is the nature of friendship in Job?
- How does the idea of blind faith play into Job's story and claim?
- Why do you think the wicked prosper? Why aren't good people honored and evil persons shown for who they really are? In your experience, have you seen the rich get richer and the poor get poorer? How do you account for that? Is God to blame? Why or why not?

## What did I learn about my life/relationship with God?

- Isaiah 55:2 states: "Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?" How does this question strike you? What things have you spent your money or labor on that have ultimately proven to be unfulfilling?
- In PR 31, the wife of noble character feared both the Lord and received the praise of children, husband and co-workers. Apart from the Lord's favor, whose opinion or praise matters most to you? Who is it harder to please – your family members or co-workers? Why?
- If you could make two requests of God, with the prospect of them both coming true, what would they be? How might they change if you were facing extreme hardship?
- When are you most comfortable with silence? Why? When is silence more preferable, even more powerful than words?
- How do you see sin and suffering related: A) I suffer the consequences for my sins B) I suffer for the sins of others C) I suffer without regard to sin D) I sin without suffering any immediate consequences? E) I sin without suffering, period. Which statement would Job most agree with?