

Job. The Faith to Challenge God

Biblical scholar Michael Brown brings Job to life for the twenty-first-century reader, exploring the raw spirituality of Job, his extraordinary faith, his friends' theological errors, the mysteries of God's speeches, and the unique answers to the problem of suffering offered in the book of Job. Undergirded by solid Hebrew scholarship but written with clarity for all serious students of Scripture, the commentary provides an important introduction to the study of Job, a new translation, a series of theological reflections, and additional exegetical essays providing in-depth discussion of key passages.



Job

The Faith to Challenge God



We go astray when we think that we
can do spiritual work without
spiritual power.

— *Aiden Wilson Tozer* —

AZ QUOTES

Summary of the rest of Job

- **The Breaking**
- **The Friends**
- **The Glory**

Book of Job Speeches

The First Cycle of Speeches

- CHAPTER 3. Job's First Speech
- CHAPTER 4. Eliphaz Responds to Job
- CHAPTER 5. Eliphaz Responds to Job (Continued)
- CHAPTER 6. Job Responds to Eliphaz
- CHAPTER 7. Job Responds to Eliphaz (Continued)
- CHAPTER 8. Bildad Responds to Job

Book of Job Speeches

The First Cycle of Speeches

- CHAPTER 9. Job Responds to Bildad
- CHAPTER 10. Job Responds to Bildad (Continued)
- CHAPTER 11. Zophar Responds to Job
- CHAPTER 12. Job Responds to Zophar
- CHAPTER 13. Job Responds to Zophar (Continued)
- CHAPTER 14. Job Responds to Zophar (Continued)

Book of Job Speeches

The Second Cycle of Speeches

- CHAPTER 15. Eliphaz Responds to Job
- CHAPTER 16. Job Responds to Eliphaz
- CHAPTER 17. Job Responds to Eliphaz (Continued)
- CHAPTER 18. Bildad Responds to Job
- CHAPTER 19. Job Responds to Bildad
- CHAPTER 20. Zophar Responds to Job
- CHAPTER 21. Job Responds to Zophar

Book of Job Speeches

The Third Cycle of Speeches

- CHAPTER 22. Eliphaz Responds to Job
- CHAPTER 23. Job Responds to Eliphaz
- CHAPTER 24. Job Responds to Eliphaz (continued)
- CHAPTER 25. Bildad Responds to Job
- CHAPTER 26. Job Responds to Bildad
- CHAPTER 27. Job Responds to Bildad (Continued)
- CHAPTER 28. The Hymn to Wisdom
- CHAPTER 29. Job's Final Speech
- CHAPTER 30. Job's Final Speech (Continued)
- CHAPTER 31. Job's Final Speech (Continued)

Book of Job Speeches

The Elihu Cycle of Speeches

- CHAPTER 32
- CHAPTER 33
- CHAPTER 34
- CHAPTER 35
- CHAPTER 36
- CHAPTER 37

Book of Job Speeches

The Divine Cycle of Speeches

- CHAPTER 38. The Lord's First Speech to Job
- CHAPTER 39. The Lord's First Speech to Job (Continued)
- CHAPTER 40. Job's First Response to the Lord and the Lord's Second Speech to Job
- CHAPTER 41. The Lord's Second Speech to Job (Continued)

Book of Job Speeches

The Divine Cycle of Speeches

- CHAPTER 38. The Lord's First Speech to Job
- CHAPTER 39. The Lord's First Speech to Job (Continued)
- CHAPTER 40. Job's First Response to the Lord and the Lord's Second Speech to Job
- CHAPTER 41. The Lord's Second Speech to Job (Continued)

And Finally, The Epilogue And...

- Chapter 42.
- **Job: Translation**
- **Theological Reflections**
 - Who Was the Adversary?
 - Job and the New Atheists
 - Challenging God as an Act of Faith

And Finally The Epilogue And...

- Job and Jesus
- Is Suffering a Reward for Righteousness?
- The Danger of Holding to a Too-Rigid Orthodoxy
- Job and the Problem of Suffering
- How Would Job Comfort a Godly Sufferer?
- The Happy Ending of Job.

And Finally, The Epilogue And...

- **Exegetical Essays**
- The Meaning of “In All This Job Did Not Sin with His Lips” (Job 2:10)
- The Chaos Monsters in Job
- The Meaning of *hofa’ta* in Job 10:3
- Job 13:15
- Job 19:25–27
- Job 24:18–25
- Job 42:6
- General Bibliography

The Breaking

Chapter 3:

4 That day! May it be darkness! May God above not seek it out and may light not shine on it.

5 May darkness and deep shadow reclaim it, and may a cloud cover it; may the blackness of the day terrify it.

6 That night! May pitch darkness seize it! May it not be included in the days of the year; may it not appear among the number of months.

The Breaking

7 Indeed, that night—may it be barren. May no joyful shout be heard in it.

8 May those who curse the day damn it, those prepared to arouse Leviathan.

9 May its twilight stars darken it. May it hope for light, but there be none, and may it not see the first glimmerings of dawn—

10 for it did not shut the doors of my mother's womb and thereby hide misery from my eyes.

The Breaking

11 Why couldn't I die at birth, just emerge from the womb and expire?

12 Why were knees there to welcome me and breasts that I could suckle?

13 For then I would have lied down and been quiet; I would have slept and been at rest,

14 together with kings and counselors of the earth who rebuilt ruins for themselves

The Breaking

15 or with princes who had gold and who filled their houses with silver.

16 Or like a hidden stillborn, I would not even exist, like infants who never saw the light.

The Breaking

2 Corinthians 4:

⁷ But we have this treasure in [e]earthen containers, so that the extraordinary *greatness* of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; ⁸ *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying around in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who live are constantly being handed over to death because of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death works in us, but life in you.

The Breaking

2 Corinthians 12:7

Thorn in the Flesh

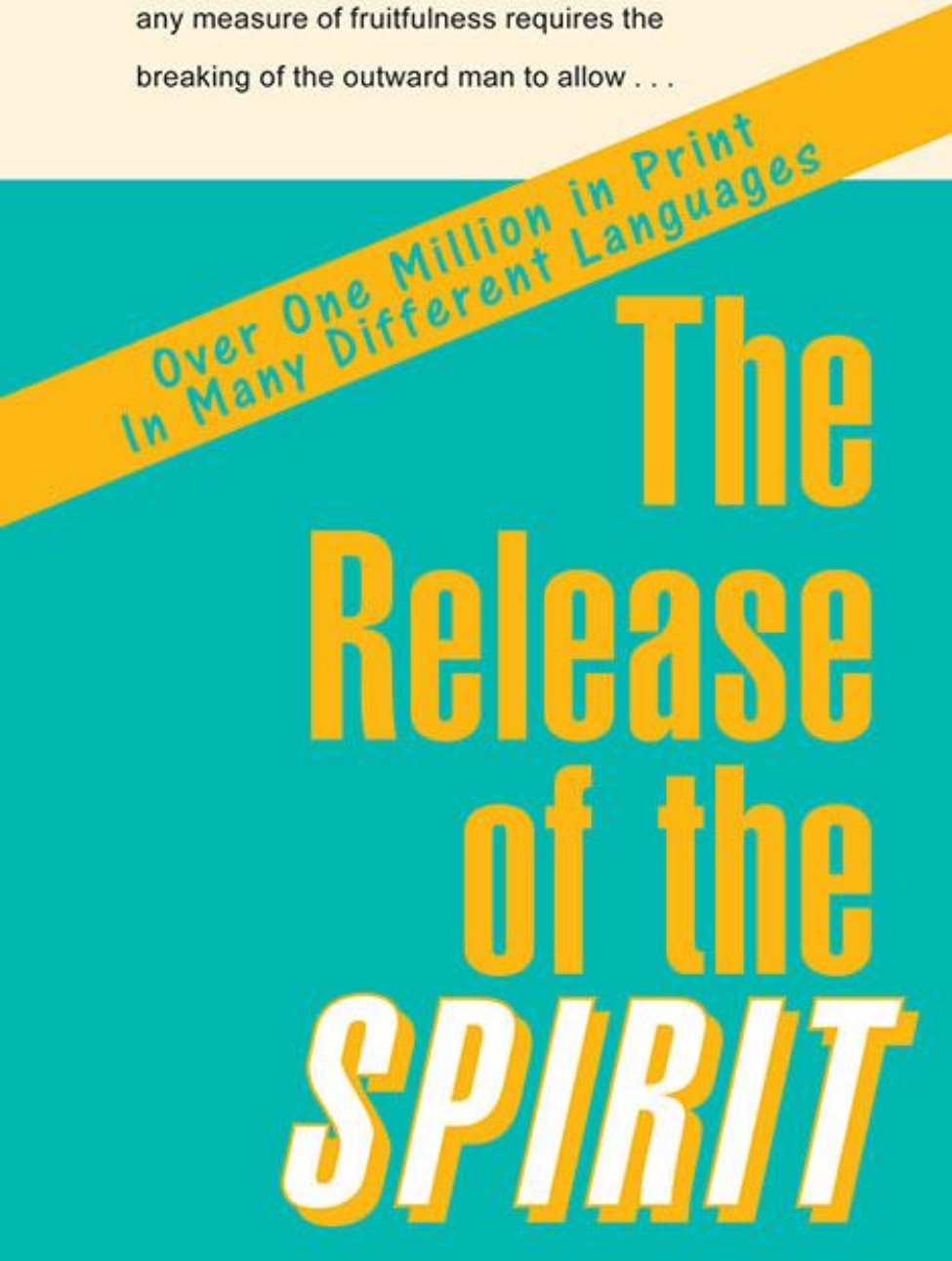
⁷ Because of the extraordinary *greatness* of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to [\[a\]](#)torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!

WATCHMAN NEE stresses one basic

lesson every servant of God must learn: that

any measure of fruitfulness requires the

breaking of the outward man to allow . . .



The Release of the Spirit

ANYONE who serves God will discover sooner or later that the great hindrance he has in the Lord's work is not others, but himself. He will discover that his outward man (soul) is not in harmony with his inward man (spirit). Both tend to go toward two opposite directions from each other. He will also sense the inability of his outward man to submit to the inner control of his regenerated spirit, received through the new birth. Thus, he is rendered incapable of obeying God's highest commands. He will quickly detect that his greatest difficulty lies in his outward man, which hinders him from using his spirit.

The Friends – Eliphaz Chapter 4

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite spoke up and said, 2 “If one ventures a word with you, will you grow weary? But who can hold back the words? 3 Look, you instructed many and you strengthened the hands of the weak. 4 Your words raised up the one who was stumbling, and you made the tottering knees strong. 5 But now [calamity] overtakes you and you are weary; it touches you and you are dismayed. 6 Surely your reverential fear is your confidence, the integrity of your ways your hope.

The Friends - Eliphaz

7 Consider, now: Who being innocent ever perished? Where have the upright ever been destroyed? 8 As I have observed, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble will reap them. 9 They perish by the breath of God; they are consumed by the blast of his nostrils. 10 The roar of the lion, the voice of the fierce lion, the teeth of the young lions—they are broken. 11 The lion perishes for lack of prey and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

The Friends – Zophar Chapter 11

1 Then Zophar the Naamathite spoke up and said, 2 “Will a multitude of words not be answered? And can a man who speaks too much be in the right? 3 Your idle talk silences men, and you mock without anyone putting you to shame. 4 You say, ‘My doctrine is pure and I am clean in your eyes.’ 5 But oh, if only God would speak, and talk with you directly, 6 that he would declare to you the hidden secrets of wisdom, for true wisdom is many-sided. And know that God has actually overlooked some of your iniquity.

The Friends - Zophar

13 If you would only prepare your heart and spread out your palms to him, 14 [and] if there is iniquity in your hand put it far away, and don't let injustice dwell in your tent, 15 then you will lift up your face without blemish, and you will be established and will not fear. 16 You will forget your misery, remembering it like waters that have passed by. 17 Life will shine brighter than the noonday [sun];...

The Friends – Bildad Chapter 8

1 Then Bildad the Shuhite spoke up and said, 2 “Dominion and dread are his, he who makes peace in his heights. 3 Is there any number to his troops? And upon whom does his light not rise? 4 How then can a mortal be in the right with God? How can one born of a woman be pure? 5 Not even the moon is bright [before him] and the stars are not pure in his sight. 6 How much less a mortal—a maggot!—and a human being—a worm!”

The Danger of Holding to a Too-Rigid Orthodoxy

Job 42:7 contains one of the most surprising statements in the entire book:

“After YHWH spoke these words to Job, YHWH said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My anger is kindled against you and your two friends because you did not speak what was right concerning me as did my servant Job.”

But that is only one-half of the surprise. The other half is God’s assessment of the words of Job’s three friends, respected men of wisdom who appeared to mirror conventional, Old Testament orthodoxy. To them God says

“you did not speak what was right concerning me as did my servant Job.”



The Danger of Holding to a Too-Rigid Orthodoxy

To be sure, there is much truth to these premises: God does bless the righteous (either in this world or the world to come); God does judge the wicked (again, either in this world or the world to come); and God does chasten the righteous so that they might be more righteous (and more blessed) still.

The Danger of Holding to a Too-Rigid Orthodoxy

The problem for the friends was that Job's suffering did not fit into any of these categories, since he was not being judged by God as a wicked man nor was he being corrected as a righteous man (although, to be sure, God used this fiery trial to further perfect Job; see Job 23:10; 42:6). There was something else going on, something of which the friends were unaware, something that had not been revealed to them.

The Danger of Holding to a Too-Rigid Orthodoxy

The author of Job would affirm that. We do *not* go beyond what is written. But as God revealed truth to his people in the Old Testament in a progressive manner, culminating in the revelation of Jesus through the New Testament writings, he continued to expand our understanding without contradicting the foundations he had already laid. And so, when it came to the suffering of Job, the orthodox truths remained true—God *does* bless the righteous, discipline the righteous, and judge the wicked—but that doesn't mean those are the only options available. Therefore, it was a serious mistake to assume that Job's sufferings had to be attributed to divine discipline or divine judgment. Consequently, in the end, the orthodox views were ***expanded*** rather than refuted.

Romans 14

¹⁰ But *as for* you, why do you judge your brother *or sister*? Or you as well, why do you regard your brother *or sister* with contempt? For we will all appear before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written:

“AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, TO ME EVERY KNEE WILL BOW,
AND EVERY TONGUE WILL ^[h]GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.”

¹² So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

¹³ Therefore let's not judge one another anymore, but rather ^[i]determine this: not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's *or sister's* way.

As
Knowledge
Increases...

So does our
ignorance.



every answer one finds leads to ten
more questions. The more we learn
the less we know.

— *Robert M. Pirsig* —

AZ QUOTES

1 Corinthians 8:1b
"we know that we
all have
knowledge.
Knowledge makes
arrogant, but love
edifies."



every answer one finds leads to ten
more questions. The more we learn
the less we know.

— *Robert M. Pirsig* —

AZ QUOTES

Now You See Why

“after working for years (or decades) on Job, interpreters generally do not claim to have mastered Job but admit rather that Job has mastered them, realizing that the book has interpreted them more than they have interpreted the book.”

James 5:11

¹¹ We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the [\[a\]](#)endurance of Job and have seen the [\[b\]](#)outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful.

The Glory and
Prologue Next
Week.



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