Reflections [6 - 12 October 2024](https://www.rootsontheweb.com/lectionary/2024/133-september-october-2024-b/proper-22) - [When you don’t understand](https://www.rootsontheweb.com/lectionary/2024/133-september-october-2024-b/proper-22)

**Bible study on Job 1:1; 2:1-10**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Unfathomable God,  
we feel so small beside your greatness.  
Help us to trust in you,  
to hold onto your steadfast love  
and your faithfulness.  
Lord, we want to praise you,  
even when we don’t understand you.  
We pray in the name of Jesus  
who brings us to your throne.  
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

Job 1:1, 2: 1-10

**1**In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.

**2**On another day the angels[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=job%202&version=NIV#fen-NIV-12893a)] came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. **2**And the Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?”

Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.”

**3**Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.”

**4**“Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. **5**But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

**6**The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”

**7**So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. **8**Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

**9**His wife said to him, “Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!”

**10**He replied, “You are talking like a foolish[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=job%202&version=NIV#fen-NIV-12902b)] woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**Job is part of the philosophy or wisdom subsection of the Writings of the Hebrew Scriptures, along with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. In 1:1, Job is presented as the epitome of the wise person celebrated in Proverbs. The existential question of Job is why do good people suffer? The biblical commentator CS Rodd suggests that Job is one of the very greatest works of world literature, but it is also the most difficult text in the Old Testament, particularly as it comes from a culture far removed from our own. Job is a poetic piece that reads like a play, in which truth is presented differently. It is a book to be grappled with. Jesus himself often left those he spoke to with questions to ponder. Philip Yancey points out that, ‘Job decisively refutes one theory – that suffering always comes as a result of sin’. In chapter one, we have the particular challenge of illness. The exact nature of the illness is not known but part of its consequence is social isolation – think leprosy in biblical times and, more recently, AIDS and Covid. Job was further ostracised because of the view that his illness was the result of sin. However, Job persists in his view that everything – good and bad – comes from God. The narrator’s position here is a bit complicated. Job’s suffering is inflicted by Satan but clearly permitted by Yahweh.

**Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

Like a Shakespearean play, the Book of Job contains ‘truth’ without being factual. It carries a message in a dramatic form to teach us about God and about ourselves. Its lesson is timeless: disasters and suffering can and do happen to us, even in our modern age. How must God feel when he looks at his beautiful world? Wars, floods and earthquakes tear lives apart somewhere in his world each day: God understood Job’s suffering and, through Jesus, he shares ours. Our challenge is to trust God more than we can understand him.

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

**First impressions**

You could also use the image and following questions to help introduce the theme.

A painting of a person standing in a wave

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* What helps you make sense of things?
* What are you confused by in life? What questions do you wrestle with?
* Have you experienced God’s peace/presence during a dark time in your life?

**A prayer to end the Bible study**

Bear with me, O Lord,  
as I try to live for you in all I do.  
Help me to keep you in my heart and mind  
and to walk in faithfulness to you.  
As I follow your way,  
Lord, in your mercy, help me  
to keep my feet on the ground,  
so that wherever I find myself  
I will bless you.  
**Amen.**