

# Dr. John Walton, Job, Session 27 – Podcast

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Welcome back, everyone. We're diving into the book of Job today. Ooh, Job.

Yeah. Specifically, the theology presented. And we've got Dr. John Walton's lectures to guide us.

Not just the story itself, but what it reveals about God. So less about Job's trials and more about what those trials teach us about the divine, you know. And Dr. Walton takes this cool approach using Job's mistakes and views of God to get us closer to a more accurate picture.

Yeah, that's a really effective way to teach, actually. I think so, too. Yeah.

So what's the first misconception we're tackling? Well, one of the first things Job fears is that God is like keeping score. Like meticulously tracking his every, you know, misstep. And then punishing him for it out of proportion too.

Okay. So like cosmic store card. Exactly.

Dr. Walton called it in one lecture, a petty view of God. Like reducing him to rewards and punishments for every tiny infraction. Yeah, I can see how someone would think that way.

Makes me wonder if, like, forgetting to be grateful for my coffee means I'm going to get a flat tire later. Ever feel that way? Like God's tallying up all your mistakes? Oh, for sure. It's a very human reaction to suffering.

Trying to find that direct link between our actions and what happens. Makes sense. But doesn't Matthew 5.48 say, be perfect like our Heavenly Father is perfect? I always thought that meant like striving for moral flawlessness.

Yeah, a lot of people interpret it that way. But I think that's where we misunderstand. Perfection, as Dr. Walton explains it, isn't about obsessing over every little slip-up.

Oh, okay. It's about reflecting God's character in our relationships and actions, you know. So less about avoiding every mistake, more about the big picture of our lives, how we relate to God and others.

Exactly. And thankfully, there's more evidence that God isn't waiting to pounce on our every flaw. That's good to know.

Like remember Psalm 103? That's the one about God being merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Yes. It beautifully describes how God gets our weaknesses, you know, our tendency to mess up.

We're human after all. Right. But His love is steadfast.

Dr. Walton puts it nicely. God's love is not contingent on our performance. Okay, that is so reassuring.

Because it's easy to fall into that trap of thinking God's just scrutinizing our every move, waiting for us to slip up. So that's misconception number one. God is the scorekeeper.

What's next? So as Job's suffering continues, he goes from this kind of fearful acceptance to something bolder. He starts challenging God directly, even demanding a court hearing to accuse God of being unjust. Whoa, hold on.

That's a big move. Like, all right, enough is enough, God. We need to talk.

Exactly. And Dr. Walton points out that Job uses this Hebrew word *mishpat*, meaning justice, to argue that God isn't living up to his own standards. Like you say, you're just God, but where's the justice in this? Yeah, you know, that's a question I think we all ask at some point.

When bad things happen, it's hard not to wonder, where's the fairness in all this? It really is. And here's where Dr. Walton's analysis gets super interesting. Okay, I'm listening.

He says, we often assume that the cosmos should perfectly reflect God's justice right now in this moment. Hmm. So every wrong should be immediately righted, every good deed rewarded, that kind of thing.

Yeah, but it doesn't always work like that, does it? Not really. And Dr. Walton says that's because we have this very limited view of time. We're impatient.

We want quick resolutions on our terms, but God works on a whole other timescale, a much grander scale. That makes me think of Toa Peter, you know, with the Lord, a day is like a thousand years. A thousand years are like a day.

So maybe God's sense of justice just operates on a scale we can't even grasp. It's possible. So instead of justice being the main force behind everything, Dr. Walton suggests it's God's wisdom that's at work.

Things that seem chaotic to us might be part of a much bigger plan that we just can't see yet. Okay, I like that. It's not just about rewards and punishments, but about a bigger, wiser design playing out over time.

But doesn't Job try to use that to his advantage? He's going through all this suffering, trying to figure out why. And it seems like he tries to, I don't know, use God's silence against him. You're right, he does.

And that leads us to the third false view, that God can be manipulated. Oh, interesting. We see this most clearly in Job's vow of innocence in chapter 31.

Refresh my memory. What's happening there? Essentially, he's trying to use his perceived innocence to force God's hand. How so? He lists all these good deeds he's done, how righteously he's lived, almost daring God to contradict him.

So it's like, if I'm truly innocent, God, then you have to bless me. Your own justice demands it. Exactly.

And Dr. Walton points out that this reveals a dangerous tendency in us. This urge to manipulate God with our actions. Oh, I get it.

Like treating him like a cosmic bending machine. If I put in enough good deeds, then God is obligated to give me what I want. And that misses the point of faith entirely.

It becomes transactional instead of genuine. True. True.

But, you know, it's kind of comforting that even Job, this model of faith, struggled with these ideas about God. It makes me feel less alone in my own wrestling, you know? I think we all wrestle with these questions at some point. So we've got these three flawed views.

The scorekeeper, the unjust judge, the cosmic vending machine. What now? What does Dr. Walton offer as, like, a corrective lens for all this? Well, this is where things get really exciting. I'm ready.

Dr. Walton wants us to consider a much bigger view of God. One rooted in his wisdom and the immensity of his plan. All right.

I'm intrigued. Tell me more. So one of the most crucial things Dr. Walton brings up is that God's wisdom is, well, way more than we can even fathom.

It's not always about this, like, immediate justice. Tit for tat. Right.

Exactly. There's a bigger design at play unfolding over time, you know, and it's not just about our individual lives, but the entire cosmos. That's wow.

It's kind of a mind-blowing concept, isn't it? It makes our human ideas about fairness seem so tiny. Yeah. But if the cosmos isn't this perfect reflection of God's justice right now, how do we even begin to see his hand at work? Like what are we even looking for? That's the question, isn't it? Yeah.

And I think recognizing our own limited perspective is a good place to start. We're like, what's that analogy? The blind man and the elephant? Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Touching one part and thinking they know the whole thing. Exactly. We get so focused on our own little corner of experience that we miss the bigger picture.

Totally. So caught up in the day-to-day, our own wins and losses, that we forget there's this massive universe out there guided by a wisdom we can't even grasp. And that's where faith comes in, right? Trusting that even when we don't understand, even when things seem unfair or chaotic, God is still in control.

Okay. I get that. But here's where I get tripped up.

If God is so wise, so powerful, why is there so much suffering? Why doesn't he just fix it? I mean, this is like the big question, right? The age-old question, for sure. And honestly, Job doesn't give us an easy answer. It really leans into the mystery of it all.

But what it does do is give us a way to think about suffering without diminishing God's goodness or power. So how does Job approach it? Does he just clench his jaw and say, well, God's got this, even though it sucks? Not exactly. I mean, Job rails against God, questions him, argues, even accuses God of being unfair.

He does not hold back. And the amazing thing is God doesn't punish him for it. Dr. Walton makes this point that Job's wrestling with God is actually a sign of faith, not a lack of it.

So it's okay to question God, even be angry with him. Sometimes it feels like we're just supposed to blindly accept everything. But Job's experience seems to suggest otherwise.

God can handle our questions. He's a big God. Right.

He can handle our anger, our doubts, our frustrations. And I think there's a lot of comfort in that. For sure.

Let's be real. Most of us have probably shaken our fist at the sky at some point, right? Wondering why things are so hard. Why bad stuff happens to good people.

What's interesting is that after Job pours out his heart, God doesn't give him this neat explanation. No bullet points for why you're suffering. So what does God do? How does Job find peace if God isn't like spelling it all out? How does Dr. Walton address this? Instead of answers, God shows Job his majesty, reminds him of how vast creation is, his power over nature, and the complexity of the world he made.

It's like God shifts Job's focus from the why of suffering to the who of God. So it's less about getting a detailed explanation and more about experiencing God's awe-inspiring presence. Is that what Dr. Walton's saying? You got it.

Like God's saying, Job, you might not get all the intricacies of my plan, but trust that I'm in control. I'm not just randomly causing pain. I'm the creator holding the universe together.

Wow. That's a big perspective shift. Right.

It's not about demanding answers, but about expanding our idea of who God is, which honestly can be kind of unsettling, can't it? For sure. We like to feel in control, like we have things figured out. Absolutely.

But Dr. Walton points out that embracing that mystery, that awe and wonder, can be incredibly freeing. Oh, so? It lets us let go of that need to control everything and just rest on the knowledge that God is God, and we are not. That makes me think of looking up at the stars.

You feel so small, but also connected to something so much bigger. Exactly. That's that sense of wonder that opens us up to God.

And in that, we can find peace and strength, even when we don't have all the answers, even when life feels messy. Absolutely. Okay.

So if we think back to those three false views- the scorekeeper, the judge, the vending machine- the antidote is this bigger view of God, right? Yes, exactly. When we try to put God in a box, make him fit our limited understanding, we end up with a very distorted picture. Like trying to fit the ocean in a teacup? Right.

But when we're open to the mystery, to how vast God's wisdom and power are, we can start to see him for who he truly is. And that's where real change happens. It's not about having all the answers, but about letting ourselves be changed by encountering God and all his mystery and wonder.

This is all so fascinating, making me want to reread Job with fresh eyes. I feel like we've only just scratched the surface. Oh, we definitely have.

But I think you've made a great point. Dr. Walton's lectures aren't about giving us all the answers, but about sparking curiosity, you know? Right, right. Inviting us to really explore this ancient, complex text.

And that's the beauty of a deep dive, isn't it? It's about the journey of discovery. You're so right. It's the asking questions, wrestling with ideas, being surprised by what we find along the way.

But before we get too lost in our own explorations, I want to circle back to Dr. Walton's insights. He's given us this really powerful way of looking at the theology of Job. What's the one thing you'd want our listener to take away from today? Good question.

Right. If I had to pick one thing, embrace the mystery. Don't be afraid of those tough questions.

Don't shy away from what doesn't make sense. Because it's in those moments of wrestling, of questioning, that we really encounter God. That's beautifully said.

Faith isn't about neatly packaged answers. It's about the journey, the conversation with God, even when it's messy. Exactly.

And I think Dr. Walton would agree that Job invites us into that conversation, challenges us to move beyond simple ideas of God and embrace a faith rooted in wonder, awe, and trust. It really makes you think. You know, sometimes the deepest answers aren't about explanations, but about those moments of awe, surrender, realizing how much bigger things are than us.

It's like Dr. Walton wants us to trade in our black-and-white picture of God for something way more expansive, something that captures the full spectrum of who he is. You've got it. And I think we get so caught up in analyzing everything, trying to find that perfect solution, you know, that we forget the power of just being present, being humbled by the mystery of it all.

Right. And Job, with all its complexity and ambiguity, it kind of forces us to do that, doesn't it? It really does. Pushes us to embrace those questions.

The paradoxes. Yeah. Finding comfort not in easy answers, but in how vast God's wisdom is, how constant his presence is.

Like we've forgotten how to be okay with not knowing everything, you know, like to be humbled by the limits of our understanding. But maybe that's where faith actually starts. I think you're right.

In that letting go, admitting we don't have it all figured out. Because then we can open ourselves up to a much deeper relationship with God. Exactly.

And that's something Dr. Walton keeps coming back to, right? Job isn't a guidebook for avoiding suffering or finding easy answers to the hard stuff. It's not about that. It's about encountering the God who's bigger than our pain, bigger than our doubts.

Bigger than all of it. Yeah. Bigger than we can even comprehend.

And you know, he's present. He's listening. He's working everything together for good, even when we don't see it.

Man, that's such a powerful message and one we need to hear, I think, especially in a world that's so obsessed with certainty, with control. It reminds us that faith isn't a destination; it's a journey. And the most amazing discoveries happen when we let go of our need to know everything and just embrace the unknown.

That's so well said. And as you keep exploring Job, don't be afraid to ask those hard questions, you know? Don't avoid the parts that make you uncomfortable. Because that's where our faith grows, where our understanding deepens, and our relationship with God becomes real.

It changes us. Beautifully said. And on that note, we'll leave you to ponder the mysteries of Job.

Hopefully, this deep dive gave you some new insights into this ancient text, and maybe even sparked a desire to explore it further on your own. Remember, it's not about having all the answers, but about embracing the journey, the questions, and the sheer mystery of a God who is beyond anything we can imagine. Until next time, keep seeking, keep questioning, and keep diving deep.