

This stated consensus on the philosophical inadequacy of the book of Job is not universally held. For some, the patriarch is heard to say, in concluding confession (42:6), that the protracted physical and philosophical struggle brings him something he did not have before. Whereupon his Lord quite aggressively affirms him, and for words that sound too close to our definitions of blasphemy. In context of the Lord's full-throated and proud extolling of Job's virtue and appropriateness, continued dissatisfaction among rhetoricians and the church may yet reflect continued misdirection in our questioning. Tongue-in-cheek quips about crediting more the patience of the reader of Job than that of Job himself (p. 2, and see James 5:11, KJV) seem more in accord with Job at chapter 9:29–34 or 23:1–9 than with 19:25, 23:10, or his final declaration (42:5, 6) and the Lord's final words in the book's epilogue (42:7–9).

In the context of Job's indeterminacy, Kynes and Kynes voice an existent fear that the Job who appears in some of the book may not be up to the piety of his earlier personage (p. 145). At the same time, they admire his "tenacious faith," and that of other patriarchs, that conquers the darkness; they link it to the desperate groping of psalmists for the God they cannot find (pp. 145–49). The mystery is that for them these cries never find their parallel and clarification at the cross, where Jesus on Calvary quotes the psalmist's agony to express his own: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46, quoting Ps 22:1). On that matter, I am as mystified as I am later enthused about the authors' conclusion on "the mysterious Elihu," intemperate, inflated, and divinely ignored (chap. 7).

Kynes and Kynes recognize chapter 28, a poem on wisdom, as a compliment to Job, for throughout the dialogue he has "desperately" desired wisdom (p. 122). They find the poem's conclusion "decisive" (p. 119) and a description of Job himself (p. 122). Yet they seem uncertain about its structural purpose, about why it occurs where it does. Its tone they describe as "peaceful and untroubled," an epithet that is hard to bear, given the poem's cosmic range and philosophical penetration. "Peaceful and untroubled" may aim at contrasting it with earlier and later anguish or harangue. But its yearning to know where wisdom can be found is as intense and strong as Job's craving desperation for finding God. The parallels and equivalencies here—Job seeking God, God being wisdom, wisdom defining Job—deserve more of their analytical ploughing, and will yield good harvest for future readership of this good book's subsequent editions.

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*Job: God's Sovereignty in Suffering.* By Ronald Hanko. Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing, 2021, 160 pp., \$19.95.

Ronald Hanko is an emeritus minister in the Protestant Reformed Churches of America who has served in active ministry for thirty-eight years. In his preface, Hanko defines this work as a "commentary" (p. ix), which attempts to show "how the book fits together and how the different speeches develop and build on each

other” (p. xi). Hanko states his foundational assumptions and beliefs regarding the creation of the book of Job: “The book is inspired and infallible, given to us by God’s Spirit as an explanation of our own suffering and the suffering we witness” (p. ix). Further, Hanko believes that Job is a “real historical figure” (p. x), and that the work will be used “for the comfort of his people” (p. xi).

Following this preface, the book divides into the natural six-part division of Job’s 42 chapters—“Part One: The History of Job”; “Part Two: The First Round of Speeches” (Job 4–14); “Part Three: The Second Round of Speeches” (Job 15–21); “Part Four: The Third Round of Speeches” (Job 22–31); “Part Five: Elihu’s Entry” (Job 32–37); “Part Six: God and Job” (Job 38–42). Each of these chapters admirably summarizes the arguments of the various speakers, describing the different points of view, the way these play out in our lives practically, and the struggles we have in these to see the sovereignty of God and the saving grace of Jesus’s sacrifice for us today.

The “Job Study Guide” (pp. 143–48) follows this section and consists of questions that create a good foundation for discussion of the deeper theological thoughts found in Job. These questions should drive people deeper into the more challenging thoughts of God’s sovereignty, pain, and suffering, commonly known as “theodicy.”

Clearly, while the target audience imagined by Hanko is Sunday School classes and other pastors and church leaders, the book is valuable for any Christian who desires to dig deeper into the issues raised in Job’s story.

That this book demonstrates the perspective of Reformed theology makes the book very useful for those adhering to those theological ideas. Evidence demonstrating this derives from the few footnotes found throughout the book. Other than biblical passages, C. S. Lewis, William Henry Green, and Adelaide A. Pollard’s song “Have Thine Own Way, Lord,” documentation comes only from John Calvin, the Larger Catechism of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Canons of Dordt, and the Heidelberg Catechism. For this reason, others may find the book challenging and desire other possible answers. This may be one of the book’s weaknesses. Granted, the book of Job demonstrates the sovereignty of God, and this will be seen by Reformed theologians as well as any serious student of the book. However, these answers may seem too simple to people not as inclined toward Reformed theology, who see other issues in addition to the sovereignty of God.

Even so, the reader who works through this book (whether independently or in a classroom), even if it is to challenge Hanko’s conclusions, will gain a greater understanding of the issues raised in the book of Job. As Proverbs 27:17 says, “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another” (ESV).

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