



The Book of "Job": A Biography (Lives of Great Religious Books)

Mark Larrimore

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The Book of Job raises stark questions about the nature and meaning of innocent suffering and the relationship of the human to the divine, yet it is also one of the Bible's most obscure and paradoxical books, one that defies interpretation even today. Mark Larrimore provides a panoramic history of this remarkable book, traversing centuries and traditions to examine how Job's trials and his challenge to God have been used and understood in diverse contexts, from commentary and liturgy to philosophy and art.

Larrimore traces Job's obscure origins and his reception and use in the Midrash, burial liturgies, and folklore, and by figures such as Gregory the Great, Maimonides, John Calvin, Immanuel Kant, William Blake, Margarete Susman, and Elie Wiesel. He chronicles the many ways the Book of Job's interpreters have linked it to other biblical texts; to legends, allegory, and negative and positive theologies; as well as to their own individual and collective experiences. Larrimore revives old questions and provides illuminating new contexts for contemporary ones. Was Job a Jew or a gentile? Was his story history or fable? What is meant by the "patience of Job," and does Job exhibit it? Why does God speak yet not engage Job's questions?

Offering rare insights into this iconic and enduring book, Larrimore reveals how Job has come to be viewed as the Bible's answer to the problem of evil and the perennial question of why a God who supposedly loves justice permits bad things to happen to good people.

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