

Job - Introduction & Background

Title

Like most OT books, the title of the Book of Job is derived from its central character. The Hebrew title is *lyyōb*. In Hebrew, this name can mean, "persecuted one." However, some have suggested that this Hebrew word was derived from an Arabic root, which adds the nuance "repentant one." Both of these meanings are consistent with the content of the Book of Job. The LXX and Latin Vulgate entitle the book *Job*. The English title of the book is Job.

Authorship

The Book of Job is an anonymous work containing no internal clues regarding who its author was. However, several possibilities have been proposed. Among them are Job, Elihu, Moses, Solomon, a wise man who was a contemporary of Solomon, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Manasseh, Ezra, and an anonymous inter-testamental writer. Moses and Solomon are two of the more popular suggestions. Both of these views hold to the notion that the story of Job was passed down to these writers through oral tradition.

Moses is believed by many to be the book's writer due to the existence of a Talmudic tradition attributing authorship to him (*Baba Bathra* 14b), Uz is next to Midian which is the place where Moses resided for 40 years, similarities exist between the Books of Job and Genesis, Moses was familiar with the desert, and Mosaic authorship explains why the Book of Job became an undisputed part of the Hebrew canon. Solomon has also been thought to be the book's writer due to similarities between Job 28 and Prov 8 and Solomon's interest in poetical literature (Prov, Eccl, Cant). Also, the mention of iron tools (19:24; 20:24; 28:2; 40:18; 41:27) hints at a date subsequent to the advent of the Iron Age that began in 1200 BC. Furthermore, the mention of a war horse (39:19-25) hints at a latter date since extra biblical sources indicate that the 10th or 9th century represented the earliest use of cavalry.

However, it is probably best to conclude that Job was the book's author. He is favored for the following reasons: the detail of the book's contents would have to come from someone who was an eyewitness to them or directly involved in them, Job could have recorded the book's events during his prolonged life following his restoration, it is common for both biblical and other ancient Near Eastern writers to record events in the third person, the book's non-Hebraic content and numerous Arabic words point to a Gentile writer, the view of antiquity is that Job wrote the book, and it was common in the OT era for someone else to record the author's death after the fact. Some say that Job could not have been the book's writer since his authorship would mandate him knowing the reason for his sufferings

and such understanding violates the message of the book that requires him not having an explanation for his adversities. However, God could have revealed the reason for his sufferings after the fact during the years of his restoration. All things considered, there are no problems associated with ascribing authorship of the book to Job. The fact that Job is the writer of the entire book seems fairly certain since "numerous poetical features point to a single author, as several scholars have pointed out. In addition, numerous cross references within the book point to its unity."

Date

When discussing the date of the Book of Job, it is important to distinguish between the time of the book's setting and the time of the book's writing. These items have been heavily debated since no overt historical references are found in the book. Both of these matters are intertwined with whatever view one holds regarding the identity of the book's writer. Regarding the time of the book's setting, it is important to remember that subsequent Scripture presents Job as a historical entity (Ezek 14:14,20; James 5:11). To argue that Job was a non-historical person invented by the writer solely for the purpose of teaching to Israel a spiritual lesson is to violate the biblical pattern of teaching lessons through real history. Furthermore, several pieces of evidence can be adduced showing that the recorded events transpired during the patriarchal period.

Such evidence includes the length of Job's life (42:16) that corresponds to the long life spans of those during the patriarchal period, Job's wealth was reckoned in terms of livestock (1:3; 42:12; Gen 12:16; 13:2; 30:43; 32:5), the existence of the nomadic Sabeans and Chaldeans (1:15,17), Job as the priest of his family (1:5), "piece of money" is an expression used only of Jacob (42:11; Gen 33:19; Joshua 24:32), musical instruments mentioned in Job are also mentioned in Genesis (21:12; 30:31; Gen 4:21; 31:27), Job's daughters became heirs of their father's estate which was later impossible under the Mosaic Law (42:15; Num 27:8), books similar to Job were also written in Mesopotamia in general chronological proximity to the patriarchal era, the book fails to mention any of the institutions of Judaism, the book's frequent use of the word *Shaddai* would have been one of the names of God familiar to the patriarchs (Gen 17:1; Ex 6:3), proper names of people and places in the Book of Job are also used in Genesis (Gen 25:23; Job 1:15; 6:19; Gen 25:15; Job 6:19 Gen 36:4; Job 2:11; Gen 22:21; Job 1:1), Job was a common name from the second millennium, Job mentions ancient beasts (40–41), and stylistic parallels exist in between Job and the Ugaritic literature.

Regarding the time of the book's writing, some believe that Moses in Midian wrote the book sometime between 1485 and 1444 BC. This view attempts to explain the lack of any reference to the Mosaic Law or Judaism in Job by noting that the events of the book unfolded in a North Arabian setting. Others believe that the book was written during the time of Solomon probably around 950 BC. Proponents of this position hold to the

previously mentioned arguments for Solomonic authorship as well as the fact that Solomon's acumen in international affairs made him aware of events transpiring outside the borders of Israel.

This view is also buttressed by the discovery of a similar Job like writing dated around 1000 BC. This writing, known as the "Babylonian Theodicy," records dialogues between the sufferer and friends, notes the sufferer's refutation of his friends' counsel, describes how the sufferer calls his god a cripple, and eventually concludes with the sufferer begging for mercy from his god. Still others date the book's setting during or after the Babylonian captivity. Advocates of this view say that the book was written in order to give the exiles hope. They also rely upon Ezekiel's mention of Job (Ezek 14:14,20). Their logic here is that just as Ezekiel mentions his contemporary Daniel (Ezek 14:14,20), Ezekiel also must be referring to his contemporary Job. However, the discovery of the Job-like work from Solomon's era makes an exilic or post-exilic date unlikely.

Some date the book during the time of Manasseh since the cruelty associated with his reign would cause many to question the divine wisdom of suffering. However, the universality of this question could hardly confine it to Manasseh's reign. Finally, many believe that the book was written during the time of Jeremiah due to the many similarities between the Books of Job and Jeremiah. The major weakness in all of these views is that they put a great distance between the book's setting and writing. For the reasons already suggested, it is best to view Job as the book's writer who composed it during the patriarchal period not long after its recorded events transpired.

Setting and Place of Writing

The book indicates that its setting and presumed place of writing took place in the land of Uz (1:1). Uz has been identified various ways including the fertile Bashan in Southern Damascus, Edom located southeast of the Dead Sea (Lam 4:21), and east of Edom in Northern Arabia. Josephus as well as Christian and Moslem tradition supports the southern Damascus locale. However, the last view is favored since "Job lived near the desert (1:19), his land was fertile for agriculture and livestock raising (1:3,14; 42:12), and customs, vocabulary, and references to geography and natural history relate to northern Arabia."

Furthermore, Elihu was a Buzite who dwelt in northeast Arabia.

Scope

The scope of the book remains unclear. However, Constable provides the following helpful insight.

Job referred to months when he spoke of his sufferings (7:3; 29:2). In view of Job's physical symptoms his ailments seem to have bothered him for several months at least... Job said the same people who had respected him previously had come to reject him and avoid him. He implied that his rejection was fairly recent. The main part of the book contains dialogue that took place between a few individuals. There is no indication in the

text that extended periods of time interrupted Job's sojourn at the city dump. It seems to have continued for a few days at most, though the conversations may have stopped and then restarted...It appears that the scope of the main action at the city dump lasted no longer than a few days or possibly weeks.

Message

Man's relationship with God in all circumstances is predicated upon man's submissive faith in God's sovereign grace. While four human counselors as well as Job were unable to comprehend this message, God finally conveyed it to Job by teaching him that He is free to act as He chooses unhindered by overly simplistic, manmade theological systems built upon mere human observation. Thus, man should trust in God's sovereignty and goodness rather than relate to God based upon false constructs concerning how He ought to act.

Purposes

Job compiled his book in order to accomplish several purposes. First, the book serves as a polemic against the overly simplistic view of retributive and prosperity theology. Second, the book encourages faith in God's grace even when His ways are beyond human comprehension. Third, the book exhorts people to trust in God even when His blessings are removed. Fourth, the book explains that God allows suffering into the life of the righteous so that they might become mature.

Fifth, the book shows that man must have the divine viewpoint rather than just the human philosophical viewpoint in order to effectively live life. Sixth, the book shows the fallen angelic realm that the divine removal of prosperity is not an obstacle preventing genuine worship of God. Seventh, the book refutes the dualistic notion that God and Satan are equally empowered adversaries. Eighth, the book defends God's liberty to act independent of human presuppositions. Ninth, the book explains that true wisdom is sourced in God rather than human philosophy.

Theological Themes

Several theological motifs recur throughout the Book of Job. First, the book emphasizes the sovereignty of God. Thus, God transcends man-made systems and is therefore free to act independently of them. Moreover, God's sovereignty even allows Him to use Satan for His own purposes.

Second, the book emphasizes God's omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. Thus, God is worthy of human trust and worship (37:23-24) even when his ways are unfathomable to the human mind (13:15). Third, the book notes the bankruptcy of human philosophy, especially retributive and prosperity theology. Fourth, the book highlights that fear of the Lord yields wisdom (28:28).

Fifth, the book exemplifies faith and patience in the midst of adversity (James 5:11). Sixth, the book routinely observes how creation reveals God's majesty. Seventh, the book affirms the reality of anthropological finitude. Eighth, the book explores the appropriate response

to unjust human suffering. Ninth, the book notes how God can use adversity to bring the righteous to a more mature and broader view of God.

Unique Characteristics

The Book of Job boasts several outstanding characteristics. First, the book is rich in poetic material. Thus, the book displays a variety of parallelism. Second, the book makes great use of metaphors and similes. Third, the book utilizes numerous strophes. These occur when a group of verses form a rhythmical pattern. Fourth, if Job is the book's author, then the book is the oldest in the entire canon not only in terms of its setting but also in terms of the time of its composition.

Fifth, the book's setting is also unique in that it represents a non-Jewish culture in the era of the patriarchs. Sixth, the book makes several scientific statements that are far beyond the knowledge of the original writer. Among them are the notions that the earth hangs suspended in space (26:7) and that the earth is a sphere (22:14). The book also reveals advanced information in the realms of the constellations, metals, precious stones, beasts, mining, insects, reptiles, birds, geography, geology, and meteorology. Seventh, God's speeches (38:1–42:6) are unique since they provide one of the most in depth looks at divine creation found anywhere in Scripture.

Eighth, "the prose-poetry pattern, though seen in other ancient compositions in the ancient Near East, is unique among the books of the Bible." Ninth, the book's rich vocabulary is seen in that it contains 110 *hapax legomena*. This figure represents more *hapax legomena* than any other book found in the OT canon. Tenth, the book is one of the few in the entire Bible that pulls back the veil allowing the reader a clear glimpse into the heavenly court room and the contest between God and Satan. Eleventh, the book makes great contributions to the branches of systematic theology known as angelology and Satanology.

Genre

Most broadly, the Book of Job belongs to a branch of biblical material known as wisdom literature. Such wisdom material (*hokamah*) refers to the extraction of common principles arising from the powers of observation made applicable to daily life. Other biblical books focusing on wisdom literature include Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Psalms, and the Song of Solomon. Characteristics of wisdom literature include the following: an emphasis on the universal and less on the national, less dispensational, an emphasis on skill in living, more anthropocentric, a focus on how the individual walks in covenant relationship with God, and conveyance of concepts through generic principles rather than through prophetic oracles. The primary genres of the Book of Job include prose (1–2; 42:7–17) and poetry (3:1–42:6). Sub-genres found in the book include narrative (1–2), soliloquy (3), dialogue (4–27), hymn (28), and discourse (29–41).

Structure

The three major divisions of the book can be distinguished on the following chart:

1–2	Dilemma	Conflict	Prose	Heaven and earth
3–39	Debates	Debate	Poetry	Uz
40–42	Deliverance	Repentance	Prose	Heaven and earth

The basic structure of the Book of Job is captured on the following outline.

I. Prologue (1–2)

II. Dialogue (3–41)

- a. Job-opening lamentation (3)
- b. 1st cycle (4–14)
 - i. (4–5) Eliphaz and Job (6–7)
 - ii. (8) Bildad and Job (9–10)
 - iii. (11) Zophar and Job (12–14)
- c. 2nd cycle (15–21)
 - i. (15) Eliphaz and Job (16–17)
 - ii. (18) Bildad and Job (19)
 - iii. (20) Zophar and Job (21)
- d. 3rd cycle (22–37)
 - i. (22) Eliphaz and Job (23–24)
 - ii. (25) Bildad and Job (26–31)
 - iii. (32–37) Elihu
- e. Jehovah-closing interventions (38–41)

III. Epilogue (42)

- 1. The theological resoluteness of the three friends in their retribution and prosperity theology throughout their speeches.
- 2. The three friends becoming “more vitriolic and specific as their speeches progressed.”
- 3. The second dialogue round moves from “suggestion to insinuation” and the third round moves into “open accusation.”

Other structural clues include the following:

- 1. The theological resoluteness of the three friends in their retribution and prosperity theology throughout their speeches.
- 2. The three friends becoming “more vitriolic and specific as their speeches progressed.”
- 3. The second dialogue round moves from “suggestion to insinuation” and the third round moves into “open accusation.”
- 4. Job affirms his innocence throughout his speeches.
- 5. Job blames God throughout his speeches.

6. Job's repetition of the question "why?" throughout the first round of speeches.
7. Job's desire "to present his case to God" throughout his speeches.
8. Job's speeches become longer and his friends' speeches become shorter. Job always speaks longer than the previous counselor. Every time a counselor speaks his speech is smaller than his previous speech. The single exception to this rule is Zophar who speaks only in the first and second dialogue rounds.
9. The three friends emphasize "different aspects of God" (Eliphaz: "the distance between God and man" and the fact that "God punishes the wicked"; Bildad: God's justice and greatness and His punishment of the wicked; Zophar: God's inscrutability and that "He punishes the wicked quickly").
10. The three friends base their arguments on different foundations (Eliphaz: experience; Bildad: tradition; Zophar: assumption).
11. The three friends exhibit different tones (Eliphaz: courteous; Bildad: less courteous; Zophar: blunt).
12. Bildad and Zophar echo Eliphaz' speeches.
13. Zophar speaks only during the first and second round in order to prepare the way for Elihu's speeches (32–37).

Christ in Job

Christ is seen in the book through Job's constant desire to have a mediator represent him before God in heaven (5:1; 9:32–33; 16:19; 25:4; 31:35–37; 32:12, 21–22; 33:23). Christ would become the very mediator spoken of by Job (Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 1 Tim 2:5). Another key Christological text is found in Job 19:25–27. The word *goel* or redeemer is found in v25. "A redeemer (*goel*) in the OT provided protection or legal preservation for a close relative who could not do so for himself." The redeemer is God, as is made clear in the following verse (19:26). These verses together teach that God will redeem mankind and also stand upon the earth at the end of time. Thus, these verses are predicting Christ's redemption of humanity and earthly rule.

Outline

- I. Prologue (Job 1:1–2:13)
 - (1) Job's righteousness before his trial (1:1–5)
 - (A) Righteousness (1:1)
 - (B) Wealth (1:2–3)
 - (C) Family intercession (1:4–5)
 - (2) Job's trials (Job 1:6–2:13)
 - (A) First trial involving Job's prosperity and family (1:6–22)
 - (a) Satan's accusation (1:6–11)
 - (b) Satan's attack (1:12–19)
 - (c) Job's worshipful response (1:20–22)

(B) Second trial involving Job's health (2:1-10)

(a) Satan's accusation (2:1-5)

(b) Satan's attack (2:6-8)

(c) Job's worshipful response (2:9-10)

(C) The assembling of Job's friends (2:11-13)

II. Dialogue (Job 3:1—42:6)

(1) Job's introductory lamentation where he indicates that he does not want to live

(3:1-26)

(A) Job's desire not to have been born (3:1-10)

(B) Job's desire to have died at birth (3:11-19)

(C) Job's desire to die (3:20-26)

(2) First dialogue cycle (Job 4:1—14:22)

(A) Job's exchange with Eliphaz (Job 4:1—7:21)

(a) Eliphaz' first speech (Job 4:1—5:27)

(i) Eliphaz implies Job is not trusting in God (4:1-6)

(ii) Iniquity causes suffering (4:7-11)

(iii) Eliphaz implies Job's disobedience by recounting the vision that taught no man can be righteous before God (4:12-21)

(iv) Man invariably suffers (5:1-7)

(v) Job should seek mercy from God (5:8-16)

(vi) Job should not despise God's discipline (5:17-27)

(b) Job's reply (Job 6:1—7:21)

(i) Job emphasizes his suffering (6:1-7)

(ii) While claiming that he has not denied God's words, Job yearns for death (6:8-13)

(iii) Job's disappointment with his friends' wrong assessment and resulting lack of kindness toward him (6:14-23)

(iv) Job challenges his friends to prove him wrong by enumerating his sins (6:24-30)

(v) Job's brief and miserable life exemplifies all life (7:1-6)

(vi) Job to be forgotten after death exemplifying this same pattern for all people (7:7-10)

(vii) Job asks God to name his sin (7:11-21)

(B) Job's exchange with Bildad (Job 8:1—10:22)

(a) Bildad's first speech (8:1-22)

(i) Bildad accuses Job's children of sin (8:1-4)

(ii) Bildad promises Job God's blessing upon repentance (8:5-7)

(iii) Bildad explains that history teaches that sin leads to suffering (8:8-11)

- (iv) Ungodliness leads to curses (8:12-19)
- (v) Godliness leads to blessing (8:20-22)
- (b) Job's reply (Job 9:1—10:22)
 - (i) Job recognizes that he cannot appeal to God due to his greatness (9:1-12)
 - (ii) Job claims God is afflicting him despite his innocence (9:13-24)
 - (iii) Job sees no reason to pursue righteousness since God has treated him unfairly (9:25-35)
 - (iv) Because of his innocence, Job accuses God of oppressing the righteous and blessing the wicked (10:1-17)
 - (v) Job laments his birth (10:18-22)
- (C) Job's exchange with Zophar (Job 11:1—14:22)
 - (a) Zophar's first speech (11:1-20)
 - (i) Zophar criticizes Job for defending himself and not acknowledging his sin (11:1-6)
 - (ii) God's vast wisdom can ascertain man's sin (11:7-12)
 - (iii) Zophar pleads with Job to repent of his iniquity so that he can experience divine blessing (11:13-20)
 - (b) Job's reply (Job 12:1—14:22)
 - (i) Job rejects his friends' council (Job 12:1—13:19)
 - (a) Job claims equality of knowledge in comparison to his companions (12:1-3)
 - (b) Job asserts his view (12:4-25)
 - (1) While innocent Job suffers and the wicked prosper (12:4-6)
 - (2) God controls all things (12:7-12)
 - (3) God's supremacy over the loftiness of men (12:13-25)
 - (c) Job reiterates his equality of knowledge in comparison to his friends (13:1-2)
 - (d) Job declares his friends' knowledge is minute in comparison to God's wisdom (13:3-12)
 - (e) Job desires to present his case before God (13:13-19)
 - (ii) Job presents his innocence before God (13:20-28)
 - (iii) Job's and man's weak condition causes his lament (14:1-22)
 - (a) Brevity of life (14:1-6)
 - (b) Man lives only once unlike plant life (14:7-12)
 - (c) Job longs for the afterlife when his suffering will cease (14:13-17)
 - (d) Man's invariable pain and death (14:18-22)
 - (3) Second dialogue cycle (Job 15:1—21:34)

(A) Job's exchange with Eliphaz (Job 15:1—17:16)

- (a) Eliphaz' second speech (15:1-35)
 - (i) Job has condemned himself through his self-righteousness (15:1-6)
 - (ii) Eliphaz claims the elders agree with him (15:7-13)
 - (iii) Man's universal guilt before God (15:14-16)
 - (iv) Eliphaz claims that his view is consistent with the views of the elders (15:17-19)
 - (v) Only the wicked suffer (15:20-35)
- (b) Job's reply (Job 16:1—17:16)
 - (i) Job says his friend should be comforting rather than tormenting him (16:1-5)
 - (ii) Job blames God for his troubles (16:6-14)
 - (iii) Job restates his innocence (16:15-17)
 - (iv) Job's desire for a heavenly intercessor (16:18—17:2)
 - (v) Job calls on God for a guarantee since his friends do not understand his cause (17:3-5)
 - (vi) Job indicts his friends for not comprehending his situation (17:6-16)

(B) Job's exchange with Bildad (Job 18:1—19:27)

- (a) Bildad's second speech (18:1-21)
 - (i) Bildad says Job's lack of understanding caused him to criticize his three companions (18:1-4)
 - (ii) Because an evil man is doomed to destruction Job is also doomed to destruction since he matches Bildad's description of an evil man (18:5-21)
- (b) Job 's reply (19:1-27)
 - (i) Job rebukes his friends for their harsh words (19:1-6)
 - (ii) Job accuses God of ignoring his plight (19:7-12)
 - (iii) Job's estrangement and ridiculers (19:13-20)
 - (iv) Job calls out to his friends for pity (19:21-22)
 - (v) Job's hope in God (19:23-27)

(C) Job's exchange with Zophar (Job 20:1—21:34)

- (a) Zophar's second speech (20:1-29)
 - (i) Zophar responds out of anger (20:1-3)
 - (ii) The wicked man's fleeting prosperity (20:4-11)
 - (iii) The bitterness of the wicked man's ill gotten gain (20:12-19)
 - (iv) The sudden anger of God will overtake the wicked rich (20:20-29)
- (b) Job 's reply (21:1-34)
 - (i) Job calls for careful consideration of his words (21:1-3)

- (ii) Job calls attention to his own adverse circumstances as the basis for his words (21:4-6)
- (iii) The prosperity of the wicked (21:7-16)
- (iv) God postpones judgment upon the wicked (21:17-21)
- (v) Those blessed and cursed die just the same (21:22-26)
- (vi) The presence of the unjudged wicked men demonstrates that Job's friends have wrongly assessed his situation (21:27-34)

(4) Third dialogue cycle (Job 22:1—31:40)

- (A) Job's exchange with Eliphaz (Job 22:1—24:24)
 - (a) Eliphaz' third speech (22:1-30)
 - (i) God is no longer interested in Job due to his iniquities (22:1-5)
 - (ii) Eliphaz enumerates Job's sins (22:6-20)
 - (a) Social sins (22:6-11)
 - (b) Spiritual sins: Living wickedly under the false pretense that divine judgment will never come (22:12-20)
 - (iii) Job must repent in order to experience divine blessing (22:21-30)
 - (b) Job 's reply (Job 23:1—24:25)
 - (i) Job longs for an opportunity to be heard in God's courtroom so his innocence can be established (23:1-7)
 - (ii) Job reiterates his righteousness (23:8-12)
 - (iii) Although awestruck by God Job would not hold back his case from him (23:13-17)
 - (iv) Job's complaints (24:1-24)
 - (a) God does not observe oppressors (24:1-12)
 - (b) God does not enlighten the rebellious (24:13-17)
 - (c) God brings down the righteous and ignores the unrighteous (24:18-24)
 - (v) Job challenges his friends to disprove him (24:25)
- (B) Job's exchange with Bildad (Job 25:1—28:28)
 - (a) Bildad's third speech (25:1-6)
 - (i) God's infinite nature (25:1-3)
 - (ii) Therefore Job was wrong in asserting that he can justify himself before an infinite God (25:4-6)
 - (b) Job's reply (Job 26:1—28:28)
 - (i) Job discredits Bildad's wisdom (Job 26:1—27:27)
 - (a) Job ridicules Bildad's wisdom (26:1-4)
 - (b) Because of God's sovereignty over his enemies in his majestic creation, man cannot grasp God's wisdom (26:5-14)

- (c) Job reiterates his innocence (27:1-6)
- (d) Job calls for justice against his enemies (27:7-10)
- (e) Job claims superior wisdom in comparison to his friends (27:11-12)
- (f) The unrighteous will inevitably be judged (27:13-27)
- (ii) Job's divine wisdom discourse (28:1-28)
 - (a) What man can reveal in the physical world (28:1-11)
 - (1) Metals (28:1-2)
 - (2) Mines in the middle of the earth can bring forth these formerly hidden items (28:3-6)
 - (3) Unlike animals man can find these things (28:7-8)
 - (4) Man's technology allows him to reveal these items (28:9-11)
 - (b) Man's inability to uncover wisdom (28:12-22)
 - (1) The inaccessibility of wisdom (28:12-13)
 - (2) The ocean does not contain wisdom (28:14)
 - (3) The inability to purchase wisdom (28:15-19)
 - (4) Wisdom is hidden (28:20-22)
 - (c) Wisdom comes from God (28:23-28)
 - (1) Wisdom is found in God (28:23)
 - (2) God governs the universe with wisdom (28:24-27)
 - (3) Wisdom defined: respect God and flee evil (28:28)
- (C) Job yearns for his past glory (29:1-25)
 - (a) Blessings (29:1-3)
 - (b) Ease (29:4-6)
 - (c) Respect (29:7-11)
 - (d) Philanthropy (29:12-17)
 - (e) Full of life expectancy (29:18-20)
 - (f) Wise leadership (29:21-25)
- (D) Job laments his present adversity (30:1-31)
 - (a) Denunciation of foolish mockers (30:1-8)
 - (b) Cruel treatment (30:9-15)
 - (c) Physical suffering (30:16-19)
 - (d) God's cruelty (30:20-23)
 - (e) Reiteration of present suffering (30:24-31)
- (E) Job's protest of innocence (31:1-40)
 - (a) Absence of sins related to sexuality and honesty (31:1-12)
 - (i) Lust (31:1-4)
 - (ii) Lying and deceiving (31:5-8)

- (iii) Adultery (31:9-12)
- (b) Absence of sins related to abusing authority (31:13-23)
 - (i) Helping slaves (31:13-15)
 - (ii) Helping the poor and needy (31:16-23)
- (c) Absence of sins related to dishonesty before both God and man (31:24-40)
 - (i) Materialism (31:24-25)
 - (ii) Idolatry (31:26-28)
 - (iii) Revenge (31:29-30)
 - (iv) Miserliness (31:31-32)
 - (v) Hypocrisy (31:33-34)
 - (vi) After signing his defense Job challenges God to answer (31:35-37)
 - (vii) Exploitation (31:38-40)
- (5) Elihu's four speeches (Job 32:1—37:24)
 - (A) Introduction (32:1-22)
 - (a) Despite waiting on account of his age Elihu desires to speak due to Job's self justification and a lack of conclusion among the three friends (32:1-5)
 - (b) Elihu desires to focus on justice (32:6-10)
 - (c) Elihu mentions the inadequacy of the three friends' argumentation (32:11-14)
 - (d) Elihu is compelled to speak since the three friends failed to answer Job (32:15-22)
 - (B) Elihu's first speech (33:1-33)
 - (a) Elihu invites Job's listening and attempted refutation (33:1-7)
 - (b) Elihu criticizes Job's self justification and misunderstanding of God's character (33:8-12)
 - (c) Refutation of Job's argument that God does not speak (33:13-22)
 - (i) God speaks through dreams regarding long life and humility (33:13-18)
 - (ii) God speaks through suffering to chasten man (33:19-22)
 - (d) God protects men through a mediating angel giving him further incentive to live holy (33:23-28)
 - (e) God protects and instructs (33:29-30)
 - (f) Therefore Job should listen to Elihu (33:31-33)
 - (C) Elihu's second speech (34:1-37)
 - (a) Elihu quotes Job as denying the connection between sin and suffering (34:1-9)
 - (b) Elihu's refutation of Job (34:10-37)
 - (i) God punishes evil because of his justice and sovereignty (34:10-15)

- (ii) God impartially condemns the powerful wicked (34:16-20)
- (iii) God's judgment upon the wicked emanates from his attributes of omniscience and omnipotence (34:21-30)
- (iv) Elihu charges Job with sin (34:31-34)
- (v) Elihu believes that his view is consistent with those of understanding (34:34-37)

(D) Elihu's third speech (35:1-16)

- (a) Elihu quotes Job as saying righteousness does not pay dividends (35:1-3)
- (b) Elihu's refutation (35:4-16)
 - (i) Because His standards are impartial God blesses and judges because man deserves them (35:4-8)
 - (ii) Job's sin prevents him from being heard by God (35:9-16)

(E) Elihu's fourth speech (36:1—37:24)

- (a) Elihu claims to be a conduit of divine knowledge (36:1-4)
- (b) God afflicts the wicked while granting justice to the afflicted (36:5-15)
- (c) Elihu explains that divine judgment can be avoided through righteous living (36:16-23)
- (d) God should be respected because of His dealings in nature (Job 36:24—37:13)
- (e) Elihu uses the coming storm as a reason for Job to respect God (37:14-20)
- (f) Therefore men should fear God (37:21-24)

(5) God confronts Job (Job 38:1—42:6)

(A) God's first speech (Job 38:1—40:5)

- (a) God answers Job out of the whirlwind (38:1)
- (b) God challenges Job to answer Him (38:2-3)
- (c) God questions Job concerning creation (Job 38:4—39:30)
 - (i) Inanimate creation (38:4-38)
 - (a) Creation of the earth (38:4-7)
 - (b) Shoreline (38:8-11)
 - (c) Dawn and sunlight (38:12-15)
 - (d) Depth of the ocean (38:16-17)
 - (e) Dimensions of the earth (38:18)
 - (f) Light and darkness (38:19-21)
 - (g) Weather (38:22-30)
 - (h) Stars (38:31-32)
 - (i) Ordinances of the heavens (38:33)
 - (j) Clouds and lightning (38:34-38)

- (ii) Animal world (Job 38:39—39:30)
 - (a) Lion (38:39-40)
 - (b) Raven (38:41)
 - (c) Goat (39:1a)
 - (d) Deer (39:1b-4)
 - (e) Donkey (39:5-8)
 - (f) Ox (39:9-12)
 - (g) Ostrich (39:13-18)
 - (h) Warhorse (39:19-25)
 - (i) Hawk (39:26)
 - (j) Eagle (39:27-30)
- (d) God challenges Job to answer (40:1-2)
- (e) Job's reply of humility (40:3-5)
 - (i) Job acknowledges his insignificance (40:3-4)
 - (ii) Job's silence prevents him from adding or subtracting from his previous statements (40:5)
- (B) God's second speech (Job 40:6—42:6)
 - (a) God answers Job out of the whirlwind (40:6)
 - (b) God challenges Job (40:7-14)
 - (i) The charge to listen (40:7)
 - (ii) The challenge to Job's right to self justification (40:8-9)
 - (iii) The Lord tells Job to justify himself (40:10-14)
 - (c) Behemoth (40:15-24)
 - (i) Description (40:15-18)
 - (ii) The Lord asks if man can capture the behemoth (40:19-24)
 - (d) Leviathan (41:1-34)
 - (i) God asks Job if he can capture the Leviathan or bring him into servitude (41:1-11)
 - (ii) Description (41:12-34)
 - (e) Job 's reply (42:1-6)
 - (i) Job acknowledges that God knows things that he does not know (42:1-3)
 - (ii) Job invites God's instruction (42:4-5)
 - (iii) Job 's repentance (42:6)
- III. Epilogue (Job 42:7-17)
 - (1) Job mediates the sacrifices for his three counselors (42:7-9)
 - (2) Job's restoration (42:10-17)
 - (A) Twofold restoration (42:10)

- (B) Consolation by friends (42:11)
- (C) Livestock (42:12)
- (D) Family (42:13-15)
 - (a) Seven sons and three daughters (42:13)
 - (b) Daughters (42:14-15)
- (E) Longevity (42:16-17)

Introduction

Job is the oldest book of the Bible. Victor Hugo called it the “greatest masterpiece of the human mind.”

Style: Epic poem (Cf. Iliad and Odyssey); it may have been presented at times as a drama.

It contains mostly poetry; yet opens and closes with prose (like program notes).

Yet, Job was a real person: mentioned by Ezekiel, along with Noah and Daniel (Ezek 14:14,20) and by James (James 5:11).

Vocabulary

- 110 *hapax legomena*, words not found elsewhere in OT (more than any other OT book)
- 5 different words for lions (4:10-11)
- 6 for traps (18:8-10)
- 6 for darkness (3:4-6; 10:21-22)
- Contains names of constellations, metals, precious stones
- Familiarity with detailed anatomy of great beasts
- Technical language of law and courts, occupations of mining and hunting
- References to insects, reptiles, birds, beasts; weapons and military strategies; musical instruments; means of travel; geography; whirlwinds, dew, dawn, darkness, clouds, rain

Richness of similes and metaphors unexcelled. For example, the brevity of life is depicted by:

- A weaver’s shuttle (7:6)
- One’s breath (7:7)
- A cloud (7:9)
- A shadow (8:9; 14:2)
- A runner (9:25)
- A falcon (eagle) (9:26)
- And a flower (14:2)

Along with poetic parallelism (two lines with the second completing or contrasting the first) and strophes (a group of verses in a rhythmic pattern) make the book of Job: *The greatest poem of ancient or modern times...* — Tennyson

The Names of God

- *Elohim* God the Creator, carrying out His will
- *El* God the Omnipotent, carrying out His work
- *Eloah* God who is worshipped and reverenced; the Living God, in contrast to idols, etc.
- *Adonai* God as the Ruler of the Earth (the whole Earth rather than as limited to His own people).
- *Jehovah* God the Eternal: Who is, and was, and is to come.
 - The self-existent God, who stands in covenant relation to His own people.
- *Shaddai* God as all-bountiful; not merely Almighty as regards to His power, but all-bountiful as regards to His resources ("breast").

Languages: Hebrew + Akkadian, Arabic, Aramaic, Sumerian, Ugaritic...

[Hebrew idioms are also instructive: "Accept" is from *dashen*, "turn to ashes," because that was the way in which the Lord accepted a sacrifice. He turned it to ashes, by causing Divine fire to fall from the heavens and consume it. This is how He "had respect" for Abel's offering: this is how He testified of Abel's "gifts"; this is how Abel "obtained witness that he was righteous" (Heb 11:4).]

Single author: interdependence of design.

When Was Job Written?

Time of patriarchs... no mention of Law, Israel, etc. (yet, sacrifices!). [No mention of other "gods."]

Traditions?

(Talmud): Job = King of Edom?

Job = Pyramids? Re: Joseph?

(1) Length of Job's life: 60? (Children grown) + 140 after calamities (42:16); compares with Terah, Abraham's father, 205; Abraham, 175; Isaac, 180; Jacob, 147; Joseph, 110; ...shorter since. May have overlapped Noah (350 yrs after flood); Shem (502 years; cf. Gen 9:28; 11:10-11); Abraham may have been born only 292 years after the flood...

(2) Wealth reckoned in livestock (1:3; 42:12), Cf. Abraham (Gen 12:16; 13:2) and Jacob (Gen 30:43; 32:5).

- (3) Depicts Sabeans and Chaldeans (1:15,17) as nomads; they weren't in later years.
- (4) Job was priest of his family (1:5); national priesthood not yet in existence.
- (5) Hebrew word "piece of money" (42:11) is used elsewhere only twice (Gen 33:19, Josh 24:32), both in reference to Jacob.
- (6) Musical instruments referenced (21:12; 30:31) timbrel, harp (or lyre), flute (or pipe) are also mentioned in Gen (4:21; 31:27).
- (7) Job's daughters were heirs of the estate along with brothers (42:15); not likely after Mosaic law given (Num 27:8).
- (8) Similar literary works in Mesopotamia about the same time.
- (9) No references to Mosaic institutions (priesthood, laws, tabernacle, special religious days, events, etc.)
- (10) The name *Shaddai* is used of God 31x in Job (17x elsewhere in OT) and is a name familiar to the patriarchs (Gen 17:1; Ex 6:3).
- (11) Personal and place names associated with patriarchal period: Sheba (an oath, seven):
 - (a) A son of Raamah (Gen 10:7) whose descendants settled with those of Dedan on the Persian Gulf.
 - (b) A son of Joktan (Gen 10:28), probably the founder of the Sabeans.
 - (c) A grandson of Abraham: A son of Jokshan, who was a son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen 25:3).
 - (d) A kingdom in Arabia. Sabeans from Sheba (Gen 25:3; Job 1:15; 6:19); Sheba, in fact, was Saba in Southern Arabia, the Sabaeans of classical geography, who carried on the trade in spices with the other peoples of the ancient world. They were Semites, speaking one of the two main dialects of Himyaritic or South Arabic. Sheba had become a monarchy before the days of Solomon. Its queen brought him gold, spices, and precious stones (1 Kings 10:1-13) She is called by our Lord the "queen of the south" (Matt 12:42).

Tema (south, desert): Another grandson of Abraham: one of the sons of Ishmael, and father of a tribe so called (Gen 25:15; 1 Chr 1:30; Job 6:19; Is 21:14; Jer 25:23) which settled at a place to which he gave his name, some 250 miles SE of Edom, on the route between Damascus and Mecca, in the northern part of the Arabian peninsula, toward the Syrian desert; (the modern Teyma).

Eliphaz ("God his strength")

- (1) One of Job's "three friends" who visited him in his affliction (Job 4:1). He was a "Temanite"; i.e., a native of Teman, in Idumea (Edom). He first enters into debate with Job. His language is uniformly more delicate and gentle than that of the other two, although he imputes to Job special sins as the cause of his present sufferings. He states with

remarkable force of language the infinite purity and majesty of God (Job 4:12-21; 15:12-16).

(2) The son of Esau by his wife Adah, and father of several Edomitish tribes (Gen 36:4,10-11,16)

Job = common West Semitic name 2000 BC; earliest known usage is in a list of kings in Mari on the upper Euphrates River, 2000-1800 BC; also name of a 1900 BC prince in the Egyptian Execration texts. Other occurrences found in the Amarna letters (ca 1400 BC) and in Ugaritic texts.

Chiastic Structure

Job 1:1—2:5 - Introduction

Job 2:6-2:10 - Satan's assault; Job stripped of all

Job 2:11-13 - The Three Friends; Their arrival

Job 3:1—31:40 - Job and his friends

Job 32-37 - Elihu

Job 38:1—42:6 - Jehovah and Job

Job 42:7-9 - The Three Friends; Their departure

Job 42:9-10 - Satan's Defeat; Job blessed of all

Job 42:11-17 - Conclusion

Scientific: More on creation than in Genesis. At least 15 discoveries anticipated...

Primary Lesson

Ask most Christians, or consult with many Bible helps, and they will communicate that the primary lesson of the Book of Job is, "Why do the innocent suffer?" That's not the case. If you believe that, you're setting yourself up with another reason to have confidence in the flesh and yourself rather than to gather the message that the book really carries.

The primary lesson in the Book of Job is the oldest lesson in the world and the most important lesson that it is possible for us to learn. If we don't know this lesson, it matters not what else we may know. Our knowledge may be vast, extensive, and deep on all other subjects; but it will not carry us beyond the grave. This is a lesson I cannot teach you: ***How shall mortal man be justified with God?***

It may be that Deity can forgive sins, but I do not see how. — Socrates, 500 BC

James 5:11: Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen **the end of the Lord**; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

- The patience of Job is only one piece of the puzzle...
- "...the end of the Lord" - The Lord Himself must be the teacher of this Divine lesson.

The message of the Book of Job began in the Garden of Eden...in Gen 3, God asked Adam and Eve, "Where art thou?" (Lost!)

What did the "mighty famine" do for the lost son (Luke 15)? — He confessed: "I have sinned."

What did another famine do for Joseph's brethren (Gen 44:16)? They acknowledged: "We are verily guilty!"

What did Nathan's parable do for David (2 Sam 12:1-13)? "I have sinned against the Lord."

What did the vision do for Isaiah (6:1-5)? "I am undone...unclean."

...and Daniel (10:1-8)? "My comeliness was turned into corruption."

What did a miracle do for Peter (Luke 5:1-8)? "Depart from me; I am a sinful man, O Lord."

If all we gather from this book is "the patience of Job," it will only provide additional grounds for self-confidence and thus our own ultimate disappointment and depression, for we will fail to produce such patience as he did. If you're looking to understand why the innocent suffer after reading Job, you'll be disappointed.

Major Issues

- "Why do the innocent, or righteous, suffer?" [This is never really answered!]
- Deeper level: The relationship of Satan to God: Not the equal (re: dualism, "The Force" of Star Wars, et al.)
 - All forces are at God's command; there are no surprises for God.
 - More than any other book of the Bible, Job gives us a glimpse of the true greatness and majesty of God.