

JOB (Teacher's Edition)

Part One: The Dilemma of Job (1:1--2:13)

- I. The Circumstances of Job 1:1-5
- II. The First Assault of Satan 1:6-22
- III. The Second Assault of Satan 2:1-10
- IV. The Arrival of Job's Friend's 2:11-13

Part Two: The Debates of Job (3:1--37:24)

- I. The First Cycle of Debate 3:1--14:22
 - A. Job's First Speech 3
 - B. Eliphaz's First Speech 4:1--5:27
 - C. Job's Reply to Eliphaz 6:1--7:21
 - D. Bildad's First Speech 8
 - E. Job's Response to Bildad 9:1--10:22
 - F. Zophar's First Speech 11
 - G. Job's Response to Zophar 12:1--14:22
- II. The Second Cycle of Debate 15:1--21:34
 - A. Eliphaz's Second Speech 15
 - B. Job's Response to Eliphaz 16:1--17:16
 - C. Bildad's Second Speech 18
 - D. Job's Response to Bildad 19
 - E. Zophar's Second Speech 20
 - F. Job's Response to Zophar 21
- III. The Third Cycle of Debate 22:1--26:14
 - A. Eliphaz's Third Speech 22
 - B. Job's Response to Eliphaz 23:1--24:25
 - C. Bildad's Third Speech 25
 - D. Job's Response to Bildad 26
- IV. The Final Defense of Job 27:1--31:40
 - A. Job's First Monologue 27:1--28:28
 - B. Job's Second Monologue 29:1--31:40
- V. The Solution of Elihu 32:1--37:24
 - A. Elihu Intervenes in the Debate 32
 - B. Elihu's First Rebuttal 33
 - C. Elihu's Second Rebuttal 34
 - D. Elihu's Third Rebuttal 35
 - E. Elihu's Conclusion 36:1--37:24

Part Three: The Deliverance of Job (38:1--42:17)

- I. The First Controversy of God with Job 38:1--40:5
 - A. God's First Challenge to Job 38:1--40:2
 - B. Job's First Answer to God 40:3-5
- II. The Second Controversy of God with Job 40:6--42:6
 - A. God's Second Challenge to Job 40:6--41:34
 - B. Job's Second Answer to God 42:1-6
- III. The Deliverance of Job and His Friends 42:7-17

AUTHOR-

No one knows who wrote the Book of Job. A few scholars have taken the position that it may have been written by Moses. Other have suggested that the patriarch Job himself may have written this account of his experiences. But these theories have no solid evidence to support them. The only thing we can say for certain is that the book was written by an **unknown author**.

WHEN THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN-

This book, along with many of the **Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes**, is part of the Bible scholars call "**Wisdom Literature**". The Hebrew word for wisdom is translated "**skill for living**" because the Jews viewed wisdom in very practical terms. The "Wisdom Literature" provided guidance for **moral behavior** and everyday living and, in contrast to the wisdom literature of other cultures, was centered **on God**- Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline." [As a note, there are three broad categories of wisdom literature in the OT: 1) **proverbs** that express practical truth, 2) **riddles or parables** with a spiritual meaning, and 3) **discussions of the problems of life**.]

The reason I bring these things up is because the dating of Job involves two issues: the date of **the setting** of the book and the date of **the composition**, which involves its style. It seems that the events described in the Book of Job must have occurred **many centuries before** they were finally written. Job probably lived during the time of the patriarch Abraham, about **2000 to 1800** B.C. when you consider certain issues in the book, like no mention of Israel or the Law, his long life which was more like the span of those in Genesis, and the fact that, like Abraham, Job's wealth was measured in **flocks and herds**. Also, in patriarchal fashion, Job's married children were a part of his household, living in separate tents but subject to his rule as leader of the family clan.

But that still leaves the exact date of the book's writing as something of a mystery. Some believe its unknown author put it in writing as late as the second century B.C. Others insist it must have been written about the time the people of Israel returned from the captivity in Babylon about 450 B.C. But many conservative scholars assign the writing of the book to the time of King Solomon, about **950 B.C.** Historical evidence favors this date, since this was the golden age of the writing of Biblical Wisdom literature.

I would also like to mention that we can be confident that Job is a **"real"** story. His **personal reality** appears from his being named with "Noah and Daniel," real persons, in **Ezek 14:14,16-20**. James (James 5:11) refers to Job as an example of patience, which he would hardly do were Job an **imaginary person**. Also, persons and places are specified, as they would not be in an allegory.

ABOUT THE BOOK-

This book probably gives rise to more unbiblical philosophies than any other book in the Bible! Because of the nature of the depth of what the book is about and

some of its themes, we will go much more in depth in our discussions here and in the next section and be briefer in our "Truths and Applications".

One thing we should note at the beginning is that in the discussions between Job and his "friends" all things are truly stated, but not all are **statements of truth**.

Job begins with two introductory chapters, in the form of a narrative or prologue that set the stage for the rest of the book. Chapters 3 through 37 form the main body of the book. These chapters are **poems** in the form of **dramatic dialogues** between Job and his friends. Four additional chapters containing God's response to their arguments are also written in **poetic form**. The book ends with a final narrative or epilogue (42:7-17) that tells what happened to Job after these discussions had ended.

This prologue-poetry-epilogue format was used often in writings of this type in the ancient world. The author of Job was a literary craftsman who knew how to bring words together in dramatic fashion to drive home his message about the eternal purpose of life.

The grand theme of the book is to reconcile the **saint's afflictions** with a **benevolent God's** working in this present world. The doctrine of a **future life** in which the seeming anomalies or seeming injustices of the present shall be cleared up would have given the main solution to the problem. But Job does not make it his main solution, though he plainly refers to the resurrection. The first consideration suggested in this sublime history and poem is, "**an enemy hath done this**." The veil that hides the world of spirits is drawn aside, and **Satan**, the **accuser** of the brethren, appears **as the cause** of Job's afflictions.

Satan, in one sense, is allowed to do his worst to show that his sneer is false that religion is but **selfishness**, "does Job fear God for nothing?" (Job 1:9). The patience and the final perseverance of the saints (Job 1:21; 2:10; 13:15), notwithstanding temporary distrust under Satan's attacks that entailed loss of family, friends, possessions, and bodily health, are illustrated in Job's history. God's people serve Him **for His own sake**, not merely for the **temporary reward** His service generally brings; they serve Him even in overwhelming trial (Gen 15:1). In this Job is a type (though imperfectly) of Jesus who alone, without once harboring a distrustful thought, endured all this as well as death in its most agonizing, humiliating form, and, worse than all, the hiding of even God's countenance from Him. Job's chief agony was not so much his accumulated losses and sufferings, not even his being misunderstood by friends, but that God **hid His face from him**, as these calamities too truly seemed to prove (Job 23:9). Yet conscience told him he was no hypocrite, and even though in his own mind God was slaying him he still trusted in God (Job 23:10-15; 13:15; compare Abraham, Gen 22).

It is noteworthy to observe that Job's three trials are progressive:

1. **His sudden loss of all blessings external to himself**, possessions, servants, and sons; he conquers this temptation: "naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

2. **His loss of bodily health** by the most loathsome sickness. Still he conquers: "shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

3. **His mental conflict** brought on by the three friends' suspicion of his insincerity, which he felt untrue, but which seemed justified by his trials from God. This was the poignant sting to his soul, for he accepted their premises, that great suffering proved great sin. **Here he failed** yet amidst his impatient groans he still clung desperately to his faith and followed hard after God, and felt sure God would yet vindicate him (Job 23:10; 19:25-27). His chief error was his **undue self-justification** before God, which he at last utterly **renounces** (Job 30:25 to Job 31; 32:1; 33:9; 9:17; 10:7; 16:17; 27:5; 29:10-17; 40:4-5; 42:5-6). After fretfully demanding God's interposition (23) to vindicate his innocence he had settled down into the sad conviction that God heeds not, and that His ways of providence are as a theory inexplicable to man while practical wisdom is the fear of the Lord (Job 28:31,35).

Elihu enters the scene and gives an important solution of the problem. God not only in the hereafter shall judge the world, but even now providentially and morally **controls all its affairs**. No one is perfect and even though one may be a Godly, righteous man, even the righteous have **sin that needs correction**. God is not really silent, but speaks in many ways, including chastisement (Job 16:21; 23:3; 31:35), as Job had complained (Job 33:14, etc.). He teaches people **humility**, and prepares them for **pardon and life** through the mediating Angel of the covenant (of whom Elihu is the type: Job 33:6-7,23-30). To Job's charge of injustice against God Elihu answers that **God's omnipotence** (Job 34:35-36), upholding man in life when He could **destroy him**, and His universal supervision, exclude the idea of injustice in Him.

Among the many things we can glean from the above, several lessons stand out:

1) **God is sovereign**. We cannot understand His workings by **rational thinking alone**- we need divine **revelation** that comes from individual seeking. Faith must rest in God's love and our knowledge of Him based on His Word. By sovereignty we don't mean sanctified fatalism. We mean that He is **all-powerful**, everywhere present, **all-knowing** and His decisions are final. God is the author of all the power of the universe.

2) We understand our lives and indeed ourselves in direct relationship to **our understanding of the character and workings of God**. When we understand that God's will toward us **is good** (John 10:10, Deuteronomy 28:13, Jeremiah 29:11) and that He communicates His caring to His children, it **changes everything**. Faith must have a resting place. When deep suffering threatens the foundations of faith (like Job) we can be destroyed unless we are **firmly rooted** in God's truths. This is in contrast to placing faith in institutional, man-made religion and doctrine.

3) In times of tragedy we face the temptation of **making God our adversary instead of our advocate**. We can do one of two things: we can focus on declaring our innocence and questioning issues of "fairness" and the justice of God, or we

can humbly **bow in worship** (as Job did in the end) wait for God to **reveal Himself** with the end result of growth and **true deliverance**.

4) **The struggle of faith is a personal one**. We each will enter the crucible of testing alone (consider Jacob before he faced Esau). Our faith needs to be tested against uncontrollable forces and we must all win our individual victories. The times may come when family, friends and all human support systems will be taken and we must **stand alone**.

A BASIC ASSESSMENT OF JOB-

Rather than being an example of God doling out suffering to mankind, Job's trial is a lesson about two other essential themes. This story is a divine revelation about a) the mood and manner of **Satan's hatefulness** and readiness **to attack** humankind, and b) the tendency of people to **misinterpret those attacks**. This book was not written to describe God as intending suffering but rather **exposes Satan's efforts** in extending it (1:6-12: 2:1-7).

We must have discernment as we learn from Job's suffering that we serve an awesome God of healing, loving grace. Even in the midst of horrendous trials we should **mature** to the point of seeing **deliverance through suffering** until we gain deliverance **from it**. To those of us in Christ, growth comes even in the harshest of trials- see James 1:2-4.

Here are some truths this book teaches contrary to much "human philosophizing" that passes as "theology":

- A. Do not confuse **human frailty and vulnerability** with God's intent for human destiny. God has not destined us to suffer, nor does He approve it. Suffering **never was** God's original purpose for mankind. It is true that we are not promised **exemption from it**, but we should not presume it is God's will.
- B. It is God's will that that we **turn to Him** in the course of our suffering to **receive grace** within it and **deliverance** from it. While our individual responses to trial, suffering and pain may cause it to become a sanctifying force in our lives, still God has not sanctified it! Jesus' ministry proves this in that it was filled with demonstrations of God delivering and setting people free.
- C. In Job 42:10 the text literally says this (best translated in the KJV): "And the Lord turned the **captivity** of Job, when he prayer for his friends". Make no mistake about it. Job's situation was a **captivity of demonic contrivance** and his deliverance was from demonic things, not the survival of a man from normal "to-be-expected" human difficulty.
- D. We must always remember that **the Fall** broke God's **original order**. Our present frailty and human vulnerability to suffering is a part of **the Fall's** aftermath. Sin opened the door to the possibility of suffering, but its **proliferation** is certainly advanced by the works of **darkness**. This is a major truth of this book!

- E. Job certainly does not say that all suffering is satanic, or that any person is under attack because of his or her sin. The book does balance the facts of human frailty with satanic ferocity and hence points to God's true nature- that when all is said and done He is the Redeemer, Deliverer, Sustainer, Restorer and ultimately the Multiplier of blessings!

To summarize all this, I would point out that Job teaches us to neither suppose that God ordains suffering or that we are beyond its reach. This awesome book proves the truth of Jesus' words in John 10:10- the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; **I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.**

A POSSIBLE KEY WORD-

Though the word suffering so quickly comes to mind as a key word, considering much of what we discussed, I really felt that the key word should center on the lesson Job ultimately learns. Since it seems that the question the book is asking is, "Why suffering if God is loving and all powerful?" and the answer from God basically says, "Don't you remember who I am and what I can do if your attitude is right?" I decided on my key word as being (in a triumphant sense): **SOVEREIGNTY.**

KEY VERSE(S) AND CHAPTER(S)-

My key verse, ok, key verses, relates to the point God makes to all humans going through tragedy and comes from the awesome speech of **Elihu**. My key verse is: **Job 37:23,24**. It basically states: God doesn't **oppress** people. He is powerful to deliver, so **be wise and don't blame Him.**

As to the key chapter, I felt **it was the triumphant conclusion** of the book which speaks of God's dealing with Job after Job recants his misspeaking and wrong thoughts (see James 5:10,11): **Job 42**. Ultimately the blessings and deliverance flow when Job fully recognizes God's **total majesty and power** and he surrenders his perceived right to know "why".

JESUS REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

- Though Jesus is not directly mentioned in Job, we can see Job as a type of the suffering servant Christ and who intercedes for and wins the blessings of God for His friends
- **Job 19:25 speaks of Jesus the Redeemer and the fact that He will come to earth**
- **Job speaks in the very next verse of the resurrection and Jesus is the resurrection and the life**
- **Jesus our intercessor in heaven is mentioned in Job 16:19-21**
- **The burnt offering mentioned in Job 1 speaks of Jesus, our offering for sin**

THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

- God's speak to Job out of the whirlwind (or storm) was by the Spirit
- **Job 32: 8 states that it is the Spirit of God that gives us understanding**

- Job 33:4 states that it is the Spirit of God that is the source of life itself
- Job 34:14-15 declares that the absence of the Spirit of God would cause all of human history to end. Ultimately the Holy Spirit, in the book of Job, is the Creator and Sustainer of life and He is the One who gives meaning and rationality to it
- All the blessings that flowed to Job and upon his friends in response to his prayer came by the Spirit of the Lord

SOME TRUTHS AND APPLICATIONS-

Job 1:22

Accusing God of wrongdoing is blasphemy! Refuse to do it! Live in light of what you know to be true about God, the world and yourself as the Word declares.

Job 36:8-12

Always discern whether present adversity you experience is part of God's discipline. Agree with His correction and repent- you will grow and be loosed!

Job 33

Elihu plays the soul winner we need to be. He speaks to Job on behalf of God and gets out of the way. When he finishes God speaks! Speak the Word- not opinions!