

JOB

“Knowing God Through Adversity”

As we mentioned before, in earlier notes, the Old Testament can be divided into four sections, and each of these sections provides a specific focus regarding the person of Christ.

1. The law (Pentateuch) – *i.e.* the foundation for Christ.
2. The history – *i.e.* the preparation for Christ.

Now we come to the third section of the Old Testament – *i.e.* the wisdom – and here we will see the aspiration of Christ. These next five books lay a foundation to help us to understand key questions concerning God, humanity, the creation, and the nature of evil and suffering.

Let's turn to the first of the wisdom books – *i.e.* the book of **Job** – which ...

1. Contains 42 chapters.
2. Contains 1,070 verses.

I. The introduction.

A. The name.

In the Hebrew Bible, this book is called *Iyyob* – *p.* Ė-yob / Job – after the main character in the book. It is interesting to note that the name actually comes from the Hebrew word that means, “*persecuted one*”.

Jerome – in his Latin Vulgate (390-405 AD) – followed the Hebrew title. And, of course, that same title was brought to our English Bible – therefore, it is called the book of **Job**.

B. The penman.

Again, as we have said many times before, we know that God Himself is the Author of this book (*cf.* **2 Timothy 3:16**).

The Bible does not identify the penman of this book – and interestingly, even the Jewish Rabbis never identified a writer except to say that someone who lived before Moses wrote it!

One commentator – Jacques Bolduc, writing in 1637 AD – presented the idea that Moses may have translated the book of **Job** into the Hebrew language. This would explain how the book – which is obviously pre-Israel – found its way into the Jewish canon of Scripture.

C. The date.

Accurate dating of the events recorded in **Job** is difficult because there are no references to contemporary historical occurrences. However, a number of facts indicate an early patriarchal date – *i.e.* before the time of Abraham.

1. Job (*cf.* **Job 42:16**) lived 140 years *after* the events in the book. So he must have lived close to 200 years. Remember, the patriarch Abraham only lived 175 years (*cf.* **Genesis 25:7**).
2. Job's wealth (*cf.* **Job 1:3; 42:12**) was measured in terms of livestock instead of silver or gold. Abraham's wealth (*cf.* **Genesis 13:2**) was measured in cattle AND silver and gold.
3. Job was the priest of his family and (*cf.* **Job 1:5**) offered burnt sacrifices for his family. The Scriptures make it clear (*cf.* **Genesis 22**) that this was a common practice for Abraham as well.

And there are some other points – *i.e.* there is no mention of Israel, the Law, or the Tabernacle – that clearly shows that Job lived in the days of the Patriarchs.

However, since this book obviously predates Moses, we will say that it was written – perhaps by Job himself – before the birth of Moses in 1542 BC. That is as close as we can get.

II. The purpose.

A. The historical purpose.

This book tells the story of an early believer in the LORD God – we are taken on a tour of his testimony, his troubles, his trials, his teaching, and his triumph.

B. The theological purpose.

It is commonly said that the purpose of this book is to answer the age-old question, “*Why does God allow the righteous to suffer?*” That was certainly a question Job raised – but I do not believe it is the main point.

To get the main point, turn with me to ...

James 5:11 “... 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.”

Therefore, I believe the main theological purpose of the book is to show:

1. How the righteous ought to act when they are suffering.
2. How God uses the suffering of the righteous to perfect us.

Bottom line: The book of **Job** teaches us that God is God – *i.e.* He is omniscient, omnipotent, and good. As such, His ways are sometimes incomprehensible to us, but He can always be trusted to do what is right and best for us.

III. The story.

The book may be divided into three main sections:

A. The dilemma of Job. **Job 1-2**

Job was certainly NOT a logical candidate for disaster.

Job 1:1 “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name *was* Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed (*i.e.* to turn away or depart from) evil.”

Job 1:8 “... the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?”

Satan – *i.e.* the “*accuser*” – charged that Job only loved God because of the blessings that he had received from God (*cf.* **Job 1:10**). In order to refute Satan’s false accusations, God allowed him to strike Job with two assaults.

1. Job lost his assets.
 - a. His oxen and asses to the Sabeans.
 - b. His sheep in a fireball from Heaven.
 - c. His camels to the Chaldeans.
 - d. His children in a terrible windstorm.

Job 1:22 “In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”

2. Job lost his health – *i.e.* he was covered with boils.

His only relief came from scraping himself with a piece of pottery and sitting in warm ashes. In fact, his condition was so pitiful that ...

Job 2:9-10 “... his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”

Job 2:11, 13 “Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place ... they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.”

B. The debates of Job. **Job 3-37**

After seven days, Job broke the silence – *cf.* **Job 3:1-19** – by declaring it was his wish that he had never been born. But since he could not change the fact of his birth ...

1. He longed for death.
2. He wondered why God would not allow him to die (*cf.* **Job 3:20-23**).

When Job was finished speaking, then began three-rounds of debate:

1. Round one.
 - a. Eliphaz said the innocent do not suffer (*cf.* **Job 4-5**); so Job responded by asking that his sin be revealed (*cf.* **Job 6-7**).
 - b. Bildad said that God is just and, if Job were pure, he would be blessed (*cf.* **Job 8**); Job agreed that God is just but maintained his own integrity while concluding that God destroys the wicked and the good (*cf.* **Job 9-10**).
 - c. Zophar said that Job has actually received less trouble than he deserved (*cf.* **Job 11**); Job answered (*cf.* **Job 12-14**) by affirming the wisdom of God, but saying that his “*friends*” were actually “*forgers of lies*” and “*physicians of no value*” (*cf.* **Job 13:4**).
2. Round two.
 - a. Eliphaz repeated his belief that God only sends suffering to the wicked (*cf.* **Job 15**); Job answered (*cf.* **Job 16-17**) by declaring his suffering was allowed by God for reasons unknown to him.

- b. Bildad wondered (*cf.* **Job 18**) how long Job would reject their wisdom and he gives a long description of the suffering of the wicked; Job answered (*cf.* **Job 19**) by wondering how long they would continue to torment him. He then declared that, while he felt that God had abandoned him, he was confident that he would see His Redeemer.
 - c. Zophar declared the prosperity of the wicked is short lived – and since Job had lost all his wealth, he must have sinned (*cf.* **Job 20**); Job answered (*cf.* **Job 21**) by giving examples of some wicked who did prosper in this life, and died an easy death.
- 3. Round three.
 - a. Eliphaz accused Job (*cf.* **Job 22**) of loving the ways of the wicked and trusting that God would not see it; Job (*cf.* **Job 23-24**) maintained his integrity and declared that he had treasured God's words.
 - b. Bildad spoke (*cf.* **Job 25**) of God's greatness; Job answered (*cf.* **Job 26**) that his speech was of no help at all.
 - c. Zophar refused to speak; Job continued (*cf.* **Job 27-31**) by declaring how his "*friends*" have turned against him and he listed some sins that would certainly deserve God's judgment but he was innocent of them all.

Job 32:1-2 "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu ..."

He was the youngest of the group and did not speak (*cf.* **Job 32:1-5**); but as he listened to the three rounds of debate, he became increasingly angry:

- 1. With Job because he still continued to maintain his innocence.
- 2. With the three older men because of their failure to convince Job of sin.

Even though many of the things that these men said were theologically sound and right on the surface, the application of those points was totally wrong. That is why the LORD God Himself said in ...

Job 42:8 "... ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job."

C. The deliverance of Job. **Job 38-42**

The LORD God then spoke to Job from a whirlwind and made two speeches.

1. First speech (*cf. Job 38:1-40:2*) – God revealed His power and wisdom as Creator and Preserver of the physical and animal world. Job responded by acknowledging his own ignorance and insignificance (*cf. Job 40:3-5*).
2. Second speech (*cf. Job 40:6-41:34*), God revealed His sovereignty by showing Job two illustrations of His power to control the uncontrollable.
 - a. His control over Behemoth – *i.e.* largest of land creatures.
 - b. His control over Leviathan – *i.e.* largest of sea creatures.

The point was clear – *i.e.* if Job could not understand God's ways in the realm of nature, how could he understand God's ways in the spiritual realm? And when God was done:

1. Job began to see things from God's divine perspective.
2. Job acknowledged God's sovereignty over his life.
3. Job responded by repenting of his pride (*cf. Job 42:1-6*).

Job was blessed as God restored his worldly goods twofold. Therefore, Satan's challenge was turned around and made to become a source of blessing.

IV. The revelation.

- A. God's way is unknowable.

The ways of God are not according to our thinking – therefore, we must learn to walk by faith and not by sight. It was that faith that caused Job to say in ...

Job 13:15 “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him ...”

- B. God's end is perfect – Job had absolute confidence in God as ...

1. His living Redeemer. *cf. Job 19:25a*
2. His living hope – *i.e.* resurrection. *cf. Job 19:25b-27*

Conclusion

May God help us to have the patience of Job in the trials of our life!