

Study of Job

I. Background on Job

- A. The Place of Job in OTP (Old Testament Poetry): One suggested way of viewing the different books:
1. The Book of Job – How to suffer
 2. The Book of Psalms – How to pray
 3. The Book of Proverbs – How to live
 4. The Book of Ecclesiastes – How to enjoy
 5. The Song of Solomon – How to love
- B. There are some who suggest that Job is simply a story designed to encourage people to endure hardships and that there is nothing literal to be taken from the record. They often cite the author's intimate knowledge of heaven's inner workings as evidence that the author is using literary devices to capture readers as the author could not possibly have been a witness to the exchange between God and Satan. This, of course, suggests that God cannot allow man to see, or He cannot inform man of, the inner workings of Heaven. See Acts 7:55-56, the entire book of Revelation, etc.
- C. Most scholars consider the book of Job as being the oldest in the Bible, and one of the oldest manuscripts of any ancient text in the world, dating it between 2,000-1,500 BC. This places it well before Moses (1400-1200 BC) and possibly even Abraham (1900-1600 BC)
- D. There is no clear author for the Book of Job. Internal evidence does not suggest that Job was the author. There are several suggestions that Elihu, the youngest, and perhaps wisest, of Job's friends is the author. There are some who suggest that Moses is the author of Job, which would place the writing much later. It does not matter who wrote it, however, this preacher leans towards Elihu, as the dating seems to be more accurate. There are references to Leviathan and the behemoth which are described as dinosaur-like animals which no longer seem to exist.

II. Job in the rest of the Bible

- A. Ezekiel 14:14, 20 – In a context of God condemning the land, He mentions the righteousness of Noah, Daniel, and Job. God references that these individuals did exist, therefore any argument to the contrary will have to be taken up with God
- B. James 5:11 – James references Job as an example of patience and endurance. James, an inspired writer, says nothing regarding the fictitious nature of Job, leading to the belief that James considered him a real person.
- C. I Cor. 3:19 – Paul quotes Eliphaz from Job 5:13 as Eliphaz discusses how great Jehovah is and what He is capable of doing to the crafty. Paul uses it as an example of the foolishness of the wisdom of the world compared to the wisdom of God.
- D. Rom. 11:35 – Paul quotes from Job 41:11 in which God asks rhetorically if God owes anyone anything. Paul uses this to describe the depth of knowledge and wisdom that are found in God.

III. The Purpose of the book

- A. It is common to suggest that the purpose of the book is to answer the age-old question, "Why does God allow the righteous to suffer?" That is certainly the question Job raises, but it is worthy to note that he himself never receives a direct answer. Nor is one given by the author, other than to answer Satan's challenge, "Does Job fear God for nothing?". We are privileged to know of the challenge of Satan, and that God allows Job to suffer in answer to that challenge, but Job is never told of this. Therefore, this preacher suggests that the purpose of the book is to answer the question: "How should the righteous suffer?" or "How should the righteous endure suffering?"

IV. Some lessons to be learned:

- A. **The book defends the absolute glory and perfection of God** – It sets forth the theme echoed in **Ps 18:3** ("I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised"). God is deserving of our praise simply on the basis of who He is, apart from the blessings He bestows. Satan denied this (**1:9-11**), but Job proved him wrong (**1:20-22; 2:10**).

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B. **The question of suffering is addressed** - Why do we suffer? Who or what causes it? Why doesn't God do something? Not all questions are answered, but some important points are made:

1. - Man is not always able to subject the painful experiences of human existence to a meaningful analysis - God's workings are beyond man's ability to fathom. Man simply cannot tie all the "loose ends" of the Lord's purposes together. We must learn to trust in God, no matter the circumstances.
2. - Suffering is not always the result of personal sin – The erroneous conclusion drawn by Job's friends is that suffering is always a consequence of sin. Job proves this is not the case.
3. - Suffering may be allowed as a compliment to one's spirituality - God allowed Job to suffer to prove to Satan what kind of man he really was. What confidence God had in Job!

C. **The book paints a beautiful picture of "patience"** - The Greek word is "hupomone", which describes the trait of one who is able to abide under the weight of trials. From the "patience of Job", we learn that it means to maintain faithfulness to God, even under great trials in which we do not understand what is happening.

D. **The book also prepares the way for the coming of Jesus Christ!** - His coming is anticipated in several ways. Job longs for a mediator between him and God (**9:33; 33:23**), and Jesus is one (**1Ti 2:5**). Job confessed his faith in a Redeemer who would one day stand on earth. Is this Messianic in nature? (**19:25**); Christ certainly is our Redeemer who stood on the earth (**Ep 1:7**)

V. Brief Outline of Job

A. Job's Distress (ch. 1-3)

1. His prosperity, 1:1-5
2. His adversity, 1:6-2:13
3. His perplexity, chapter 3

B. Job's Defense (4-37)

1. The First Round (4-14)
 - a) Eliphaz (4-5), Job's reply (6-7)
 - b) Bildad (8), Job's reply (9-10)
 - c) Zophar (11), Job's reply (12-14)
2. The Second Round (15-21)
 - a) Eliphaz (15), Job's reply (16-17)
 - b) Bildad (18), Job's reply (19)
 - c) Zophar (20), Job's reply (21)
3. The Third Round (22-31)
 - a) Eliphaz (22), Job's reply (23-24)
 - b) Bildad (25), Job's reply (26-31)
4. Young Elihu Speaks (32-37)
 - a) Contradicting Job's friends, ch. 32
 - b) Contradicting Job himself, ch. 33
 - c) Proclaiming God's justice, goodness, and majesty, ch. 34-37

C. Job's Deliverance (38-42)

1. God humbles Job (38:1-42:6)
 - a) Through questions too great to answer (38:1-41:34)
 - b) Job acknowledges his sin in questioning God's wisdom, acknowledges his inability to understand (42:1-6)
2. God honors Job (42:7-17)
 - a) God rebukes Job's critics (42:7-10)
 - b) God restores Job's wealth (42:11-17)