

Lesson Four Job “Suffering”

Summary

Introduction to Job

Exposition of Job

Introduction

Job is the first of the *Kethuvim* in the Hebrew Bible, the “Writings.” This shows that the Hebrews thought of Job as teaching wisdom for the problems in life.

In the English Bible, Job is the first of the five books of poetry. Job is the story of how God allows believers to have the faith tested through undeserved suffering, as evidence of their spiritual growth. The book opens with a description of Job’s character as a mature believer, and Satan’s request to test Job through intense suffering.

- 1A **Name:** The title is based on the central character. The Heb. **יֹבֵד**, *’iyyov* The English form derives from the Gr. in the LXX, **Ιωβ**, *Iob*. A well attested W. Semitic name in various ancient documents. The original name was *Ayyab*, which may mean “Where is my father” or “no father.” Or it may be derived from the Akk. *Ayyabu*, meaning “the one attacked.”
- 2A **Author:** unknown; possibly an eyewitness.

Six views:

Job	(Barnes, Fawcett, Löwth)
Elihu	(Lightfoot)
Moses	(Talmud, Bullinger, Archer)
Solomon	(Luther, Delitzch, E. J. Young) based on his interest in wisdom lit. and parallels with Job 28, Prov. 8
Hezekiah	(Zückler, in Lange’s <i>Commentary on the Bible</i>),
Ezra	(Liberal scholarship)

Probably Job or Elihu, Elihu quotes Job verbatim in his statements.

Probably not Moses since Moses frequently uses the name *Yhwh*.

The language in Job seems more influenced by Arabic and Arabic customs.

- 3A **Date:** Unknown. Probably written not long after the events (see below) due to the exact nature of the conversations recorded.
- 4A **Theme:** Job addresses two questions:

1B The issue of _____ or _____ suffering.

This is the universal question of human suffering and the existence of evil. The book falls into the category of books called a “theodicy” which is a defense of the justice and omnipotence of God in light of the existence of evil. In these chapters the writer plumbs the depths of human anguish, misery and suffering, addressing the question: “Why did this happen to me?” “Why do bad things happen to good people?”

2B The question of why people _____ and _____ God.

This is the question Satan poses to God: Do people serve God simply for the real or perceived blessings they receive?

5A Five aspects of the book are puzzling to us when we ask: Why is this suffering happening to me?

1B The answer is not the one we would expect. We normally think:

Sin ⇨ Suffering

Goodness ⇨ Prosperity

But this is neither reality nor biblical.

2B The book shows God as being surprisingly silent for a lengthy period of time.

*God is often silent so to force us to think through the issues of life on the basis of what is revealed in the Bible and what we know in our souls.

3B It seems strange that God would allow one of his most devoted followers to suffer so intensely.

4B No one knows who wrote it, when they wrote it or where it occurred.

5B There seems to be a discrepancy between the Job of the first two chapters who will not curse God and die, the Job of the complaints later in the book, and his friends who seem to say all the right things but are wrong.

6A **Canonicity:** The book has a definite non-Israelite flavor, yet has always been included in the Heb. canon and never questioned.

7A **When did Job live?**

1B Dates range from 2100 BC to 600 BC. Many scholars, including W. F. Albright, place this during the time of the Patriarchs. Eusebius locates this during the time of Isaac.

- 1C Job lives a _____, about 210 years (Job 42:16). This fits with the life spans of the patriarchs: Abraham (175), Isaac (180), Jacob (147), Joseph (110). Jewish tradition said Job lived twice as long afterward as had before, thus making him 70 when these things occurred.
- 2C There is no reference to _____.
- 3C There is no reference to _____.
- 4C There is a frequent use of _____ as a name for God. This is used 31x in Job, and 9x in the Pentateuch, and 17x elsewhere.
- 5C There is an infrequent use of _____ as a name for God.
- 6C Job served as the _____ of his family, as did Noah (Gen. 8:20–22) and Abraham (Gen. 12:7–9, 22:1–14).
- 7C Job’s wealth is measured in _____ and _____, cf., Abraham (Gen. 12:16), Jacob (Gen. 32:5). Later wealth was reckoned differently.
- 8C The _____ and _____ are described as nomads, not city dwellers which they are in later centuries. The Sabaeans came from south Arabia.
- 9C Literary works similar to Job were written in Mesopotamia about this same time.
- 6A **The purpose**
- 1B To address the question of how a _____ and _____ God can allow his creatures to suffer.
- 2B The answer is set against the backdrop of Satan’s rebellion against God.
- 3B The book shows that the answers provided by Job’s three friends are _____, _____, and _____.
- 4B The book shows that the existence of evil is neither _____ nor _____.
- 7A The structure. Job has mixture of prose and poetry, and of monologue and dialogue.¹ Job combines at least three literary genres: lawsuit,⁴ lament,⁵ and controversy dialogue.⁶ (Constable, Job Introduction)

¹Walvoord, John F., Roy B. Zuck, and Dallas Theological Seminary. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983—c1985), 1:715. 4 . See Sylvia H. Scholnick, “Lawsuit Drama in the Book of Job” (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1975).

8A Key terms:

Theodicy: a defense of the justice and omnipotence of God in relationship to the existence of evil.

9A Interpretive Key: The key to understanding Job is God's assessment in Job 1:8 "a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil." Job's three friends plus Elihu assume Job is somehow at fault and that suffering is necessarily the result of sin or unrighteousness in Job's life. At the conclusion of Job, the advice of the friends is condemned by God.

1B Many lessons could be learned in these dialogues related to counseling others.

2B Because Job's friends' advice is built on erroneous assumptions, it is bad advice. Though their statements include many true statements about God, man and nature, these statements are based on bad theology so their advice is wrong.

3B Job's error is that he finally succumbs to arrogance and self absorption leading to anger and resentment toward God.

4B At the core of the answer to suffering is the Creator/creature distinction. As the Creator-God's knowledge is infinite and knows all the minutiae which man can never comprehend. As God multi-tasks in history finite human intellects can only superficially comprehend what God is producing through the sin and suffering of human history.

EXPOSITION OF JOB

1A Prologue (chaps. 1–2)

1B No one knows where Uz was. Uz, as a name for a person is mentioned in Gen 10:23 as a grandson of Shem; another Uz is mentioned in Gen. 36:28 as a grandson of Esau, and one who is a nephew of Abraham in Gen. 22:20–21. In either case the name could be associated with the territory of the descendants somewhere north of Canaan or south of Canaan.

1C Northern Arabia is best:

1 Arabic words, customs, syntax, rhetoric in the book.

5. See Claus Westermann, *The Structure of the Book of Job: A Form—Critical Analysis*, pp. 1–15.
6. See James L. Crenshaw, "Wisdom," in *Old Testament Form Criticism*, pp. 228, 254. Gregory W. Parsons, "Literary Features of the Book of Job," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138:551 (July—September 1981):213—29, argued for all three.
chaps. chapters

- 2 The LXX has an appendix referring to Uz as land of Asitai which Ptolemy places in N. Arabia.
 3. Job is said to be the greatest of the sons of the East: N. Arabia is East of Canaan.
 - 4 Jer. 25:20 Edom is separate from Uz.
 5. Metals in Job 28 found in Arabia
 6. Horse in Job 39:19–24 fits the description of a warhorse given in Arabian poetry.
- 2B. Job's character, family, and fortune (1:1–5) cf., 1:8, 2:3 My servant unique spiritually.
- 1C Job is blameless, upright, fears God, shuns evil. This is stated 3x for emphasis. ((1:1, 1:8; 2:3)
- “blameless” *tam* “perfect, integrity, complete, mature”
- “upright” *yashar* “straight, upright”, someone who lives according to a legally binding agreement, a man who does not deviate from divine standards.
- “fears God” a man who is submissive to God's authority.
- “shuns evil” someone who rejects paganism, idolatry, and anything opposed to God's standards.
- 2C His Prosperity 1: 2–3
- 1D His family: Job has _____ sons and _____ daughters
- 2D His fortune: 7,000 sheep 3,000 camels 500 yoke of oxen, 500 donkeys, and numerous employees, servants, ranch and farm workers. The wealthiest man of the ancient world.
- 3C His Patriarchal priesthood 1:4–5
- 1D His children gathered to celebrate one another's birthdays, “his day.”
- 2D Job would sanctify them and offer burnt offerings for them.
- 2B God allowed Job to be tested in two ways (1:6–2:10)

1C Test #1: (1:6–22)

1D Accusation by Satan 1: 6–12) Scene One => Heaven

1E All the angels, “sons of God,” including fallen and holy angels, gather for a regular assembly. 1:6

2E God points out Job to Satan. 1:7

3E Satan challenges Job's spiritual motivation: “he serves God only because God blesses him financially. This is a subtle attack on the character of God. 1:8–11

4E God gives Satan permission to test Job except for his personal health. 1:12

COMMENTS

1. We learn that human suffering is part of the broader context of Satan's rebellion against God. One purpose for testing and adversity in the believer's life is to serve as a witness or testimony against Satan.

2. Satan's attacks on believers are limited by divine Sovereignty.

3. Satan's questions Job's motivation to serve God.

4E Job loses his family and fortune.

The Sabeans raid and steal his donkeys and kill their caretakers.

Lightning from heaven burns up the sheep and the shepherds are all killed.

The Chileans attack and steal the camels, murder all the servants.

A great wind destroys the house and it falls on his children who are all killed.

5E Job's responds with grief and praise to God and _____
_____. 1:21–22.

COMMENT

1. Three times in the chapter Job is declared to not be at fault regarding the suffering that befalls him.
 2. Job demonstrates that He serves God because He is God, not for self serving reasons.
- 2C Job's second test focuses on his health. (2:1–10)
- 1D Accusation by Satan (2: 1–6)
- 2D Assault by Satan (2: 7–10)
- Sores/boils Ex. 9: 8–11 Dt. 28:27
- Suggestions: 1. Smallpox 2. Elephantiasis 3. Leprosy 4. Chronic Exema, 5. penphigus foliaceus skin infection which fits many of the symptoms best.
- 3D Job must live outside of the city.
- 4D Job's wife plays into Satan's hand. "Foolish" (*nabal*) means she is operating apart from any biblical truth.
- 3C Job's comforters (2:11–13)
- 1D Their presence was a source of comfort.
- 2D The custom was for the bereaved to speak first.
- 2A Dialogues attempting to understand God's purpose for suffering (3:1–42:6) cf., Gen. 40:10; 1 Samuel 31:13
- 1B Job first wishes he were dead (chap. 3)
- 1C Job's desire that he had not been born (3:1–10)
- 2C Job then wishes that he had died at birth (3:11–19)
- Job asks: Why? This is a normal reaction when someone is going through intellectual, emotional, and spiritual suffering.
- 3C Job wishes that he could die right then (3:20–26)
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2B The first cycle of dialogues between Job and his friends (chaps. 4–14)

1 All three repeated the view that sin → suffering. All sinners are punished. Job is punished: therefore Job is a sinner.

2 Each of Job's speeches is longer than the one before it.

3 Each time a friend speaks it is longer than his first.

4 Each round is progressively more vitriolic against Job.

5 Each speaker bases his speech on a different authority:

Eliphaz: basis his argument on experience 4:8 5: 3 15:17

Bildad: basis his argument on tradition 8:8 18:5

Zophar: basis his argument on his own dogmatism 11:5 20:23

6 Each speaker stresses different aspects of God's character:

Eliphaz: God is a God of distance and holiness. 4:17–19 22:15

Bildad: God is just, majestic.

Zophar: God is inscrutable.

*Each is partially correct in their principles

*Each is wrong in their application.

Correct principles mixed with wrong foundations produce faulty advice and wrong application.

Elihu sees God as a God of Justice, the Creator, and Job's suffering is protective.

7 They repeated each other.

1C Eliphaz's first speech (chaps. 4–5)

1D His rebuke of Job 4: 1–6

2D His reasoning about suffering 4: 7–11

3D His report of a vision 4:12–21

- 4D His recommendation to Job 5: 1–17
- 5D His reminder of God’s blessings 5:18–27
- 2C Job’s first reply to Eliphaz (chaps. 6–7): God is against me, but he did not really believe this explanation.**
 - 1D His defense of his complaining 6: 1–7
 - 2D His despair in his suffering 6:8–13
 - 3D His disappointment in his friends 6:14–23
 - 4D His plea to the three 6: 24–30
 - 5D His pattern of misery 7: 1–6
 - 6D His prayer to God 7:7–21
- 3C. Bildad’s first speech (chap. 8)
 - 1D The statement about God’s justice 8: 1–7
 - 2D The proof from history 8:8–10
 - 3D The paths of the ungodly 8: 11–19
 - 4D The possibility of blessing 8:20–22
- 4C Job’s first reply to Bildad (chaps. 9–10): I’ll present my case to God.
 - 1D God’s greatness: How can a man be righteous before God, 9:1–12
 - 2D God’s arbitrariness: He will not allow me to confront Him, 9: 13–24
 - 3D God’s unfairness: there is no mediator. 9:25–35
 - 4D God won’t stop punishing me, 10:1–7
 - 5D God won’t leave me alone, 10:8–17
 - 6D God won’t let me die, 10:18–22
- 5C Zophar’s first speech (chap. 11): Zophar is infuriated, rude, hostile to Job and emphasizes the inscrutability of God’s wisdom.

- 1D His rebuke of Job's words: Job is verbose, self justifying, mocking God, 11: 1-6
- 2D His praise of God's wisdom, 11: 7-12
- 3D His plea for Job's repentance, 11: 13:20
- 6C Job's first reply to Zophar (chaps. 12-14)
 - 1D Job repudiated his friends: God is arbitrary. (12:1: 13:19)
 - 1E You're not any better than me (12: 1-6)
 - 2E You've not told me anything new (12: 7-12)
 - 3E I know what God is like (13:1-12)
 - 4E You're incompetent to counsel (13:1-12)
 - 5E I'll prepare my case (13:13-19)

COMMENTS

- 1. Was Job right in affirming his innocence? Yes 16:17, 23: 11-12
- 2. Was Job right in what he said about God in 10: 2-3; 19: 6; 27:2?
 - 6E Job presented his case to God and asks WHY? (13: 20-28)
 - 7E Job despaired of hope (chapter 14)
 - 1F Because of the brevity of life 14:1-6
 - 2F Because of the finality of death 14:7-17
 - 3F Because of the absence of hope 14:18-22
- 3B The second cycle of speeches: the wicked are distressed (chaps. 15-21)
 - 1C Eliphaz's second speech (chap. 15)
 - 1D A rebuke of Job's attitude: You are irreverent. 15:1-16

- 2D A reminder of the wicked's fate: they are being punished for being arrogant toward God. 15:17–35
- 2C Job's second reply to Eliphaz: You are miserable comforters (chaps. 16–17)
- 1D Job's disgust with his friends (16: 1–5)
- 2D Job's distress at the hand of God (16: 6–17)
- 16:17 "Although no violence is in my hands, and my prayer is simple.
- 3D Job's desire for someone to plead his case in heaven (16:18–17:2)
- 4D Job Prays and rejects the counsel of his friends (17:3–5)
- 5D Job's despair before his friends and in the face of death (17: 6–16)
- 3C Bildad's second speech (chap. 18: 21 vv)
- 1D Bildad's denunciation of Job: You are ignorant. (18:1–4)
- 2D Bildad's description of the downfall of the wicked: they are weakened, ensnared, frightened, and forgotten because they do not know God. (18:5–21)
- 4C Job's second reply to Bildad (chap. 19:29 vv)
- 1D You accuse me of being wrong, but God is the one who wronged me (19: 1–6)
- 2D God has kindled His wrath against me (19:7–12)
- 3D God has caused me to be offensive to my wife, relatives, friends, and servants (19:13–22)
- 4D Certainty of seeing God (19:23–29)
- 1E Redeemer (*go'el*): a kinsman redeemer, a person who takes action on behalf of a relative who can't act for himself.
- 2E Job never talks about his own death after this.
- 5C Zophar's second speech (chap. 20) his anger (emotion) affects his theology of God.
- 1D The aroused anger of Zophar (20: 1–3)

- 2D The brief prosperity of the wicked (20: 4–11)
- 3D The certain punishment of sin (20: 12–19)
- 4D The quick anger of God on the wealthy wicked (20: 20–29)

Summary: The wicked perish suddenly and lose their wealth and prosperity because they deserve this from God.

6C Job's second reply to Zophar (chap. 21)

- 1D Job's call for silence (21: 1–6)
- 2D Job's claim that the wicked live in prosperity (21:7–16)
- 1E Job rejects Zophar's speech (21:7)

Job claims that if Zophar was right, then the wicked would not live or prosper for as long as they do.

Implication: Job is not wicked because he is still alive.

- 3D Job's claim that the wicked die for their own sins, whether prosperous or poor (21:17–26)
- 4D Job's claim that the wicked die in prosperity (21: 27–34)

Summary: Your comfort is empty and your answers are wrong. (21:34)

4B The third cycle of dialogues (chaps. 22–31) Conversations at the garbage dump

The argument of the friends: God is majestic, you are wicked.

1C Eliphaz's third speech (chap. 22)

- 1D Eliphaz asserted Job is wicked, and that his righteousness means nothing to God. (22:1–5)
- 2D Eliphaz accused Job of not having a social consciousness, of not doing good or caring for the less fortunate (22:6–11)

These "sins" are just made up by Eliphaz.
- 3D Eliphaz accused Job of spiritual defiance (22:12–20)
- 4D Eliphaz appealed to Job to repent so God would bless him. (22:21–30)

- 2C Job's third reply to Eliphaz: I am not wicked (chaps. 23–24)
- Job correctly reaffirms that he is not wicked.
- 1D Job's longing (23:1–7)
- “He would listen if I could find Him”
- 2D Job's innocence (23:8–12)
- “I can't find Him, He's evasive”
- “God Who makes my heart faint”
- 3D Job's frustration (23:13–24:17)
- He couldn't find God. But he concludes that God is great (23:13) and Job is terrified of Him (23:15).
- To Job God is distant know and he claims God is ignoring his adversity.
- 4D Job's confidence (24:18–25)
- 1E Questions injustice in the world.
- 2E Why do the wicked oppress the poor.
- 3C Bildad's third speech (chap. 25)
- 1D God is just and majestic, and man is small and impure, therefore there is no hope for Job to be just and clean.
- 4C Job's third reply to Bildad (chaps. 26–31)
- 1D Job's rejects Bildad's wisdom (chapters 26:27)
- 1E Job says that his wisdom is no good
- 2E Fate of the wicked
- 1F Lose hope vs. 8
- 2F Lose kids vs. 14
- 3F Lose wealth vs. 16,17

- 2D Job's discourse on God's wisdom (chapter 28)
- 3D Job's desire for his past glory (chapter 29)
- 4D Job's dirge on his present misery (chapter 30)
- 5D Job's declaration of his innocence (chapter 31)
 - 1E A closing soliloquy (cf. ch. 3)
 - In ch 31 his desire was for justice
 - In ch 3 his desire was for death
 - 2E Pushes God to move in one direction or the other
- 5B Elihu's four speeches (chaps. 32–37)
 - 1C Introduction to Elihu (32:1–5) Elihu is tense.

Elihu's Differences
 - Personal: mentions Job by name
 - Elihu had a heart
 - The three vindicate themselves, but Elihu vindicates God
 - Puts himself as an arbitrator
 - Turns out to be a one true friend
 - Irony: he was silent & listened while they probably accused when they kept silent.
 - Elihu: suffering is to protect
 - Accused Job of arrogance
 - 2C Elihu's first speech (chaps. 32–33)
 - 1D Elihu's self-introduction (32:6: 33:33)
 - 1E His respect for the three (32: 6–10)
 - 2E His evaluation of the three (32: 11–14)
 - 3E His desire to address the three (32: 15–22)
 - 2D Elihu's first answer to Job (chapter 33)
 - 1E Answers Job's charge (in 33:10) that God is his enemy and doesn't hear him.

- 2E Request to Job (33:1–7)
- 3E Quotation of Job (33: 8–13)
- 4E Refutation of Job (33: 14–28)
 - 1F God speaks through dreams (33:14–18)
 - 2F God speaks through sickness (33: 19–28)
- 5E Purpose of God: to protect and instruct (33: 29–30)
- 6E Plea to Job: to continue to listen (33: 31–33)
 - 1F Why doesn't God respond? (chapter 33)
 - 2F Why doesn't God relieve? (chapter 34)
 - 3F Why doesn't God remove? (chapter 35–37)
- 3C Elihu's second speech (chap. 34)
 - 1D To the three (34: 1–15)
 - 2D To Job (34:16–37)

Answers Job's charge (in 34: 5–6) that God is unjust in punishing Job when he hasn't sinned.
 - 3D Quotation of Job (34: 1–9)
 - 4D Refutation of Job (34:10–12)
 - 1E He is just in His judgments (34:10–12)
 - 2E He is in control of life (34: 13–15)
 - 3E He is impartial (34:16–20)
 - 4E He is knowledgeable (34: 21–25a)
 - 5E He judges the wicked (34: 25b: 30)
 - 6E He is not responsible to man (34:31–37)
- 4C Elihu's third speech (chap. 35)

- 1D Answers Job's charge (in 34:9 and 35:3) that it doesn't pay to serve God.
- 2D Quotation of Job (35:1-3)
- 3D Refutation of Job (35: 4-16)
 - 1E God doesn't determine His actions by what men do (35: 4-8)
 - 2E God does not listen to the pleas of evil men (35:9-16)
- 5C Elihu's fourth speech (chaps. 36-37) To Job (except 37:1-13, which is to all four)
 - 1D God's justice and power in His dealings with man (36:1-25)
 - 2D God's sovereignty and benevolence in His dealings with nature (36: 26: 37:24)
 - 1E Proposes:
 - 1F Presents a bigger picture of God
 - 2F Defended God justice
 - 3F Presented a different view of suffering
 - 4F Speaking of the coming storm
- 6B God's two speeches and Job's replies (38:1-42:6) (God's confrontation)
 - 1C God's first speech (38:1-40:2): speaks out of a whirlwind
 - 1D God challenged Job (38: 1-3): doesn't explain or answer questions
 - 2D God questioned Job regarding two areas of creation (38:4: 39:30): asks more than 70 questions
 - 1E Physical world (38: 4-38)
 - 1F Foundations of the earth (4: 7) Where were you?
 - 2F Bounds of the oceans (8-11) Who enclosed the oceans?
 - 3F Dawn & sunlight (12: 15)

- 4F Depths of ocean (16, 17)
- 5F Width of the earth (18)
- 6F Light & dark (19: 21)
- 7F Atmosphere elements (22: 30)
 - 1G snow & hail
 - 2G rain & dew (27,28)
 - 3G ice, frost (29,30)
- 8F Stars (21, 32)
- 9F Sun & moon (33)
- 10F Clouds & lightning (34: 38)

2E Animal World (38:39: 39:30)

- 1F the lion (38,40)
- 2F the raven (38: 41)
- 3F goats (39: 1-4)
- 4F deer (39: 1-4)
- 5F wild donkey (39: 5-8)
- 6F wild ox (9: 12)
- 7F ostrich (13 -18)
- 8F horse (19: 25)
- 9F hawk (26)
- 10F eagle (27-30)

3D God challenged Job to reply (40: 1-2)

2C Job's first reply to God (40:3-5): humility. No repentance which leads to speech #2

- 3C God's second speech (40:6–41:34)
- 1D God _____ (40:6–14) (Why don't you take My role?)
- 2D God questions Job regarding two animals of creation (40:15: 41:34)
- 1E The behemoth (40:15–24): elephant, rhinoceros, water buffalo, hippopotamus or dinosaur?
- 2E The leviathan (chapter 41): crocodile or dinosaur?
- 4C Job's second reply to God (42:1–6) (repentance): repentance of an attitude of pride that God was unjust.

3A Epilogue (42:7–17)

- 1B God's condemning of Job's friends (42:7–9)
- 2B God's restoring of Job's prosperity and family (42:10–17)

CONCLUSION

FOUR KEY POINTS that Job teaches

- Recognize the inadequacy of our own wisdom
- We must live with mystery
- We must not demand that God explain His ways to us
- Therefore we must trust, submit and worship