

# OVERVIEW OF JOB

**Author & Date:** There is no clear indication of the time period in which the events of the book of Job took place. The most common view is that the book of Job occurred during the time of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). This view is primarily based upon the fact that the book reflects a patriarchal society and not nationalism that a later writing would likely include. Similarly, the reference to a man in the land of Uz gives an indication of God's working outside the nation of Israel – and most likely during the time of the patriarchs. Some have taken the position that the story is a fictional allegory similar to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and the events should not be taken historically. The historicity of the events however is attested in the NT reference in James 5:11 and the OT references in Ezekiel 14:14 & 20.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the book of Job is simply to answer the question, "Why do the righteous suffer?" The answer is found in the real life story of Job.

## Key/Noteworthy Passages:

- Job 1:5 So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings *according to* the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did regularly.
- Job 1:20-22 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship 21 and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." 22 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.
- Job 2:10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
- Job 9:32-33; 16:21 (cry for a mediator – answered in Jesus)
- Job 13:15-16 "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him...."
- Job 19:25-26 "...in my flesh I shall see God," (Resurrection Hope cf. Job 14:14)
- Job 27:3-4 As long as my breath *is* in me, And the breath of God in my nostrils, 4 My lips will not speak wickedness, Nor my tongue utter deceit.
- Job 31:1 I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze upon a virgin?
- Job 38 – 41 God speaks (38:2-3 "Who is this...Gird yourself like a man.."; 40:15 "Behemoth"; 41:1 "Leviathan")
- Job 42:8-9 "...My servant Job shall pray for you..."

## Broad Outline for Job

- I. Prologue (1:1-2:22)
  - A. Job's godly character (1:1-5)
  - B. Satan's Accusation and Job's First Test (loss of family and property (1:6-22)
  - C. Satan's Accusation and Job's Second Test (physical affliction (2:1-13)
- II. Dialogue with Job's Friends (3:1-31:40)
  - A. Job's Opening Cry
  - B. Round One (4:1-14:22)
  - C. Round Two (15:1-21:34)
  - D. Round Three (22:1-26:14)
- III. Concluding Arguments
  - A. Job's Final Discourse (27:1-31:40)
  - B. Elihu's Speeches (32:1-37:24)
- III. The Lord's Speeches and Job's Responses (38:1 – 42:6)
- IV. Epilogue (42:7-17)

## Food for Thought

1. Some have questioned the historicity of Job. How do Ezekiel 14:14-20 and James 5:11 help the believer respond to this position?

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2. How would you describe Job based upon 1:1-5? How does God describe Job (v. 8)? What does this tell us about how we should view Job throughout this book?
3. In Job 1 and 2 we have a rare glimpse into the heavenly throne. What do we learn about issues such as how God views things on the earth, Satan's power, and God's sovereignty?
4. Job suffered an extraordinary amount of tragedy in a short period of time. How would you characterize his responses to this adversity in 1:20-22 and 2:9-10?
5. The majority of the book of Job presents the "comfort" of Job's three friends. What did his friends do right in 2:11-13? (cf. 13:5) In the comforting, each of Job's friends presents their interpretation of Job's circumstances in turn – each of which is followed by Job's response. The order is the same each time. A professor of mine at Seminary (Dr. Todd Beall) memorably described the three friends as:
  - A. Eliphaz the eloquent – his speeches were more sensitive and longer than the others
  - B. Bildad the blunt – his speeches were more to the point and less politically correct
  - C. Zophar spoke "zingers" – he took Bildad's bluntness to a new level

In considering the arguments of the friends, we see that they have some things correct about God, yet they don't understand the heart of God and miss the heart of God. How would you summarize the answer of Job's friends to the question, "why do the righteous suffer"?

6. Consider the "key" passages above and others that you read in Job. What verses/thoughts stand out as examples of how we should respond in times of great trials? How do you think Job could maintain such an attitude?
7. How does Job understand God in chapter 9? What do you think of Job's response to his friends in 13:9?
8. Consider Job's hope in 19:25-26. What does this tell us about what Job believed concerning future things? (cf. 14:13-14)
9. List some of the principles Job chose to live by in chapter 31. What do you think of the principles this man followed in his life? How is this consistent with 1:5?
10. God answers Job in 38-41. How would you summarize God's answer to the question of the book? (As an aside, the description of the Behemoth and the Leviathan provide a picture that appears more representative of fossils we find in the museum than anything we find in our zoos.)
11. Why do you think God had Job pray for his friends in 42:8-9?
12. How did God bless Job in the latter portion of his life? (42:10-17)