

Exploring the Old Testament

...

Job

JOB'S WIFE

CURSE GOD AND DIE!

ELIPHAZ THE TEMANITE

BILDAD THE SHUHITE

ZOPHAR THE NA'AMATHITE

JOB

↑ BEST OF ANCIENT ↑
NE.



What is the Purpose of Wisdom Literature?

- Tell us more about King Jesus
- Helps us examine the Wisdom and Praise of God's King
- Helps us know how to rightly understand God and His purposes in the world.

Background

Historical Setting: Likely sometime during the time of Abraham in the Patriarchal (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc.) period, during the timespan of the book Genesis

Geographic Location: The land of Uz, known in the Bible as the land of Edom, modern day Southwest Jordan and Southern Israel

Background

Author & Date of Writing: Unknown, evidence suggests this author wrote the book sometime after the Exodus due to the use of the covenant name (“LORD,” meaning “YHWH”) used by the narrator to describe God (Job uses “el-o-ah” which is a general name for God)

Biblical Genre: Wisdom literature along with Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, & Song of Solomon

Background

Key Characters: God, Satan (“Sah-tan” = accuser, prosecutor, adversary), Job, Job’s three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, & Zophar, & Elihu

Introduction

Two Truths:

1. God is sovereign
2. God is good

Summary of Job

God is totally sovereign over every action in the entire universe to display His glory so that it can be known and enjoyed by His creation. As his creation, we often do not know his reasons or goals in what he does. Despite our lack of understanding, God offers, in His character, enough for us to trust in His care.

Outline of Job

1. Prologue
2. Job's Lament
3. Disputations
4. God's Response
5. Epilogue

Key Themes in Job

- God's sovereignty over Creation
- Unseen spiritual forces interacting with human history
- Failed friendship during suffering
- The problem of "unearned" suffering
- Justice and injustice
- Righteous suffering accomplished through faith in God

What can Job's experience of suffering and his story teach us about true wisdom?

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1. We often suffer

13 Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 14 and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 16 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

17 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” 18 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Job 1:13-19

And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

Job 1:21

Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.” But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Job 2:9-10

“Let the day perish on which I was born, and the night that said, ‘A man is conceived.’ Let that day be darkness! May God above not seek it, nor light shine upon it. Let gloom and deep darkness claim it. Let clouds dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.”

Job 3:3-5

“Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire?”

Job 3:11

Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light?

Job 3:16

Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in? 24 For my sighing comes instead of my bread, and my groanings are poured out like water. 25 For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me. 26 I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, but trouble comes.

Job 3:23-25

What can Job's experience of suffering and his story teach us about true wisdom?

1. We often suffer
2. We only sometimes understand
3. We can always trust

Cycle 1: Job 4-14 - Eliphaz, Bildad, & Zophar speak – Job responds

Cycle 2: Job 15-21 - Eliphaz, Bildad & Zophar speak – Job responds

Cycle 3: Job 22-31 - Eliphaz & Bildad speak – Job responds

Job 31:5-7 - “I have not lied or stolen...”

Job 31:9-12 - “I have not committed adultery...”

Job 31:13-15 - “I have treated my servants fairly...”

Job 31:16-23 - “I have cared for the needs of the poor...”

Job 31:24-28 - “I have not made an idol of material things...”

Job 31:29-37 - “I have loved my enemies...”

Job 31:38-40 - “I have not been greedy...”

I. Prologue: Introduction to Job and the cosmic struggle between God and Satan (1-2)

I. Prologue

Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.” And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Job 1:9-12

II. Job's lament (3:1-26)

“Let the day perish on which I was born, and the night that said, ‘A man is conceived.’ Let that day be darkness! May God above not seek it, nor light shine upon it. Let gloom and deep darkness claim it. Let clouds dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

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Job 3:23-25

III. The Cycle of Speeches (4:1-27:23)

Eliphaz:

“Remember: who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.”

Job 4:7-8

Job:

For the arrows of the Almighty are in me; my spirit drinks their poison; the terrors of God are arrayed against me.

Job 6:4

III. The Cycle of Speeches (4:1-27:23)

Job:

If it is a contest of strength, behold, he is mighty! If it is a matter of justice, who can summon him? Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless, he would prove me perverse.

Job 9:19-20

For he is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together.

Job 9:32

III. The Cycle of Speeches (4:1-27:23)

Zophar:

2 “Should a multitude of words go unanswered, and a man full of talk be judged right? 3 Should your babble silence men, and when you mock, shall no one shame you? 4 For you say, ‘My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in God's eyes.’ 5 But oh, that God would speak and open his lips to you, 6 and that he would tell you the secrets of wisdom! For he is manifold in understanding. Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves. 7 “Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? 8 It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? 9 Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.

Job 11:2-9

III. The Cycle of Speeches (4:1-27:23)

Job:

15 Though he slay me, I will hope in him; yet I will argue my ways to his face.

Job 13:15

14 If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come. 15 You would call, and I would answer you; you would long for the work of your hands. 16 For then you would number my steps; you would not keep watch over my sin; 17 my transgression would be sealed up in a bag, and you would cover over my iniquity.

Job 14:14-17

III. The Cycle of Speeches (4:1-27:23)

19 Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and he who testifies for me is on high.

Job 16:19

25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. 26 And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, 27 whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

Job 19:25-27

III. The Cycle of Speeches (4:1-27:23)

Job's Faith in God:

10 But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold. 11 My foot has held fast to his steps; I have kept his way and have not turned aside. 12 I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food. 13 But he is unchangeable, and who can turn him back? What he desires, that he does. 14 For he will complete what he appoints for me, and many such things are in his mind. 15 Therefore I am terrified at his presence; when I consider, I am in dread of him. 16 God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me; 17 yet I am not silenced because of the darkness, nor because thick darkness covers my face.

Job 23:10-17

III. The Cycle of Speeches (4:1-27:23)

1 And Job again took up his discourse, and said: 2 "As God lives, who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter, 3 as long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils, 4 my lips will not speak falsehood, and my tongue will not utter deceit. 5 Far be it from me to say that you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. 6 I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.

Job 27:1-6

IV. The Wisdom Poem (28:1-28)

- True wisdom is the fear of the Lord

23 "God understands the way to it, and he knows its place. 24 For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. 25 When he gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure, 26 when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder, 27 then he saw it and declared it; he established it, and searched it out. 28 And he said to man, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.'"

Job 28:23-28

V. Job's Last Speech (29:1-31:40)

3 Is not calamity for the unrighteous, and disaster for the workers of iniquity?

Job 31:3

V. Job's Last Speech (29:1-31:40)

Job 31:5-7 - "I have not lied or stolen..."

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V. Job's Last Speech (29:1-31:40)

Job's speech reveals he has been influenced by the same theology his friends have: God rewards the righteous and punishes the unrighteous – implying that his suffering is undeserved.

VI. Elihu's speeches (32:1-37:24)

Elihu prepares the way for God to speak...

6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said: "I am young in years, and you are aged; therefore I was timid and afraid to declare my opinion to you. 7 I said, 'Let days speak, and many years teach wisdom.' 8 But it is the spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand. 9 It is not the old who are wise, nor the aged who understand what is right. 10 Therefore I say, 'Listen to me; let me also declare my opinion.'

Job 32:6-10

VI. Elihu's speeches (32:1-37:24)

18 For I am full of words; the spirit within me constrains me. 19 Behold, my belly is like wine that has no vent; like new wineskins ready to burst. 20 I must speak, that I may find relief; I must open my lips and answer. 21 I will not show partiality to any man or use flattery toward any person. 22 For I do not know how to flatter, else my Maker would soon take me away.

Job 32:18-22

VI. Elihu's speeches (32:1-37:24)

19 "Man is also rebuked with pain on his bed and with continual strife in his bones, 20 so that his life loathes bread, and his appetite the choicest food. 21 His flesh is so wasted away that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen stick out. 22 His soul draws near the pit, and his life to those who bring death. 23 If there be for him an angel, a mediator, one of the thousand, to declare to man what is right for him, 24 and he is merciful to him, and says, 'Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom;

VI. Elihu's speeches (32:1-37:24)

25 let his flesh become fresh with youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor'; 26 then man prays to God, and he accepts him; he sees his face with a shout of joy, and he restores to man his righteousness. 27 He sings before men and says: 'I sinned and perverted what was right, and it was not repaid to me. 28 He has redeemed my soul from going down into the pit, and my life shall look upon the light.' 29 "Behold, God does all these things, twice, three times, with a man, 30 to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be lighted with the light of life.

Job 33:19-30

VI. Elihu's speeches (32:1-37:24)

15 He delivers the afflicted by their affliction and opens their ear by adversity.

Job 36:15

32 He covers his hands with the lightning and commands it to strike the mark.

Job 36:32

VII. God's Speech and Job's Response (38:1-42:6)

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: 2 "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me.

Job 38:1-3

VII. God's Speech and Job's Response (38:1-42:6)

1 And the LORD said to Job: 2 "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it."

Job 40:1-2

8 Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be in the right?

Job 40:8

VII. God's Speech and Job's Response (38:1-42:6)

God's sovereignty over the forces of nature and evil in the world:

- Behemoth (40:15-24)
- Leviathan (41:1-34)

VII. God's Speech and Job's Response (38:1-42:6)

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said: 2 "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.' 5 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; 6 therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Job 42:1-6

VIII. Epilogue: God restores Job & his friends (42:7-17)

Major Takeaway

Job paints a picture for us in which evil and sin in the world caused by Satan and humans is overcome not through warfare, but through righteous suffering that wholly trusts in God.

How to read Job the right and the wrong way...

Right: Understanding God's providence and sovereignty over his creation to produce humility. His nearness to those suffering by revealing Himself to us. How much more we can know God's goodness in suffering and triumph over evil than even Job did because of Jesus.

Wrong: I'm Job, I've suffered, so God MUST intend to restore everything to me tenfold