

JOB

Author: Uncertain

Date: Uncertain

Probably set in the time of the patriarchs, the book of Job tells the story of a man who loses everything—his wealth, his family, and his health—and wrestles with the question, WHY? The book begins with a heavenly debate between God and Satan, moves through three cycles of earthly debates between Job and his friends, and concludes with a dramatic divine diagnosis of Job's problems. In the end, Job acknowledges the sovereignty of God in his life and receives back more than he had before his trials.

This is the first book in the section known as the Books of Poetry/Wisdom. Job has long been considered a literary masterpiece. The author is unknown, but ancient Jewish tradition ascribes the book to Moses.

The basic question of the book is, "Why do the righteous suffer if God is loving and all-powerful?" Suffering itself is not the central theme; rather the focus is on what Job can learn from his suffering—the sovereignty of God over all creation. Much of the discussion in this book concerns the relationship between human faithful obedience and divine blessing. Both Satan and Job's friends assume a direct correlation between the two. Satan argues that divine blessings illicit human obedience while Job's friends contend that obedience earns God's blessings and disobedience merits punishment. In contrast to these views, the book of Job teaches that some sufferers are saints, that God is always worthy of love and worship whether or not He bestows blessings upon us. It also teaches that God always has a purpose in permitting suffering, though one may never fully comprehend it.

Job cries out for a mediator (9:33; 25:4; 33:23) and acknowledges a redeemer (19:25-27). This book raises questions that are answered perfectly in Jesus Christ who identifies with our sufferings (Hebrews 4:15). Christ is the believer's Redeemer, Mediator, and Advocate.

Key verse: *"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (1:21). "For I know my Redeemer lives, and he shall stand at last on the earth" (19:28).*

OUTLINE

- I. THE PROLOGUE: THE TESTING OF JOB (Chapters 1-2)
- II. THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS FRIENDS (Chapters 3-31)
 - A. The First Round of Debates (Chapters 3-14)
 - B. The Second Round of Debates (Chapters 15-21)
 - C. The Third Round of Debates (Chapter 22-31)
- III. THE INTERVENTION OF ELIHU (Chapters 32-37)
- IV. THE REVELATION OF THE LORD (38:1—42:6)
 - A. The Lord's First Challenge to Job (38:1 – 40:2)
 - B. Job's Response (40:3-5)
 - C. The Lord's Second Challenge to Job (40:6 – 41:34)
 - D. Job's Humble Response (42:1-6)
- V. EPILOGUE: THE DELIVERANCE OF JOB (42:7—17)