

The Book of Job

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Name, Date, & Author

1. The name is taken from its chief character: Job. The actual author is unknown.
2. From a study of the events and customs most people believe it was written during the patriarchal age about the time of Abraham or earlier (wealth is reckoned in cattle and Job appears as his own priest, see 1:1-11).

Literary Characteristics

1. Job is arranged in our English Bibles as one of the Poetical books.
2. Chapters 1,2, and 42:7-16 are prose ("The ordinary language in speaking or writing").
3. The rest of Job is poetry ("writing that formulates on concentrated imaginative awareness of experience").

Outline:

Introduction and Job's Affliction (1-2)

Job's discussion with his three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (3-31)

The speeches of Elihu (32-37)

The response from God (38-41)

Job's restoration (42)

Purpose of the Book:

1. The majority of scholars believe Job's purpose is to teach us why the righteous suffer and how to respond to it.
2. I believe Job's purpose is to instruct us concerning the reason why man fears (i.e. worships and serves) God (cf.1:8.9).

Why The Righteous Suffer

1. For advancing the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:12-20).
2. For correcting God's children (Prov. 3:11-12; Heb.12:5-10).
3. For restraining sin (2 Cor. 12:7; 1 Pet.4:1-2).
4. As a consequence for sin (1 Cor. 11:29-30; 2 Sam. 12:9-14).
5. For growth in maturity and perseverance (Jam. 1:2-4).
6. To test and prove faithfulness (Jam.1:12; 1 Pet. 1:6-7).
7. To equip us for ministry to other sufferers (2 Cor. 1:3-5).
8. To teach us to live by God's Word (Deut. 8:3).
9. To direct us to seek after God (Heb.4:15-16; Luke 15:18)
10. To conform us to the sufferings of Christ (Phil. 3:8-11; Acts 7:54-58; John 15:19-21).
11. To more clearly display God's works and mercy (John 9: 2-3; Lam.2:22-23; 2Cor.4:8).
12. To exalt God's sovereignty and cultivate his worship (Rom.8:28).

Review of the Contents of Job

1. Chapters 1 - 2: Conference between God and Satan over Job's worship. Job's wife wants to abandon God-centered worship if suffering is required. Job seeks God regardless of his circumstances.
2. Chapters 3 - 31: Job's three friends believe Job is suffering because of his failure to trust God in some way. They did not understand the righteous could suffer and still be faithful to God. Job says, "Though he [God] slay me, I will hope in him" (13:15).
3. Chapters 32-37: Elihu denounces Job's attitude about suffering. Job does not respond.
4. Chapters 38-42: God speaks as to who he is and how he is to be loved, served, and adored. God does not give Job an answer to his suffering. Rather, he allows Job to enter into the presence of God (42:1-6). Since Job wanted to worship God, nothing could satisfy him more.
5. The book begins and ends with Job's worship of God being praised. Through all the suffering in between, Job holds on to a faithful habit of trusting God.

Personal Questions of Application

1. Why do I serve God?
2. Would I love him if he let me severely suffer for an extended time?
3. Would I call on him even in his apparent absence?
4. Do I cling to God's gifts or to him?
5. Even when I do not feel good, do I still want to gather with God's people for worship?
6. Do I ever live as though God has to buy my worship with rewards?
7. If I am stripped of everything in life that I consider good, will I still love God?
8. How much do I love God and why?
9. Where is Jesus in the book of Job?
10. Why would the book of Job be God's choice for the first book of the Bible?