

Job

"Patience and Power"

Background Information

Job's name is either from the Hebrew word for "persecution" or an Arabic word for "repentance."

There are many possible human authors, though Job himself is almost universally not believed to be the writer. Moses and Solomon are possible authors, along with several prophets and Ezra.

The book is one of the oldest in terms of when the events occur. Job's vast age, as well as the patriarchal themes, show it to be an ancient book.

Time Covered and Outline

Other than the final chapter, where we are told of Job seeing several generations of his family, the major portion of the book likely only covers a few months.

- I. Job's Suffering (chapters 1-2)
- II. Cycles of Debate (chapters 3-37)
 - 1. First cycle (3-14)
 - 2. Second cycle (15-21)
 - 3. Third cycle (22-26)
 - 4. Job's final defense (27-31)
 - 5. Elihu speaks (32-37)
- III. God delivers Job (chapters 38-42)

Major Themes

Faithfulness in the midst of suffering
God's sovereign nature
Satan's power (limited, but powerful)
Wisdom

Job's Reactions to God

When God finally speaks to Job, the reaction of the patriarch is remarkable.

1. After God speaks the first time (38:1-40:2), Job is simply silent and recognizes his ignorance.
2. After God speaks the second time (40:6-41:34), Job's reaction is total repentance.

When we hear God speak—through His Word—this should be our reaction, too!

Retribution Theory

The friends of Job may seem cruel, but they were simply holding to a commonly-held belief, called "retribution theory." This idea taught that a person was blessed (materially) if he/she was faithful, and was punished (materially) if unfaithful. Due to Job's amazing level of pain, their thinking was that he must have done some terrible sin, and simply will not admit it.

God's Character in Job

Deliverer (33:27-28)
Glorious (37:22)
Just (4:17; 8:3; 34:12)
Loving (7:17)
Powerful (5:9; 9:4; 9:10; 26:14)
Provident (1:21; 26:10)
Righteous (36:3)
Unsearchable (11:7; 37:23)
Wise (9:4; 11:11; 21:22)
Wrathful (9:13; 14:13; 21:17)

Jesus in Job

While there is no direct line to Christ in the book, the suffering of Job helps us understand more about human suffering, which Christ fully identifies with (Hebrews 4:15).
Job cries out for a go-between with God, which Christ is for His people.

Key Words in Job

Blameless (Hebrew *tam*); "to be complete." 1:1; 1:8; 2:3; 8:20; 9:20-22
Affliction (Hebrew *oni*); "misery" or "poverty." 10:15; 30:16; 30:27; 36:8; 36:15; 36:21
Behold (Hebrew *ra'ah*). 19:27; 22:12; 40:11

Elsewhere in the World...

The Egyptian culture was flourishing, discovering papyrus and establishing the first libraries.

Elsewhere in Scripture...

Likely, the book of Job fits in the first few chapters of Genesis. Some put it before the flood, while others have it between the Tower of Babel and the life of Abraham. Either way, it might have been the first book of the Bible actually penned.