

Job – Overview

The oldest book in the bible Job was a real person, written by a single author. Some scholars have proposed dates between the 10th and 7th centuries (around the time of the exile). Others suggest around 1300 BCE.

There are several reasons why Job precedes Abraham:

1. There are not references to the Mosaic law.
2. Wealth is measured in cattle and property.
3. Jewish culture seems to be non-existent
4. There are not references to Jewish forefathers like Abraham.
5. Job's life span was similar to the patriarchs prior to Abrahams's era

They believe Job's original name was Johab. He married an Arabian woman and fathered Ennon. Job's father was Zerah who was from the lineage of Esau – five generations from Abraham. Some Jewish writings claim Job was a king in Egypt and that his three friends were Eliaphaz, a descendant of Esau and king of Teman, Bildad, king of the Shuhites, and Zophar, king of the Naamathites. (Several church Fathers as well as Philo, Aristeus, and Polyhistor attested to the accuracy of this genealogy.) While none of this is documented in the Bible, it is something to ponder.

Job includes names of God, constellations, metals, precious stones and much more which indicates that Job was well educated and had a vast knowledge of nature.

Job was written during the time of the patriarchs Abraham or maybe Isaac when people worshipped Idols. However, Job was righteous in God's eyes.

Job's fame was known throughout the East. Some scholars believe he was as king. He is at about 70 years old. He lived in the land of Uz. Job's father was Zerah who was from the lineage of Esau – five generations from Abraham.

Job was very wealthy as demonstrated by the amount of livestock he owned. He used his wealth to glorify God. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East. But Job was not sinless.

Satan and his angels have, at this time, access to the Third Heaven. Satan is an accuser, a slanderer. He prowls like a lion seeking someone to devour. One day he will be cast to the Earth.

Chapter 1: Job had 7 sons and 3 daughters. He was unhappy about the behavior of his children, afraid that his children will insult God. His sons had birthday parties and invited their sisters. After they feasted, he would sanctify them and offer burnt offerings for each of them regularly. (This is before the priests did the offerings in the tabernacle).

Satan has no confidence in human virtue and maintains that there is no one that could resist temptation. One day he and the sons of God came before the Lord who states that Job is the most

righteous man on earth. Satan implies that God's blessings are a bribe for Job's faithfulness and that if He stopped protecting Job, he would no longer have reverence for God. Satan's attack on Job is really an attack on the integrity of God.

God created Satan with limitations. He can only do what God will permit. God plainly states that he can not kill Job. However Satan pushes very limit as quickly as he could. And so the trial begins...

A messenger came to Job and said "The fire of God fell from Heaven," and burned up the sheep and the servants. This is probably lightening, which makes one wonder, can Satan control weather? Frightening thought but could explain a few things (my thoughts). Then Sabians, (descendants of Ham) attack the servants and take the oxen and donkeys. If that weren't enough, the Caldeans (descendants of Assure; Son of Shem) from Mesopotamia raided and took the camels and killed the servants. Camels were the most prized among the animals in that part of the world. Finally, when Job couldn't possibly take any more, the fourth servant came to give him the news that wind blew the house where Job's children were and then they died. (When Jesus rebuked the storm to cease, was He ordering Satan to cease and desist?) They were taken away when he had most need of them to comfort him under all his other losses.

In each case, one servant from each event survived to deliver the horrible news. He lost all his wealth and all his children at once. Job did not tear his hair, but deliberately shaved his head, tore his robe, fell to the ground and worshipped the Lord. He accepted that all he had belonged to God. I Corinthians 10:13 "God will not test you above that you are able to bear". Job proved Satan wrong.

Chapter 2

Well, that didn't work for Satan so he once again came to the Lord. He pushed forward with his malicious prosecution of Job. He challenged God to make a further trial of Job's integrity. Job may be able to endure losing his wealth and family, but he will value his own physical health over worship of the Lord. Satan afflicted Job with boils from his head to his toes. This was probably a staph (Elephantiasis) infection caused by bacteria. Symptoms seen with boils, carbuncles may also be associated with fever, chills, fatigue horrible nightmares, feelings of terror, etc. In certain cases, a doctor may need to cut into your skin to drain the pus. Once the fluid and pus drain from the boil or carbuncle, it will heal. That explains why Job used potsherd (broken pieces of pottery) to scrape himself. Obviously, Satan spared Job's wife. Satan convinced her to scourge him and get him to renounce God.

Job maintains his faithfulness to God so Satan attacks him with his friends, Elipaz the Temite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite. Some scholars suggest these were kings from nearby kingdoms. They also believe Job was a king. Either way, everyone respected Job, not just because he was wealthy and successful but also because he did so much for them. He always tried to do right and refused to do evil. Job's three friends must have had a good relationship with them since they each came from a long distance to mourn and comfort him. As they approach, they didn't recognize Job at first. He was sitting on top the garbage mound usually found adjacent to ancient cities, where rubbish and dried sewerage were burned. He was now an outcast, suffering miserably, despised and rejected by nearly everyone. No wonder his friends did not recognize him.

They expressed their grief as they wept, tore their robes, sprinkled dust over their heads and sat on the ground with him for 7 days and nights as was the funeral ritual in those days.

Job was tempted seven times. The first four were the satanic blows delivered by those four messengers, one after another, announcing the loss of all Job's possessions and the death of his children. The fifth temptation came in the form of that horrible disease; and this sixth one was that wicked proposal of his wife to "Renounce God, and die." The seventh temptation would come in the words of those who came to comfort him, but who, instead, were guilty of dishonoring him with their false admonitions to confess his wickedness and repent of his sins. His friends echoed false opinions by some very grave theological misconceptions. It was their view that, in this present life, righteous people were happy, healthy and prosperous, and that only the wicked were subjected to the type of disasters that had come to Job.

Everyone that God prepares goes through some trial. Example: Moses spent forty years in Midian before he was called to bring his people out of Egypt. David hid from Saul before he became king. Even Jesus was in the desert for 40 day and nights before he began preaching.

Chapter 3

How would you react if you lost all your possessions and all your children have died, all at the same time? Then after all that, you were stricken with a disease that made sores all over your body and you were in pain and agony. Job just sat silently with his friends before began his lamentation. Job curses the day he was born but never curses God.

Job speaks nine times in this section, Eliphaz and Bildad three times each, Zophar twice, Elihu once, and God once, his declaration ending the dialogue.

In this chapter, Job has 3 laments.

1. Why was I born?
2. If I was born, why didn't I die at birth?
3. Why can't I die now?

*Leviathan in verse 8: Isaiah also mentioned Leviathan which means crocodile and is sometimes referred to as Satan.

Job was depressed, tormented and just wanted relief from his pain and agony. He would welcome the peace from the grave.