

Job

Authorship: Unknown. Some believe Moses was the author, due to the early date and the vocabulary similar to the Pentateuch. But there is no solid evidence for this.

Date: The early date (2000 B.C.) is suggested by such things as: (1) The patriarchal lifestyle seen in the book; (2) the use of the ancient patriarchal name for God (*El Shaddai*, “the Almighty,” used 31 times); (3) the absence of any mention of Israelite history.

Location: Though the “land of Uz” (1:1) is clearly outside of Israel (perhaps northern Arabia), the style and vocabulary of the Hebrews writing, as well as the mention of the Jordan River (40:23), suggest that the book was written in Israel for an Israelite audience.

Overview and Background: Job is the first of five Old Testament books of poetry – first in both canonical and historical order. With a date as early as 2000 B.C. (the time of Abraham), Job may be the Bible’s oldest book. It tells the story of Job, a righteous and wealthy man whom God allowed Satan to tempt through great suffering. Though poetic in form, Job, like the other biblical books of poetry, is firmly rooted in history. Both Ezekiel (14:14, 20) and James (5:10-11) considered Job a historical person..

Purpose: (1) To address the question of why innocent people suffer; (2) To promote faith and trust in God, whose ways are higher than those of humankind (42:1-5, Isaiah 55:9).

Unique Feature:

- Because of its focus on human suffering, Job has a unique appeal to people of all religions.
- Job, like Zechariah, gives a brief glimpse of confrontation between heavenly beings.
- Job is the only biblical book to refer to what may have been dinosaurs (Hebrew “behemoth” and “Leviathan,” (40:15, 41,1).

Outline:

I. Prologue Narrative: Criticisms from Satan (1-2)

- A. Job introduced (1:1-5)
- B. Satan’s accusations (1:6-12)
- C. Job’s tragedy; his reaction (1:13-22)
- D. More accusations from Satan (2:1-6)
- E. More tragedy for Job; his wife and friends react (2:7-13)

II. Conversations with Friends: Cycle 1 (3-14)

- A. Job’s lament (3)
- B. Eliphaz speaks (4-5)
- C. Job’s response (6-7)
- D. Bildad speaks (8)
- E. Job’s response (9-10)
- F. Zophar speaks (11)
- G. Job’s response (12-14)

III. Conversations with Friends: Cycle 2 (15-21)

- A. Eliphaz speaks (15)
- B. Job’s response (16-17)
- C. Bildad speaks (18)
- D. Job’s response (19)
- E. Zophar speaks (20)
- F. Job’s response (21)

IV. Conversations with Friends: Cycles 3 (22-31)

- A. Eliphaz speaks (22)
- B. Job’s response (23-24)
- C. Bildad speaks (25)
- D. Job’s response (26-31)

V. Dissertation by Elihu (32-37)

- A. Elihu denounces Job and his friends (32-33)
- B. Elihu refutes Job’s complaints (34-35)
- C. Elihu defends God (36-37)

VI. Confrontation with God (38:1-42:6)

- A. God’s questions for Job (38:1-40:2)
- B. Job’s response (40:3-5)
- C. More questions for Job (40:6-41:34)
- D. Job’s response (42:1-6)

VII. Epilogue Narrative: Consideration from God (42:7-17)

- A. Spiritual restoration (42:7-9)
- B. Material restoration (42:10-17)

Key Verse

“Though he slay me, I will hope in him,
yet I will argue my ways to his face” (Job 15:13 ESV).

Sources:

Journeying with God: A Survey of the Old Testament, Purposeful Design Publications.
Wilmington, Harold L. *Wilmington’s Bible Handbook*, Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale, 1997.