

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

LESSON SERIES

Old Testament Survey - Unit IX
The Books of the Wise Men of Israel
The Book of Job

for

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
CHRISTIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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BOOKS BY THE WISE MEN OF ISRAEL**INTRODUCTION**

The whole Bible was produced by wise men, and it is pre-eminently a Book of Wisdom. What this section refers to, however is the presence of a class or profession of Wise Men, such as were to be found in every generation and in every land of the ancient East. The Wise Men had habits of thought and a literature somewhat peculiar to themselves.

The **Book of Job** differs in one important particular from the other books of Wisdom, in that it comes face to face with God and undertakes to justify the ways of God to man. And it does so by a non-Jewish and wholly unorthodox approach. In the book we meet with a group of Wise Men, all of them non-Jews, except perhaps the author, the wisest of them all.

The **Proverbs** deal with practical life, something new in Hebrew literature, and rather different from the books of the Prophets and their denunciation of sin, and the songs of praise and worship in the book of Psalms. However, the same conclusions are reached as are found in the prophets and psalms, although, there is no single hint of the Messianic Hope; and only one reference to Temple worship. There is little said even of a personal God.

The **Book of Ecclesiastes** is unique in that it is the most pessimistic book in the Bible, although no one would wish to be without it. It was written by one of the wisest men who ever lived, Solomon.

The **Song of Solomon** (Song of Songs) presents an idyllic love story of Solomon's earlier life and kingdom.

There were many other books by the wise men that were not thought to be worthy of a place in the Old Testament canon.

THE BOOK OF JOB

"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job . . ." Who was this man Job, and where was the land of Uz? In general, these questions are answered in the first two chapters of the book.

Abraham's brother Nahor's first-born son was named Uz (Genesis 22.21). According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Uz was the founder of the old city of Damascus. And from the evidence generally, it appears that the descendants of Uz occupied a portion of the Syrian and Arabian deserts east of Palestine, and between the latitudes of Damascus and Edom.

The home of Job, according to early tradition appears to have been in the somewhat fertile district east of Damascus and a large lake, famous later as the Sea of Galilee. This region was once thickly populated, as is indicated now by the ruins of some three hundred cities.

The writer, (1:3) states that "this man was the greatest of the people of the East," a term which applied to the tribes dwelling beyond the eastern borders of Palestine, in Syria and Arabia, and which later included also Chaldea, Media, and Persia.

The part of the East where Job lived is further indicated by two bands of robbers to which he was exposed (1:15; 17), the Sabeans and the Chaldeans. The Chaldeans we know, for they occupied the southern portion of Babylonia. And according to an Assyrian inscription, in the eight century B.C., the Sabeans were living in northwest Arabia, in the general area of the Chaldeans, the other robbers in the story.

The time or historical background of the story of Job is indicated by the ancient customs and patriarchal atmosphere. Job is a great prince, whose ten sons and daughters are married and set up in their separate tents and houses in the prince's realm. Like a true patriarch, Job reckons his wealth by the number of cattle of each kind he possesses. Also, he is his own priest (1:3-5). Further arguments which seem to place Job with the Old testament patriarchs are, the length of Job's life (42:16); and Eliphaz the Temanite was descended from Esau's eldest son (Genesis 36:10,11).

Evidently then, even though the author is unknown, it was written during the patriarchal period. Did Job know Jacob? it is possible. It was written before Exodus, it would seem, as there is no reference to the Mosaic law nor to any of the events recorded in the book of Exodus.

Many problems are raised and settled by this book.

1. To determine why the righteous suffer. (This is not the primary teaching.)
2. To refute the slander of Satan.
3. To reveal Job to himself.
4. To teach patience. Was Job patient?

5. PRIMARY PURPOSE: to teach REPENTANCE.

God selected the best man who ever lived (Christ is the exception) and showed that he needed to repent. In contrast, men choose the worst man who repents as an illustration. Manasseh, a most ungodly king, repented; Saul of Tarsus repented; St. Francis of Assisi, a debauched nobleman, repented. **God chose the best man and showed that he repented.** "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (42:5,6).

The book of Job has been called, "The greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature." The prose section (chapters 1,2) is a gigantic sweeping drama that encompasses earth and heaven. The poetry section of the book (2:11-42:6) is a contest in dialogue between Job and his three friends. Later in the book Bildad challenges Job.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF JOB

I. DRAMA (Prose), Chapters 1,2

- Scene 1 - Land of Uz. Job's Prosperity & Serenity, 1:1-5
- Scene 2 - Heaven. Satan's Slander of God & Job, 1:6-12
- Scene 3 - Land of Uz. Job's Loss of Children & Wealth, 1:13-22
- Scene 4 - Heaven. Cod & Satan, 2:1-6
- Scene 5 - Land of Uz. Job's loss of Health & Wife's sympathy, 2:7-10

II. DIALOGUE (Poetry), Chapters 2:11-42:6

- Scene 6 - City Dump
 - Job's Loss of Understanding of Friends, 2:11-13
 - Job vs. Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, 3:1-32:1
 - Job vs. Elihu, 32:2-37:24
- Scene 7 - Jehovah vs. Job, 38:1-42:6

III. EPILOGUE (Prose), Chapters 42:7-17

- Scene 8 - Land of Uz. Job's Blessings Doubled

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF JOB (Expanded Outline)

I. DRAMA, Chapters 1,2

- Scene 1 - Land of Uz, 1:1-5
 - The land of Uz was somewhere in the Middle East. Josephus gives a glimmer of light on the location of Uz. According to Genesis 22:21 the firstborn of Nahor, Abraham's brother, was Uz. He is the founder of the ancient city of Damascus. Job lived somewhere in the Syrian desert, where later the Lord sent Paul for postgraduate studies (Galatians 1:17).
 - "Perfect" (v.1) in the sense that he had offered sacrifices for his sons (v.5). "Feared God" means that he has a high and holy concept of God and as a result he hates evil. He is a wealthy man (v.3), and his 10 children live in the ease and luxury of the rich (v.4). Job's one concern is for his children (v.5).
- Scene 2 - Heaven, 1:6-1
 - God's created intelligences report to God as a matter of regular routine. They are responsible creatures. Satan, also, has access to heaven (v.6). Even he has to report. He reports that he had been up and down the earth, which is his domain (I Peter 5:8; I John 2:13-17; Matthew 4:8,9; II Corinthians 4:4).

- Satan obviously had been trying to get at Job (v.8). Satan found there was a hedge about Job. Satan cannot touch God's man without God's permission. Slandering both God and Job, he infers that God is not worthy to be served and loved for Himself alone but that He has to pay Job to love Him. Satan suggests that Job is a time server (vs.9-11). God grants Satan permission to get at Job's possessions, including his children (v.12).
- Scene 3 - **Back in the land of UZ** - 1:13-22
 - Job is stripped of all his earthly possessions, including his 10 children. Job's reaction to his tragic circumstances reveals that though his faith is shaken, it is destroyed. Job is no time server (vs.20-22)
- Scene 4 - **Heaven again**, 2:1-6
 - Created intelligences make their regular report again. Satan has to admit that he has not destroyed the integrity of Job, and he asks for permission to touch his body. He is confident that Job will then curse God to His face. God gives Satan permission to touch his body, with the provision that he may not take his life.
- Scene 5 - **Back to the land Uz**, 2:7-10
 - Satan smites Job with a frightful disease. Job's wife suggests that he curse God and commit suicide - which is the reason that Satan did not take Job's wife! Job still maintains his integrity.

II. DIALOGUE, Chapters 2:11-42:6

- Scene 6 - **Down to the dump of the city**
 - Three friends of Job come to visit and comfort him:
 - Eliphaz was a Temanite. Esau had a son named Teman (Genesis 36:10, 11), and thus Eliphaz was probably a descendent of Esau. As a leader of the three, he was a stately, dignified prince, more considerate, and with more finesse in his criticism of his friend.
 - Bildad was a Shuhite. Abraham had a son by the name of Shuah (Gen. 25:2), and it appears that the Arab tribe of Shuhites were descended from him. Bildad is a narrow traditionalist, who finds the wisdom of the past quite good enough for him.
 - Zophar was a Naamathite, a native of Naamah in northern Arabia. Oldest of the group, Zophar is a dogmatist who assumes a holier-than-thou attitude toward his friend Job.
 - For seven days Job's three friends mourn with him without saying a word. They are real friends, but they are in no position to comfort Job because:

- They do not understand God;
- They do not understand Job;
- They do not understand themselves.
- They merely shake their heads in a knowing manner during the 7 days of mourning.
- There are three rounds of speeches:
 - By Job, then Eliphaz, and Job answers him;
 - By Bildad, and Job answers him;
 - By Zophar, and Job answers him.
- **Chapter 3** - Job wishes that he had never been born or that he had died at birth. Job's tranquility in his days of prosperity was disturbed by the uncertainty of life. He had dreaded the very thing that had happened to him (v.25).
- **Chapter 4,5** - Eliphaz's first discourse. He is the voice of experience. He suspects that there is secret sin in Job's life (v.8). He recounts a terrifying and hair-raising vision (vs 12-16). The self-evident truth he received from the vision does not seem worthwhile for all the terror he endured (v.17). He gives some gems of wisdom as all the others do (5:6,7). He charges that Job is being corrected for some awful secret sin and he should not complain (vs. 17-22).
- **Chapters 6,7** - Job's answer. His condition is much worse than his friends realize, and he wishes God would destroy him, not correct him (v.9). He expected pity and comfort from his friends (v.14). He looked for help when he saw them coming, but it was only a mirage on the desert (v.15). Eliphaz misses the entire problem (v.25). Job is willing to confess any sin he has committed. Why doesn't God pardon his sin and restore him (ch. 7)?
- **Chapter 8** - Bildad's first discourse. Bildad is the voice of the past. He rests his argument on tradition (v.8). Man can know nothing of himself. He must depend on the past (vs.9,10). He is more candid and crude than Eliphaz. He considers Job a hypocrite (v.13). He does not know the ways of God (v.20), nor does he take into account the final outcome (v.21).
- **Chapters 9,10** - Job's answer to Bildad. Bildad has not met the problem of Job (v.2). Job makes no claim to perfection and knows that he cannot defend himself before God. He needs someone on his side to present his case (vs.19,20). Notice Job's heart-cry for Christ (vs.32,33). He recognizes his need for a mediator to stand between himself and God. (See 1 Sam.2:25). God knows that Job is not perfect, but He also knows that Job

is not wicked (10:6,7). Again Job resorts to his wish that he had not been born or had died at birth (10:19).

- **Chapter 11** - Zophar's first discourse. Zophar is the voice of legalism. He holds that God is bound by laws and never operates beyond the circumference of His own laws. He is probably the senior member of the group, and he speaks with a dogmatic finality that is even more candid and crude than that of Bildad. He accuses Job of covering his sin with words (v.2). He even accuses Job of lying (v.3). He assumes the pious position of being on the inside with God while Job is on the outside, unable to know what He does (vs.4-11). He urges Job to come clean, that he is hiding his sin (v.14). He predicts the complete judgment of Job unless he confesses his secret sin (v.20).
- **Chapters 12,13** - Job's answer. Job becomes bitter and sarcastic. He resents the superior claims of his friends and their accusations (vs. 1-3. Job would bypass his friends and appeal to God directly (13:3,4). He now accuses them of lying about his case and offering to him no help - "physicians of no value" (13:3,4). The faith of Job stands inviolate in spite of the onslaught of his friends who have now become strange to him (13:15).
- **Chapter 14** - A great elegy on death. Trouble is the common denominator of mankind (v.1). Job knows that death is inevitable and that he must depart from this world (v.10). However, Job has a hope beyond death and the grave (vs.14,15).
- **Chapter 15** - Eliphaz's second discourse. Eliphaz accuses Job of being his own accuser for his words are foolish (v.6). He defends himself and two other friends by reminding Job of their advantage of maturity over him. He states a great truth, but it is no more applicable to Job than to any other human being.
- **Chapter 16** - Job's answer Job labels his friends "miserable comforters" and accuses them of uttering self-evident truths which are not applicable to him. If their situations were reversed, Job could argue as they have (v.4.). Instead of helping Job, they fill him with wrinkles (v.8). He goes too far in defending himself (v.17). Job will stand by his record (v.19). He recognizes the problem of pleading his case before God (v.21).
- **Chapter 17** - Job's physical condition is tragic.
- **Chapter 18** - Bildad's second discourse. Bildad suggests that Job stop speaking and start listening (v.2). His second argument follows the same pattern as his first - since the past teaches that God judges sin, and since Job is being judged, he has committed some gross and secret sin. He digs up a few hoary epigrams from the past as proof.

- **Chapter 19** - Job's answer. Job recognizes that his friends are becoming strangers to him and that they are growing apart (v.3). Job is willing for his words to be made into a permanent record, and he is prepared to stand by them (vs.23,24). Job expresses his great faith. He is maintaining his integrity. He believes the Redeemer is coming and that he himself is numbered with the redeemed.
- **Chapter 20** - Zophar's second discourse. He introduces nothing new. He rests upon his seniority and resorts to the same legalism. He still holds to the theory that Job is a very wicked person because of the law that the wicked will be punished (vs.3-5).
- **Chapter 21** - Job's answer. Job is growing weary of their false charges. He appeals to a higher court (vs.1-4). He agrees that the wicked will be punished but insists this does not apply in his case.
- **Chapter 22** - Eliphaz's third discourse. He accuses Job of being self-righteous (v.3). His final word to Job is a great Gospel invitation, but it does not fit Job's case (v.21). He admonishes Job to return to God (vs.22-30).
- **Chapters 23,24** - Job's answer. Job claims that his condition is worse than his friends think it to be (v.2). He would like to present his case before God (vs.3-9). Job begins to sense that he is in the sieve of God's testing and that God will bring him through his trials (v.10). Job still maintains his integrity (v.12).
- **Chapter 25** - Bildad's third discourse. His answer is brief. He becomes rather thoughtful and begins to wonder why Job has not broken if he is guilty.
- **Chapters 26-31** - Job's answer. This is Job's longest speech. His friends have not helped him, but he expresses his faith in God, the Creator.
- **Chapter 28** - This is beautiful poem about God as Creator.
- **Chapter 29** - **The secret sin of Job is now revealed.** He is suffering from a bad case of perpendicular "1-itis." He is filled with pride. Even a good man needs to repent. The first person pronoun, in one of its forms, occurs 52 times in this chapter. What Job says is probably true, BUT HE IS SELF-RIGHTEOUS.
- **Chapter 30** - He compares his past with his present condition. His voice is no longer a song of praise but a sigh of pain (v.31).
- **Chapter 31** - He is not guilty of the common sensual sins.
- **Chapter 32** - Elihu's discourse. Elihu was a Buzite, that is, he belonged to the Arabian tribe of Buz (Genesis 22:21). He was a younger man, an outsider and perhaps a foreigner, who sat at the sidelines while Job and his

friends argued at length on the cause of Job's suffering. When the three friends have nothing more to say and have lost the contest, Elihu is angry because:

- He feels that Job justified himself and condemned God (v.2);
- He feels that the 3 friends of Job have failed to adequately answer Job.
- When Elihu finally speaks, he speaks longer than any of the 3 friends or Job - chapters 32-37.
 - **Chapter 33** - Elihu maintains that (1) God is right in all that He does; (2) God created man (v.4); (3) God is responsible to no one (v.13); (4) God speaks to man by dreams and visions [before He gave a written revelation] (vs.14,15); (5) God instructs men through discipline (vs.29,30). Notice that he suggests the reason for the Incarnation (vs.6,7).
 - **Chapter 34** - Elihu declares that God never does wickedly nor commits wrong acts (v.12).
 - **Chapter 35** - Elihu reproves Job for inferring that he is more righteous than God (v.2). God is teaching Job a lesson, and both Job and his friends missed this truth (vs.10-12).
 - **Chapter 36** - God is the great Teacher (v.22). It was said of Jesus, "Never *man* spake like this man."
 - Chapter 37 - Elihu infers that God is too far removed from man to communicate with Him (v's.22,23). However, it is not the greatness and majesty of God that has separated man from Him; it is man's sin that has caused the disruption (see Isa. 59:1,2).
- Scene 7 - **Jehovah verses Job, 38:1-42:6**
 - **Chapter 38** - Answer of the Almighty. God appears as a Voice of the Whirlwind, and speaks to Job (v.1). Both Job and Elihu had obscured truth with their theories and ideas (v.2). God's appeal to Job is on the basis of His role as Creator. Remember that this was before there was any written revelation (v.4). Compare Romans 1:19,20. This is a good introduction for every book on geology and origins. This response (v.7) predates the creation of man. Actually, man is a "Johnny-come-lately" in God's universe. What did Job know about the beauty of a snowflake? Hail is for judgment - Rev.8:7.
 - **Chapter 39** - God's wisdom, person and power are revealed in creation.
 - **Chapter 40** - God now demands Job to answer Him (vs.1,2). Job begins to see himself in the light of God's presence - he is vile. Job becomes

suddenly silent (vs.3-5). God speaking out of the whirlwind continues His appeal through creation.

- **Chapters 41** - God continues to quiz Job relative to His acts of creation.
- **Chapter 42** - Job answers God. He recognizes the sovereignty of God (v.2); he confesses his sin (v.3); he repents (vs.4-6). God accomplishes His purpose in the life of Job. **Job evidently realizes that the reason God has permitted him to suffer is TO BRING HIM TO REPENTANCE.** Job now sees himself in the light of the presence of God (see I John 1:6,7).

III. EPILOGUE, Chapters 42:7-17

- **Scene 8 - Land of UZ**
 - This section is the final scene in the drama. It is poetic justice. God rebukes the 3 friends of Job. Job becomes their priest to offer a sacrifice for them (vs.7-9). God gives Job twice as much of everything as he had at the beginning.

END of Lesson

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