

Abounding Grace Christian Church

What about the Book of Job? – Part 1

I. Introduction: Today, we're going to begin a study concerning a man named Job. There has been many misunderstandings about the book of Job which has brought about a lot of bad doctrine throughout the history of the church. The goal of this study is to convey a Biblically sound perspective concerning the overall message of this book, which will bring enlightenment and freedom into our lives. This will not be a chapter by chapter and verse by verse study but will be a general overview, especially in light of New Testament truth. It would be unwise, however, for anyone, including scholars, to say they understand everything about the book of Job. This study will be presenting an alternative way of looking at this book which will differ from what most have traditionally understood. I appreciate the following comment by Dr. David Clines:

“There are, however, two drawbacks to finding out what the Book of Job is all about. The first is that no one can say, and certainly not this commentator, what the Book of Job is all about, not even given unlimited space and time. For it is a part of the Book’s greatness that whenever we think we have it mastered, it surprises us with new angles that we realize we haven’t yet properly taken into consideration.”¹

II. Some things we know about the Book of Job.

A. The author of this book is unknown. Any proposed author is merely speculation. One of the theories, is that Moses is the author. Gleason Archer states:

“While it can scarcely be said that there is anything Mosaic about the style of Job, this theory would at least account for (1) its being possessed by the Hebrews, (2) its attaining a canonical status, (3) its patriarchal flavor and setting, and (4) the Aramaic flavor in some of the terminology and modes of expression exhibited by the text.”²

B. The date this book was written is also unknown. Many scholars consider Job to be the oldest book in terms of composition. Of course, the book of Genesis is the oldest in terms of some of the events that occurred.

C. The traditional theme of the book of Job is often referred to as “Why the Righteous Suffer.” The problem with this is that the book never actually answers that question. **I propose to you that the message of this book is redemption and deliverance from suffering!** The problem is many people don't get past the first two chapters.

1. Proposed basic Outline:

a. First part is about Destruction – **Chapters 1-2.**

b. Second part is about Debate – **Chapters 3-41.** **“The bulk of the book of Job is the theological argument between four people who did not know what they were talking about.” – Tony Cooke**

c. Third part is about Deliverance – **Chapter 42.**

D. The events that took place are believed to have taken place over a period of a few months and probably less than a year (**Job 7:3; 29:2**). When we consider that Job probably lived to be at least 200 years old, this period of trials and suffering was a small portion of his life. **Job 42:16** states that he lived 140 years after all these events. Seeing he had 10 grown children at the beginning (**1:2**), he could have easily been in his 40's or 50's when the suffering occurred.

III. Some things we know about Job.

A. Job was not an Israelite. The best indication is that he was an Edomite because he lived in the land of Uz (**Job 1:1**). In the Bible, Uz was always associated with the Edomites which were the descendants of Esau (**cf. Genesis 36 entire chapter taking note of verse 28; Jeremiah 25:20; Lamentations 4:21**). Andrew Hill and John Walton write:

“The individual named Job shows no indication of being an Israelite. The place names rather suggest that he was Edomite. Consequently there is no mention of the covenant or the law, and God is rarely identified as Yahweh (El Shaddai is more frequent). Since the book is a work of Wisdom, there is little information of a historical nature in its content to help us to date either its events or its composition. Traditionally the events of the book have been dated roughly to the patriarchal era because the lifestyle and longevity of Job are most similar to those found in Genesis. It is further pointed out that the

¹ David J.A. Clines, *Word Biblical Commentary: Job 1-20, Vol. 17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1989)

² Gleason Archer Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 3rd. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 505.

existence of roving bands of Sabaeans and Chaldeans (Job 1:15, 17) suits best the early second millennium bc.”³

- B. So, if Job lived during the Patriarchal era, this means he was a contemporary of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- C. As a descendant of Esau, therefore, Job was not part of the Abrahamic Covenant. Of the two sons of Isaac’s (Abraham’s son), Jacob became the heir instead of Esau. **NOTE: God always dealt with people according to covenants. We don’t know if there was some kind of personal covenant between God and Job. Though there are lessons we can learn from the book of Job, the New Covenant believer must keep in mind that our covenant with God is greater than any other covenant.**
- D. Job is only mentioned in two other passages of the Bible. He’s mentioned in **Ezekiel 14:14,20** where he is mentioned alongside two other great men of God, Noah and Daniel and it refers to their righteousness. The second time and the **ONLY** time Job is mentioned in the New Testament is in **James 5:10-11**.
- E. Job is said to have been **“blameless” (1:1)**. This word means; **“complete, normal, perfect, blameless. In the context of perfection, it conveys the idea of moral integrity or physical beauty.”⁴** Now this does not mean that Job never sinned or that he had no faults. The Bible says, **“...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)**. This means that overall, he attempted to do what he thought was right.
- F. Job is said to have been **“upright” (1:1)**. This word means; **“upright, straight, right. Can refer literally to being straight or metaphorically to having moral integrity.”⁵** The NET footnote states that this has to do with one’s relationship with others.⁶
- G. Job is said to have **“feared God” (1:1)**. Depending on the context, this word means; **“afraid, revere, awesome”⁷** Based upon the time that Job lived, he had a vague knowledge of God. He did not have an extremely specific knowledge of God. He didn’t have a Bible. His understanding of God must have come through tradition handed down, creation and, perhaps his own conscience.
- H. Job is said to have **“shunned evil” (1:1)**. This word means; **“turn aside, out of one’s course, from following”⁸**
- I. God called Job His servant **(1:8)**.
- J. God said there was none like him in all the earth **(1:8)**.
- K. Job was a very wealthy man **(1:3)**.
1. 7000 sheep. (Today one live sheep costs from \$100 to \$500.) 7000 sheep at \$300 each comes out to \$2,100,000.
 2. 3000 camels. (Today one live camel costs from \$10,500 to \$15,500) 3000 camels at \$12,000 each comes out to be \$36,000,000.
 3. 500 yoke of oxen. (Today one live ox costs from \$600 to \$1400) 1000 oxen at \$1000 each is \$1,000,000.
 4. 500 female donkeys. (Today one live female donkey costs \$700 to \$1900). 500 donkeys at \$900 each is \$450,000.
This comes out to \$39,550,000 worth of livestock in today’s money! This would require thousands of acres of grazing land. After Job’s trial, he was blessed with twice as much of everything he had lost! **(Job 42:10)**.
 5. A very large household. This refers to; **“service of household servants as a body.”⁹** One estimate is that Job would require about 1000 servants to run his operation.

³ Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 404.

⁴ Adriani Milli Rodrigues, “Perfection,” in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

⁵ Garwood P. Anderson, “Righteousness,” in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

⁶ Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible* (Biblical Studies Press, 2005).

⁷ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries : Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998).

⁸ Richard Whitaker et al., *The Abridged Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament: From A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament by Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles Briggs, Based on the Lexicon of Wilhelm Gesenius* (Boston; New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1906).

⁹ Ibid.