

Job

The Author and Dating

The book itself doesn't identify its penman. A search for other evidence concerning the author's name provides no conclusion. "The name of the author of Job is lost forever. Rarely has history left such a literary genius unnamed and unknown as to his circumstances or motive for composing such a magnificent work."¹ Others conservative writers concur with this assessment including Walvoord,² Archer,³ Merrill,⁴ Wilmington,⁵ and Benware.⁶ The Babylonian Talmud indicates that Moses wrote Job. *Baba Bathra* 14b records "Moses wrote his own book and the portion of Balaam and Job." However, again, there is no evidence within the book itself that Moses penned Job. Therefore, most conclude an unknown author.

Concerning the date of the composition, the evidence leads to another inconclusive answer. For example the mention of iron tools and weapons (19:24; 20:24; 40:18) point to an Iron Age period sometime after 1200 B.C.⁷ However, no mention is made of the Patriarchs or even the Torah.⁸ Neither is there any record of the "Land of Uz."⁹ The inconclusive evidence concerning the authorship and dating of Job must be tempered with humility, something ironically taught by the book itself.

The Recipients

Given the difficulty in authorship and dating the identification of a specific recipient is near impossible. Given the book's national origin and topic it is possible that the book was written to encourage Hebrew believers during a period of suffering. However, since the book doesn't mention anything about the covenant community such thoughts must proceed cautiously.

The Purpose

Given the lack of information concerning the book's dating, authorship and intended readership, any purpose statement must be formed around the theological themes located within the document itself. With this in mind it seems safe to say that Job was written to demonstrate that God exercises sovereign power over His spiritual (1-2) and physical (38-42:6) creation which at times questions God's justice (3-37). However, in the end His justice is always vindicated (42:7-17). In short, Job was written to reaffirm God's sovereignty over the most perilous and unexplained sufferings of godly people.

¹ David Allan Hubbard William Sanford LaSor, Frederic Wm. Bush, *Old Testament Survey the Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*, Second ed.(Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996)., 473.

² Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck John F. Walvoord(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

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

⁴ Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests a History of Old Testament Israel*(Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996). 375

⁵ H. L. Willmington, *Wilmington's Bible Handbook*(Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1997).

⁶ Paul N. Benware, *The Essential Bible Survey of the Old Testament*(Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003)., 165-6.

⁷ Ronald B. Allen Earl D. Radmacher, H. Wayne House, ed. *New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999). 615.

⁸ Archer. 508.

⁹ Earl D. Radmacher, ed. 613.

The Message

Job works to solve man's relationship to suffering. Do people who live right suffer? Is personal suffering a sign of sin? "The book of Job addresses the issue of the suffering of people who are righteous. Whereas the suffering and distress of the wicked has not been as great a problem to most people, the suffering of people who love and serve the Lord God is another matter."¹⁰ The message of Job rings with truth even in our modern society.

The book can be divided into five sections. The first section provides a prologue to the story. Job, a man of great wealth and godly reputation was accused by Satan in heaven as a phony. God granted Satan opportunity to afflict Job. As a result, Job suffered the loss of all his possessions including his own children. However, through the adverse circumstance, Job acted with honor toward God (1). After a second accusation, again unknown to mankind, Satan gained permission from God and afflicted the body of Job (2). This time Job was driven to question his actions before God providing the premier topic of the text... How does suffering relate to the righteous? The following sections address the relationship of suffering among the righteous.

The second section (3-28) involves Job's dialogue with his friends. Through three repeating dialogues Job investigated his own motives and actions. Throughout this section, Job's friends indicated that blessing will surely come upon those who live right before God and man (4:1-5:27; 11:1-20). They also assured Job that cursing and judgment comes upon those who disobey God and fail to humbly seek him (8:1-21; 18:1-21; 20:1-29). Job responded by claiming that his conscience was innocent of wrong doing (6:1-7:21). He agreed with them that man was nothing before God (9:1-10:22) and that God would surely judge the wicked (23:1-24:25). However, Job did not see justice in his affliction. By the end of this section Job and his friends were at an impasse. Job grew more sorrowful and confused concerning his pain (12:1-14:22; 19:1-29; 28:1-28).

Two monologues mark the third section (29-37). Through his statements Job affirmed God's greatness while at the same time maintaining his innocence (29-31). Elihu, though agreeing with Job about God's greatness, condemned Job for what he perceives as self-righteous behavior (32-37). Again, this section ends with an impasse.

The fourth section (38-42) involves another dialogue. But this time it is with the Lord. In His first series of questions the Lord asked Job concerning his knowledge and ability concerning creation (38-39). Job responded with total inability to provide an answer (40). God asked Job a second series of questions concerning creation (41). Job again responded and admitted his littleness (42). God closed the conversation with a rebuke of Job's friends indicating failure in their assessment of Job.

In the closing section (42:10-17), God graciously rewarded Job for his faithfulness by providing him with more children, health and possessions. Through the last section Job is vindicated.

Through the message of Job it is understood that righteous people suffer. It is also understood that the righteous are to face suffering with faith and humility before our creator God.

Theme

God's righteousness concerning the suffering of good people.

¹⁰ Benware. 166.

Outline of Job

- I. Prologue: God's Testing of Job 1:1-2:13**
 - A. Job's Loss of Wealth and Family 1:1-22
 - 1. The Righteousness of Job 1:1-5
 - 2. Satan's Request Permitted 1:6-12
 - 3. The Great Loss of Job 1:13-19
 - 4. The Continued Righteousness of Job 1:20-22
 - B. Job's Loss of Health 2:1-13
 - 1. Satan's Second Request Permitted 2:1-6
 - 2. The Great Sickness of Job 2:7-10
 - 3. The Great Mourning 2:11-13
 - C. Job's Lament of Life 3:1-26
- II. Dialogues With Friends 3:1-31:40**
 - A. His First Dialogue 4:1-14:22
 - 1. The Response of Eliphaz Encouraging Godliness for God's Blessing 4:1-5:27
 - 2. Job's Answer of Innocence and Despair 6:1-7:21
 - 3. The Response of Bildad Indicating Sure Blessings upon Righteous and Judgment upon Ungodly 8:1-21
 - 4. Job's Answer Indicating the Futility of any Man before God 9:1-10:22
 - 5. The Response of Zophar Indicating God's Blessing for Correct Humble Living 11:1-20
 - 6. Job's Answer Indicates Continued Dissatisfaction with Friends and Humility before God 12:1-14:22
 - B. His Second Dialogue 15:1-21:34
 - 1. Eliphaz Assures Job of Ancient's Wisdom and Sure Judgment of Wicked 15:1-35
 - 2. Job's Sorrow and Disdain from Friend's Continued Rebuke 16:1-17:16
 - 3. Bildad Reaffirms Judgment upon Wicked 18:1-21
 - 4. Job's Continued Sorrow from Friends 19:1-29
 - 5. Zophar Indicates God will Judge the Wicked and Hypocritical 20:1-29
 - 6. Job Notes the Present Prosperity of the Wicked 21:1-34
 - C. His Third Dialogue 22:1-28:28
 - 1. Eliphaz Maintains that God Does Bless Those Who Humbly Seek Him 22:1-30
 - 2. Job Maintains His Humility and Acknowledges the Wicked's Coming Judgment 23:1-24:25
 - 3. Bildad Claims Inability of Man to be Right with God 25:1-6
 - 4. Job Confesses God's Magnitude Yet Holds to His Justice Among Men 26:1-28:28
- III. Monologues 29:1-37:24**
 - A. Job Confirms God's Greatness and Affirms His Actions 29:1-31:40
 - B. Elihu Confirms God's Greatness and Condemns Job's Self-Righteousness 32:1-37:24
- IV. Dialogues With God 38:1-42:17**
 - A. God Questions Job 38:1-42:6
 - 1. God Questions Job About His Knowledge of Creation 38:1-40:2
 - 2. Job's First Answer to the Lord 40:3-5
 - 3. God Questions Job a Second Time 40:6-24
 - 4. Job's Second Answer to the Lord 42:1-6
 - B. God Rebukes Job's Friends 42:7-9

V. Epilogue: God's Blessing Job 42:10-17

Questions Concerning Job

1. Discuss the dating of Job.
2. What is the purpose of Job?
3. What enemies is Job referring to in 16:9-16?
4. Job 18:5 indicates that "the light of the wicked shall be put out." Given that Job was written prior to Proverbs and given that Proverbs 4:19; 13:9; 20:20; 24:20 uses this phrase in an instructional, how does Job's use of this phrase shed light on our understanding of the application of Proverbs?
5. How are we to understand the number 10 in 19:3?
6. Elihu indicates that it is wickedness to think that God doesn't reward righteousness. This is in keeping with other themes found in Deuteronomy 28-30 as well as Zephaniah 1:12. Just as Job wrestled with this issue how is it that you solve this theological problem?
7. Describe the animals mentioned in chapter 40:15-24.
8. Describe in broad terms the progress of the message within Job.
9. What is the character of Satan before the throne of God in 1-2?
10. What is the major theme of Job?

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