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## Article 18: Job at a Glance

Harold Willmington

*Liberty University*, [hwillmington@liberty.edu](mailto:hwillmington@liberty.edu)

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## JOB AT A GLANCE

The nature of the fast moving action in this story is three-fold: first, Satan's cruel onslaught against Job, attempting to cause the suffering patriarch to curse God. Second, the unkind and untrue charges from Job's friends, all of whom conclude his terrible ordeal is a direct result of personal sin. Third, the eventual and complete restoration of Job.

### **BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION**

ARE YOUR EARS BURNING? GOD MAY HAVE MENTIONED YOUR NAME TO SATAN THIS MORNING.

Job is the story of what happened to a man when God did this very thing. The book of Job may be the oldest in the Bible. This is seen by the following:

- A. The many ancient historical allusions, such as the pyramids (3:14), the cities of the plains (15:28), and the great flood (22:16).
- B. The omission of Israel's history. There is no reference to the law, the Exodus of Israel, the Red Sea crossing, or any of the kings of Israel.
- C. The usage of the ancient patriarchal name for God, El Shaddai. It is used 31 times in Job (see 5:17; 6:4).

### **FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK**

1. Who? **Job**. He was an historical person, mentioned by both Ezekiel (Ezek. 14:14, 20), and James (Jas. 5:11), falsely accused by both Satan and his friends, but vindicated by God (Job 1, 2, 42).
2. What? The **book of Job**.
3. When and where? Possibly around 2000 B.C. from the land of Uz (that area including eastern Edom and northern Arabia).
4. Why? To display God's sovereignty even in the hour of great suffering.
5. To whom? Unknown. Perhaps for the descendants of Shem living after the Flood and before the Law.

### **KEY EVENTS**

1. Satan's first confrontation with God regarding Job
2. Job's extreme depression
3. Beginning of Eliphaz's monologues against Job
4. Beginning of Job's many defenses in response to his accusers
5. Beginning of Bildad's monologues against Job
6. Beginning of Zophar's monologues against Job
7. Beginning of Elihu's monologues against Job
8. Beginning of God's response to the entire situation
9. End of Job's ordeals and subsequent reward

## KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **Job:** righteous and wealthy farmer, falsely accused by both Satan and his own friends, resulting in terrible suffering but eventually to be completely exonerated and restored by God Himself
2. **Job's wife:** foolish spouse who urged her husband to simply curse God and die
3. **Eliphaz:** Job's first "friend" who, based on his personal experience, falsely accused Job of secret sin
4. **Bildad:** Job's second "friend" who, based on tradition, falsely accused Job of secret sin
5. **Zophar:** Job's third "friend" who, based on sheer dogmatism, falsely accused Job of secret sin
6. **Elihu:** youngest of Job's tormenters who, having found fault with Job's three friends, also accused the suffering patriarch of secret sin

## KEY PLACES

1. **Land of Uz:** homeland of the patriarch Job, probably located in eastern Edom

## UNIQUE FEATURES

1. The theme of this book is not Job's suffering (although this is certainly involved), but rather God's sovereignty. The name Job literally means, "Where is the Father?" This is one of the two Old Testament books giving a brief glimpse of the confrontation activities going on in heaven. The other book is Zechariah. Compare Job 1-2 with Zechariah 2. The book deals with a great misconception, namely, that suffering is always caused by personal sin. Thus, Job's three "friends" like the apostles in the New Testament (Jn. 9:2), mistakenly concluded (as have also some modern faith healers) that all sickness results from sinfulness. As this book brings out, nothing could be further from the truth. Job's three friends and the young preacher boy who later appears in the book are interesting characters indeed.
  - Eliphaz, a descendant of Esau (Gen. 36:11), was the theologian, basing his advice on observation and experience. His was the voice of philosophy (4:8; 5:17).
  - Bildad, a descendant of Abraham and Keturah (Gen. 25:2), was the historian and legalist, basing his advice on tradition. His was the voice of history (8:8).
  - Elihu, a descendant of Nahor, Abraham's father (Gen. 22:21), was the intellectual, basing his advice on education. His was the voice of logic (37:23).
2. The statements from Job's friends cannot be used for doctrinal purposes, for they were also wrong in calling Job a hypocrite (8:12; 15:34; 20:5; 34:30). God, however, had found no fault in Job (1:8; 2:3).
3. Job was an historical character, mentioned later by both Ezekiel (Ezek. 14:14, 20) and James in the New Testament (James 5:11). His disease may have been leprosy, complicated with elephantiasis, one of the most loathsome and painful diseases known in the world of his time.

4. This book may be the only biblical one to refer to ancient dinosaurs (see 40:15; 41:1). It also provides for us the most extended description of the world's early history before man (see 38-39). Other scientific statements tell us the earth is suspended in space (26:7), and that it is a sphere (22:14).
5. This book presents Satan as doing what he does best, namely, slandering Christians (compare Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5 with Zech. 3:1 and Rev. 12:10).
6. Job also reveals a very precious truth, that Satan cannot tempt or afflict a believer without the express permission of God himself (1:12; 2:6). Furthermore, in the New Testament we are told God knows just how much we can bear, and will not let Satan go beyond that point (see 1 Cor. 10:13).
7. One of the first (and finest) statements on future bodily resurrection of believers in the Word of God is found in Job: *"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"* (19:25-26).
8. The book of Job records three questions which are asked by all generations, in all places, throughout all of human history! Each question is answered in the New Testament.
  - Is there life beyond this life? (14:14)  
Answer found in Jn. 11:25
  - Where can I find God? (23:3)  
Answer found in Jn. 1:18, 45
  - How can a sinful man be justified before God? (25:4)  
Answer found in Rom. 4:24, 25; 5:1
9. Job, Joseph, and Jeremiah probably suffered more for their faith than any other Old Testament persons.
10. God subjected Job to what was surely the most difficult set of questions (some 60 in number) ever asked of a man! (38, 39)
11. Finally, this Old Testament book may be considered a commentary on the following verses:
  - Lk. 22:31-32: *"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."*
  - Heb. 12:6, 11: *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."*

## COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

### Genesis:

- Job's description of earth's early history (38:4-11) provides a complementary parallel to Gen. 1.
- Both use the Hebrew expression for "sons of God" (2; Gen. 6)
- The ancient patriarchal name for God, *El Shaddai* ("the Almighty"), occurs in Genesis and Job more than in any other biblical books.

## **Ecclesiastes:**

- Job explores the meaning of suffering; Ecclesiastes explores the meaning of life.

### **TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS**

1. The Holy One (6:10)
2. The Daysman or Mediator (9:33)
3. Almighty (11:7)
4. The Risen and Returning Redeemer (19:25)
5. The Resurrection of Believers (19:26)
6. The Mighty Creator (26:7-14)
7. The Omniscient and Omnipotent God (36:22-37:24)
8. The God of Interrogation (38, 39)
9. God of the Behemoth and Leviathan (40, 41)
10. The Restoring and Rewarding God (42:10-17)