

OVER-VIEW OF THE BOOK OF JOB

Dake's Study Bible says: "Job was the 3rd son of Issachar (**Gen. 46:13**), the 9th son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham"—thus he would have been a great, great, grandson of Abraham. Job and his friends lived in distant areas surrounding present day Israel. Their knowledge of God and spiritual reasoning indicate that all of these men were devout worshipers of the one true God of creation. Since Job was a descendant of Abraham, his counselor friends could have been descendants of Abraham, which would make them Job's cousins. If this be the case, it indicates that the sons of Jacob who betrayed Joseph later returned to piety and lived by godly precepts so that their sons and grandsons included godly, insightful men like Job's counselors. The only other explanation for all of them holding the same core religious beliefs would be that they were non-descendants of Abraham who still held to the truth conveyed to them by Noah and his sons. In either case, this is evidence that the knowledge—and true worship—of Almighty God was a witness among the heathen nations of that period. It is comforting to know that God watches over His Word and He is never without a witness.

The land of **Uz** is located somewhere SW of Arabia, perhaps in the vicinity of Petra or Edom. This would not be far from Median (NE of the Gulf of Aqaba) where Moses lived during the 40 years between Egypt and the Exodus and thus was contemporary with Job during the last 25 years of his life. It is possible that Moses may have met Job and had a first hand account of Job's trials, testings, and later life. The Book of Job occurred—and was written—**prior to the Law** because there is no reference to Jewish customs or the law which came after Israel left Egypt; and Job's view of God, sacrifice and worship, were the same as those of Abraham and his descendants.

The Book of Job opens with **God's affirmation of Job's righteousness**, and the **first two chapters** give us the setting of the entire book—a meeting in heaven between God and the sons of God. At this meeting Satan appears, and surprising as his appearance there may seem, God opens the dialogue with questions and we learn that Satan walks to and fro upon the earth, he knew about Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden (**Gen. 3**), and yes, he knew all about Job—the righteous man whom God found no fault with. Apparently Satan had sought for opportunity to attack Job because he accused God of building a hedge of protection around him, and boasted that if God would remove the hedge, and Job experienced trouble, he would curse God to His face. Since God had absolute confidence in Job's faith and faithfulness, with some restrictions He allowed Satan to trouble Job. Satan's first attack was devastating but failed to shake Job's faith and worship; neither did Satan's second attack. **Through all of his losses**—family, possessions and wealth, and physical pain—**"Job did not sin with his lips"**.

Chapters 3—37 show the severity of Job's sorrow and pain, and involve a series of dialogs between Job and four of his friends. In trying to answer the question: **"Why does Job suffer"**—the New Spirit Filled Life Bible suggests the following: **Eliphaz** based his argument on experience and attributed Job's suffering to sin. **Bildad** accused Job of hypocrisy for denying he had sinned, and based his accusation on tradition. **Zophar** said that Job was even sinning with his presumption and verbosity during the dialogue, and that Job was getting less punishment than he deserved. The fourth friend, **Elihu**, made no accusation of sin, but suggested that rather than defend himself, Job should adjust his attitude and listen for God to speak. He was the only friend and counselor God did not correct.

In Chapters 38—42 God entered the conversation by asking Job penetrating questions which humbled and silenced Job when he realized he had been focusing on the smallness of his own suffering and loss compared to the greatness of God and His creative power. Then God chastised the three friends for misjudging and wrongly accusing Job; and the tables were turned—they had come a great distance to pray for Job, but now they had to humble themselves and allow Job to pray for them. Only then did God heal Job of his physical pain and suffering, an act which demonstrated that Job was more righteous than his judgmental friends. There are a number of interesting comments in the lengthy discussions between Job and his friends, and

between Job and God, but our interest will turn to a general listing of “**how**” Job handled the trouble and **great truths that still apply** to Christians today.

Chapter 42 concludes the story with God restoring what Satan had taken from Job. He lived 140 more years, fathered 10 more children—his daughters being the fairest in the land—and died a wealthy and respected man. After careful study we can see several biblical lessons. **1)** God is always in control and Satan always loses—he lost in his attempt to turn Job against God, and he lost in his challenge with God. **2)** God knows the end from the beginning. **3)** God always has a reason for everything He does or allows. **4)** God never permits man to be tested or tried by more than he can handle; and God had great confidence in Job's ability to withstand Satan's onslaught. **5)** After God permits His servants to suffer He usually rewards them abundantly. **6)** There are times when God can't reveal what His purpose is—at such times we have to wait and trust until the end.

Mighty Men and Women—learn and grow from the lessons found in the Book of Job; but for any Bible teacher or counselor, consider these vital suggestions: **1)** be careful in drawing conclusions, **2)** be sure that your counsel applies to the individual you are counseling, and **3)** strive to encourage rather than find fault. The first three friends of Job spoke truth, but misapplied it to Job. God Himself testified that before Satan's attack, and throughout the entire ordeal of sorrow, pain and inability to understand “WHY ME”?—Job was blameless in that he did not sin with his lips or charge God with mistreating him. Notice that God did not scold Job (He asked questions to get Job thinking right) but He did chastise three of his counselor friends.

How Job Handled Adversity

- 1:22 He did not sin or charge God with wrong doing.
- 2:10 He did not sin with his lips.
- 7:17+ He did ask God questions trying to understand “why” the tribulation and suffering.
- 9:4 He acknowledged that God is wise in heart and very strong.
- 13:15 He kept his faith; he believed; He affirmed what he believed by speaking boldly.
- 14:13 He requested God to appoint a set time to remember him; and to cover any unknown sin.
- 16:14+ He stated he would not speak against his friends if roles were reversed—he would encourage.
- 16:17 His prayers were pure and correct.
- 16:19 He knew he had a witness in heaven and God would exonerate him.
- 17:9 He knew the righteous would not forsake their belief and faith, but become stronger.
- 19:25 He knew his redeemer was eternally alive and after death he would see God.
- 23:10+ He knew that God knew his pathway.
 - He knew that when tested he would survive like gold in fire.
 - He knew that his own feet had always followed where God led him.
 - He never ignored or departed from God's command.
 - He always treasured and delighted in God's word.
 - He knew that God's word was more important than food.
 - He knew that God was unique and man cannot change God's purpose.
 - He knew that God performs what He appoints for people.
 - Understanding all this about God, Job feared and trembled at God's presence and voice.
- 27:4+ He did not speak deceitfully; he did not depart from integrity; He held fast to godliness and maintained his trust in God.

The above may not be exhaustive and the Lord will bless you if you find more ways Job handled the tough times and suffering the devil imposed upon him.

Next week we will consider the great truths found in the book of Job

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