



Overview for Job

Purpose: To reveal the sovereignty of God and to demonstrate the meaning of true faith. This book also gives insight into why the righteous suffer, and illustrates the Biblical position of man's free will rather than an eternally-sealed destiny.

Author: Possibly Job, although some have suggested Moses, Solomon, or Elihu. Jewish tradition taught that Moses wrote the book while in the desert of Midian, although there is nothing in the book that directly suggests his authorship.

Date Written: Unknown.

Time Period Covered: Based on internal evidence, the events in this book probably took place during the time of the patriarchs, approximately 2000 B.C. to 1800 B.C.

Key People: Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu

Setting: The land of Uz, which likely was located northeast of Palestine, between the Damascus and Euphrates Rivers

Summary: The fact that Job is referred to in other parts of Scripture establishes that he was a real person, rather than a fictional character in a colorful story. Ezekiel 14:14 states, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD." In the New Testament, the Apostle James referenced this historical figure when he wrote, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job" (James 5:11).

The time in which Job lived is unknown. However, most scholars believe that he was contemporary with Abraham or the other patriarchs. Several reasons substantiate this thinking: Job's religious customs were those of an early date; there is no reference to a priesthood, a central place of worship, or the Law of Moses; and wealth was measured as it was in the patriarchal times, and Job's long life span was typical of that period.

While it is a historical account, the Book of Job is considered by many scholars to be one of the most eloquently profound pieces of literature ever written. The book deals with many of the difficult issues and timeless truths of human life.

The beginning and the end of the book, which relate the account of Job's life, are written in prose. The main body of the book is a dialogue in poetic style between Job, his three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and

Zophar), a younger bystander named Elihu, and God. Job's "comforters" were convinced that his suffering was caused by hidden sin. Job insisted he was innocent, and challenged the supposition that sin and suffering are linked in a cause-and-effect sequence.

An understanding of the literary style of Hebrew poetry can help in the study of this book. Rather than using conventional meter and rhyme, it relies largely on three other literary devices: parallelism, metaphors, and irony.

Parallelism is employed when the second part of a passage mirrors the thought of the first part using different words. An example of this is found in Job 3:11, "Why did I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?"

Metaphor is where descriptions are given in abstract or symbolic ways. For example, "They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey" (Job 9:26).

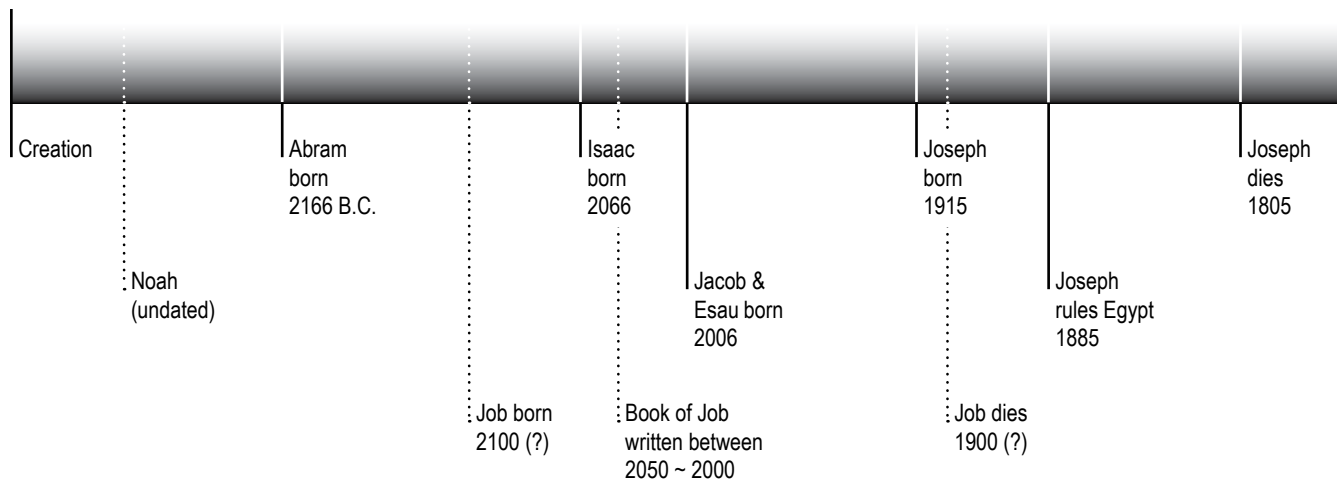
Irony is a literary technique in which what is said is the opposite of what is meant. We see irony used in Job 12:1-2, "And Job answered and said, No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." Obviously Job knew the death of one person did not mean the death of wisdom.

It is vital to compare the statements made in the Book of Job with the full message of Scripture. Many of the recorded speeches were given by Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. In Job 42:7, God states that Job's friends had not spoken "right" about Him. Thus, it cannot be assumed that everything they said is correct, even though they spoke with conviction and great assurance. Job himself was in a dark and confusing place in his life. At times he expressed feelings of being overwhelmed, even though his faith truly was anchored in God. Taken as isolated verses, these statements do not give an accurate picture of God, or even of Job's true sentiments. For example, Job said at one point, "If the scourge slay suddenly, he [God] will laugh at the trial of the innocent" (Job 9:23). This verse suggests that God would laugh if an innocent man died suddenly. While it reveals how Job was feeling at that precise moment, it is not an accurate portrayal of God's attitude.

The Book of Job does not offer solutions to all of life's troubles, but it shows us patience in the midst of trials and how a godly person can love God because of who He is, even in the absence of material benefits.

Timeline

Some dates are approximate, as reference materials differ.



Outline

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A complete amplified outline of this book is available on our website at www.apostolicfaith.org.*

- I. The introduction (1:1 — 2:13)
 - A. The character of Job (1:1-5)
 - B. The controversy over Job (1:6 — 2:10)
 - C. The coming of Job's friends (2:11-13)
- II. The solution of Job's three friends (3:1 — 31:40)
 - A. The lamentation of Job (3:1-26)
 - B. The first cycle of speeches (4:1 — 14:22)
 - C. The second cycle of speeches (15:1 — 21:34)
 - D. The third cycle of speeches (22:1-26:14)
 - E. The concluding statements of Job (27:1 — 31:40)
- III. The solution of Elihu (32:1 — 37:24)
 - A. Introduction: Elihu's intervention (32:1 — 33:7)
 - B. Elihu's first speech (33:8-33)
 - C. Elihu's second speech (34:1-37)
 - D. Elihu's third speech (35:1-16)
 - E. Elihu's fourth speech (36:1 — 37:24)
- IV. The solution of Jehovah (38:1 — 42:6)
 - A. The first speech (38:1 — 40:5)
 - B. The second speech (40:6 — 42:6)
- V. The conclusion (42:7-17)
 - A. The rebuke of Job's friends (42:7-9)
 - B. The restoration of Job's possessions (42:10-17)