



Job

The Book of Job is a somewhat polarizing work and it presents a clear portrait of divine sovereignty and human suffering. Readers tend to find it either profoundly comforting or deeply unsettling.

Introductory Information

Title: The book is named after its primary character, Job. The precise meaning of the name remains uncertain, though several proposals have been offered.

Authorship: Like many Old Testament books, Job is anonymous. Later rabbinic tradition suggests Moses wrote at least a portion of it. Other traditions attribute authorship to Job himself, to Elihu, or even to Solomon—a proposal based on the book's literary excellence.

Date The text itself does not provide a definitive date of composition. Jewish tradition proposed authors ranging from the patriarchal era to the period following the Exile. Several features of the book's setting, however, suggest the recorded events belong to the patriarchal period:

- No reference to the Mosaic law or the covenant name Yahweh
- Job offers sacrifices without a priest (1:5)
- His wealth is measured in livestock and servants (1:3; 42:12)
- His exceptionally long lifespan (42:16)
- References to roving bands of Sabeans and Chaldeans (1:15, 17)

In the end, the date of composition cannot be determined with certainty — which seems fitting, as Job's message speaks to every period of human history.

Theme & Purpose: The central theme of Job is the wisdom of living well when confronted with hardship and suffering that exceeds human understanding. The book addresses the question "Why do bad things happen to good people?" by asserting three things:

- There are no truly good people.
- The "why" is not always ours to know.
- God is sovereign, even over what appears to be meaningless suffering.

Theme Summary: *Based on the life and trials of one righteous man, Job wrestles with the wisdom of suffering in the face of hardship. Through a series of poetic speeches, the book explores humanity's finite knowledge and inability to understand divine wisdom, ultimately recognizing that true wisdom comes from God alone, and that man's path to wisdom is through the fear of the Lord.*

Redemption Revealed In Job

Job reveals the inadequacy of human wisdom and works-righteousness.

When confronted with Job's suffering, human wisdom proves unable to supply satisfying answers. This failure is most visible in the dialogue with Job's friends, whose counsel collapses into a false retributive theology—a merit-based, transactional view of God. God explicitly rejects their counsel: "*My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has*" (42:7). In contrast to this, Job teaches that true wisdom is not found in having an answer to every question, but in fearing God. Human wisdom is exposed as folly; God alone possesses the answers to the questions that affliction raises, and the only proper response to his infinite majesty is faithful submission rooted in the fear of the Lord.

Job recognizes the need for a redemptive mediator.

Perhaps the clearest anticipation of redemption in the book is Job's articulation of his need for a mediator. Job knows his previous blessing was a gift from God for his faithful righteousness, and he knows that God's sovereign hand governs his present suffering. He also knows he has done nothing to deserve the change. He is confident that if he could plead his case before God, he would be vindicated—but the problem is how to gain a hearing.

Job is under no illusions about approaching a holy God as a sinful man. He understands that even if granted an audience, he would need his sin debt covered by a redeemer first. He cries out, "There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both." (Job 9:33)

The Hebrew here denotes one who stands in the middle, placing a hand on both parties to adjudicate justly. Job's lament is one of the Old Testament's clearest expressions of the need that the New Testament declares is met in Christ alone (1 Timothy 2:5).

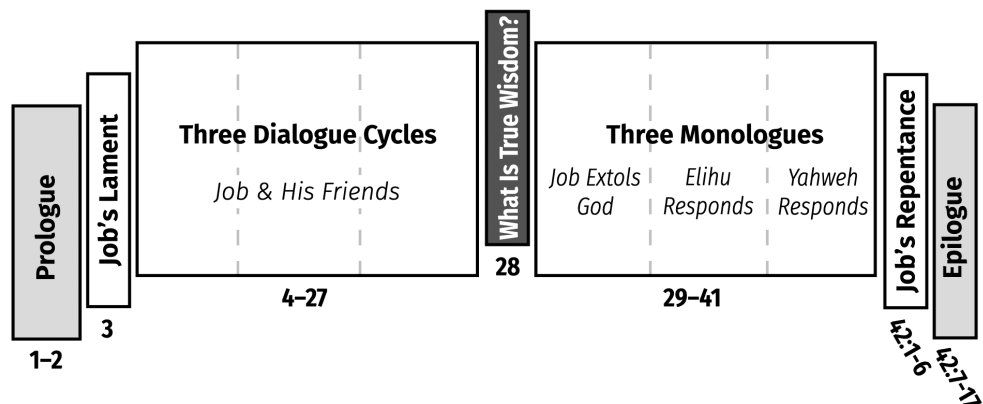
Job anticipates a bodily resurrection of the redeemed.

Job 19:25–27 is one of the most explicit anticipations of redemption in the entire Old Testament. Job's hope is not merely escape from judgment or continued spiritual existence; he anticipates a resurrection.

Job specifically anticipates a bodily resurrection ("in my flesh I shall see God"), connecting directly to Paul's treatment of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 and to Christ as the firstfruits of the dead. Job's ultimate hope is not relief from present suffering but an eschatological resurrection life—the very hope that finds its fulfillment in the gospel of the new covenant.

Notes:

Structure of Job



Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. The lesson distinguishes between wisdom and knowledge, describing wisdom as “the skill of living well.” How does that definition challenge the way you typically approach hard circumstances? Do you find yourself reaching first for more information, or for the kind of trust and fear of the Lord that Job commends?
2. Job’s three friends said many true things, yet God rebuked them for not speaking rightly about him. What does their failure reveal about the danger of applying theological principles too mechanically? Where do you see similar tendencies toward a “vending machine” view of God in your own thinking or in your surrounding culture?
3. In Job 9:32–33, Job cries out for a mediator who can stand between him and God with a hand on both. How does the New Testament’s answer to that cry in 1 Timothy 2:5 change the way you read Job’s suffering? What does it mean for you to have the mediator that Job longed for?
4. Job’s hope in chapter 19 is explicitly a hope in bodily resurrection—not merely spiritual survival but a future in which he will see God “in his flesh.” How does anchoring hope in resurrection, rather than in the relief of present circumstances, reshape the way you think about suffering that God has not yet resolved?