

Old Testament Overview

Job and Psalms

Thus far in our survey of the OT, we have covered 17 books and 2 major sections

- Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy)
- Historical books (Joshua-Esther)

This afternoon, we will begin our study of the 3rd major portion of the OT

- Poetry and wisdom

This section of the OT will cover five (5) books

- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Solomon

Let's pray and get started

During our study of the twelve (12) historical books, the focus was more on the nation

- During our study of the poetical and wisdom books, the focus will shift to the individual

In some ways, the poetry and wisdom books of the OT are some of the most preferred reading for believers

- Especially believers who are facing some type of difficulty

When you are discouraged or suffering (or know someone who is), how many of you turn to the book of Psalms?

- I would venture to guess that many of us do

These 5 books give us a perspective of life from a Divine perspective¹

- We see believers living out their faith in a series of different circumstances
- Seeing their faith gives us encouragement

These five books cover a pretty big span of time

- From the patriarchal period (ca. 2200 BC) to post-exile (ca. 450 BC)

I believe Romans 15:4 is a fitting summary of how these OT books can be useful to us

- **“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope”**

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 562.

Job

The title of the book tells us about the primary character, Job himself

NT writers quote Job on two occasions (Rom 11:35; 1 Cor 3:19)

- Ezekiel (14:14, 29) and James 5:11 portray Job as a real person²

We don't know the human author of the book

- It could have been Moses, Solomon, or someone else

Clues within the book give us an idea of when Job lived³

- His life span was long, as it was during the days of the patriarchs
- Job's wealth was measured in livestock, not silver or gold
- There is no mention of the Law, Exodus, or Abraham
- It does seem that Job was familiar with Adam (31:33) and the Noachic flood (12:15)

I would assume that most of are somewhat familiar with the plot of the book

- Job suffers the loss of livestock and his own family
- Job's own friends attempt to comfort him
- Job is rebuked by the LORD
- Job is rewarded toward the end of the book

Nowhere in the book of Job is he told why he is suffering

- His friends assume that it is due to his own sin

The readers are privileged to know about the conversation between the LORD and Satan

- But Job doesn't know about any of this!
- Neither do his friends have any knowledge of this heavenly perspective

This book promotes deep thought about suffering

- It forces us to think about the reasons for suffering

If you or someone close to you has gone through an intense time of suffering or difficulty, this book should be a massive encouragement to you

- It reminds us that we are not alone in times of suffering and difficulty
- It reminds us that God has Divine purposes for our suffering

From another perspective, this book helps us as we seek to minister to others

- We will watch others suffer greatly
- How will we respond?
- We will be like Job's friends?

² Ibid., 563.

³ Bruce Wilkinson & Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible*, 144.

Listen to these key truths from the book of Job⁴

- There are matters going on in heaven that believers know nothing about
- Even the best efforts at explaining suffering can be futile
- God’s people do suffer, so you can’t judge a person’s spirituality by his/her circumstances or success
- Perseverance in faith is needed since God is good, and we can trust the Lord in the midst of great difficulty and tragedy
- The believer should not abandon God in the midst of difficulty; rather, he/she should draw near to God
- Suffering may be intense, but it will end gloriously for those who belong to God

Have you ever thought of how many questions are asked in the Bible?

- In the NASB, there are 3,124
- (I used Bible software to compute this number)

In what book of the Bible do you think the most questions appear?

- (give them a few opportunities to guess)
- It’s the book of Job

In the book of Job, 269 questions are asked (in the NASB)

- It is intriguing when you look at where these questions are asked
- It is also interesting to see who asks the questions

	Job 1-2	Job 3	Job 4-37	Job 38-41	Total
The LORD	4			63	67
Satan	2				2
Job	1	4	110	2	117
Job’s wife	1				1
Eliphaz			30		30
Bildad			13		13
Zophar			10		10
Elihu			29		29
Total	8	4	192	65	269

In Job 1-2, there are only 8 questions asked

- All 4 questions of the LORD are directed at Satan (1:7, 8; 2:2, 3)
- Both of Satan’s questions are directed toward the LORD (1:9, 10)
- Job and his wife have a little disagreement about suffering and ask each other 1 question each (2:9, 10)

⁴ MacArthur, 565.

Job 3 is Job speaking to himself

- He asks himself 4 questions (3:11, 12, 22, 23)

Job 4-37 is familiar to us

- It is where Job interacts with his four friends
- They go in cycles, asking Job various questions
- Job responds with questions of his own (110 of them!)

But then we come to Job 38-41

- In these closing chapters, who asks the most questions?
- The LORD (63 questions)
- Job asks only 2 questions

Isn't it interesting that the book of the Bible that has the most questions is also the book in which people don't have the answers?

- Only the LORD knew the ultimate reasons why Job suffered

I am going to follow a three-part outline for Job

- The disasters of Job (1-2)
- The dialogues with Job (3-37)
- The deliverance of Job (38-42)

I. The disasters of Job (1-2)

This is the prologue to the book

- It sets the stage for what is to come

We are told in verse 1, "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil"

- He lived in "Uz", which was located near Midian
- This is where Moses lived for 40 years

We learn that Job was a

- Godly man (blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil")
- Family man (married, 7 sons and 3 daughters)
- Rich man (7000 sheep; 3000 camels; 500 yoke of oxen; 500 female donkeys; many servants)

The end of verse 3 is an astounding statement, "that man was the greatest of all the men of the east"

- His reputation was one that many knew
- From God's perspective, there was no one greater than Job

The scene changes in verse 6

- This is information that we, the reader, are privy to
- But Job knew nothing about any of this

We are specifically told in verse 6 that Satan appears before the LORD

- We know from Revelation 12:10 that Satan is “**the accuser of the brethren**”
- He is about to live up to his name with Job

Satan had been roaming the face of the earth (1:7)

- 1 Peter 5:8 tells us, “**Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour**”

Then the LORD does something quite remarkable in verse 8

- The LORD actually volunteers Job’s name to Satan
- *Again, Job knows nothing about this!*

Satan’s response is, in summary, “You have protected Job and shielded him from me; his life is easy with family and riches and health. He will curse you if you take that away from him.”

- Satan accuses God of overprotecting Job!

Keep in mind that Satan had confidence based on how things went with Adam

- Satan’s plan worked in deceiving Eve
- Perhaps he thought he could win against Job

In verse 12, the LORD responds by saying, “**Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him**”

- Satan could do anything short of attacking Job physically

Let’s stop the tape and discuss a few principles

- Satan is aware of things that occur on the Earth; he is constantly scheming, planning, attacking, and deceiving
- Satan must obtain permission from God before doing anything to a believer. This means that every trial, hardship, and demonic attack is filtered through God’s sovereign, providential hand. This should be remarkably comforting to us as believers!
- Like Job, we are not aware of these heavenly discussions that occur between the LORD and Satan
- Job did not suffer for doing anything wrong; he suffered for doing what was right

So Satan goes to work against Job in four consecutive waves

- Wave 1: the Sabeans attack the servants and took the oxen and donkeys
- Wave 2: “**fire from God**” fell and burned up the sheep and the servants
- Wave 3: the Chaldeans stole Job’s camels and killed his servants
- Wave 4: a great wind caused the house to fall and his ten children were all killed

Any one of these would be a devastating blow

- But they seem to come at Job, back-to-back, by the repeated use of the phrase, “while he was still speaking”

But notice Job’s response in verse 20, “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped”

- These are his actions
- No words are spoken in this verse

Then he speaks in verse 21, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD”

- This is an amazing statement from Job

What if Job would have said only these words, “The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away”?

- Anyone could say that
- Perhaps with animosity or bitterness in their hearts

But only someone who is strong in the faith can add those key words, “Blessed by the name of the LORD”

- Lord, You have given
- Lord, You have taken
- Lord, You are blessed; I praise and honor You

Verse 22 tells us, “Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God”

- God knows Job’s heart
- Job did not sin

Chapter 2 opens with a second scene from heaven

- Satan reappears before the LORD
- Once again, the LORD recommends Job’s name to Satan
- The LORD reminds Satan that Job “still holds fast his integrity”

Once again, Satan accuses God of overprotecting Job

- In other words, taking away his livestock, servants and all of his children was just scratching the surface

So the LORD allows Satan to afflict Job, but not to kill him (2:6)

- That is a bold statement, isn’t it?

So Satan smote Job with “boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head”

- These caused unbearable pain and discomfort for Job
- The only relief he could find was to find a broken piece of pottery and scrape himself (2:8)

Keep in mind that there were no doctors, emergency rooms, or walk-in clinics for Job

- Medicine was extremely elementary and limited

In verse 9, Job's wife speaks for the first and last time in the book

- She tells Job, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"

In light of everything that Job had going on, Job's wife was doing more the work of Satan than building up her husband

Job responds wisely to his wife in verse 10, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?"

- For the second time, we are told that Job didn't sin in all of this (2:10b)

Verses 11-13 introduce us to Job's three friends

- Eliphaz
- Bildad
- Zophar

His own friends didn't even recognize him (2:12)

- They wept when they saw him (2:12b)

Verse 13 tells us that they sat down on the ground for seven days *without saying a word to Job* "for they saw that his pain was very great"

In coming chapters, we will see Job's friends open their mouths and try to help Job

The main take-away from these chapters is the heavenly perspective that they give us of conversations and Divine permissions given to Satan by the LORD

- But Job didn't know any of this!

II. The dialogues with Job (3-37)

This is, by far, the largest section of Job

- 35 of the 42 chapters involve Job interacting with four different individuals

Most of the material in this section is a dialogue

- Job
- Eliphaz
- Bildad
- Zophar
- Elihu

Three of Job's friends attempt to give him advice about his situation

- But they all err in one fundamental way
- They all think that Job's problem is his sin

If we had the limited knowledge that they did, we would probably be inclined to think that as well

- But they didn't have access to the conversations between the LORD and Satan
- This would have drastically affected how they approached their friend, Job

If you look at your handout, you will see that I have included some analysis of the various speeches in the book of Job

- I want to focus on the middle section right now
- Chapters 3-37

You see that in chapter 3, Job is the first to speak

- You may remember that his friends had been silent for an entire week (2:13)

Job basically laments his own birth

- He wishes he had never been born
- This helps us to see just how much pain and misery Job was in

This isn't to say that Job was suicidal

- Rather, he is commenting on how much physical suffering has taken a toll on him

Then Job's three friends each take turns talking to Job

- Each time, Job has an opportunity to respond

There are three basic cycles of dialogue that take place

- 1st cycle – Eliphaz/Job, Bildad/Job, Zophar/Job
- 2nd cycle – Eliphaz/Job, Bildad/Job, Zophar/Job
- 3rd cycle – Eliphaz/Job, Bildad/Job, Elihu/Job

Each of these friends has a different approach to Job

- But as was mentioned earlier, they all make the same mistake of diagnosing Job's problem
- They see no other reason for his misfortune – other than his personal sin

Late in this section, we are introduced to another young man named Elihu

- He talks from chapter 32-37
- Job doesn't have an opportunity to respond to Elihu

I am not going to take the time to cover each of the various perspectives of Job's friends

- I believe they were truly trying to help him

I would encourage you to do your own study of these three friends

- What was the “bent” of each friend?
- Was there a friend who was closer to the truth than the others?

But as I have said multiple times – for the sake of emphasis – no human had access to the conversations that took place in heaven between the LORD and Satan

- I am convinced that if Job’s friends knew that information, they would have given different counsel

Job’s friends are a lot like us

- They were doing the best they could with the data they had
- I don’t think they were intentionally trying to give bad advice

III. The deliverance of Job (38-42)

I want us to focus our remaining time in Job on the third and final section of the book

- Because this is where the LORD speaks to Job

Far more important than anything Job’s friends may have told him is what the LORD tells him

- God’s Word is infinitely more significant and powerful than anyone else’s voice

As you can see from your handout, there are three major phases of speeches in these closing chapters

- The LORD speaks to Job the first time
- Job responds the first time
- The LORD speaks to Job the second time
- Job responds the second time
- The LORD speaks to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar

There are 65 questions that are asked in these closing chapters

- Of these 65, the LORD asks 63 of those questions
- Job asks 2 questions of his own

Why does the LORD ask so many questions?

- Not to gather info that He lacks
- But to show Job just how much he doesn’t know

Look with me at Job 38:3, “**Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct Me!**”

- God was letting Job know that He was the One to ask the questions
- If Job could, he was to try and answer the questions

God questions Job about a number of topics

- Creation
- Animals
- Weather
- Stars and constellations
- Wisdom

God's answers penetrate and expose Job's ignorance of many things

- "Have you..." is used 6 times
- "Can you..." is used 11 times
- "Do you..." is used 8 times

The LORD's final question in round 1 is found in 40:2, "Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it"

- Throughout the book, Job asserted that he wanted God as his audience
- Perhaps to justify why he was suffering needlessly and unjustly

But notice Job's response in 40:4-5, "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. 5 Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; even twice, and I will add nothing more"

- Job knew that God was right and he was wrong
- Job knew that he shouldn't have found fault with the Almighty

The LORD immediately goes into round 2 of His questions

- This time, the LORD focuses on two unique animals
- Behemoth (40:15-24) and Leviathan (41:1-34)

The main point in this section is that no man can tame either one of these powerful creatures

- But they answer to the LORD because He is their Maker

What is this behemoth?

- Some have suggested a hippo or elephant
- It could refer to an extinct dinosaur that would fit all of these descriptions⁵

Job 41:11 is a powerful statement

- "Who has given to Me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine"

God doesn't need to answer to anyone

- He is in debt to no one
- All of the heavens belong to Him and are at His disposal

⁵ MacArthur, 592.

Again, Job is overwhelmed by the LORD's interrogation

- He responds in 42:1-6, "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. 3 Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me. 5 I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; 6 therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes"

Job comes to a place of trusting the LORD and His power

- He admits that he had spoken about things that he didn't understand

Let me ask you a question

- Did Job understand why he was suffering?
- No

This is extremely encouraging and convicting to ponder

- You and I sometimes want a full explanation about things that occur in this life
- But God isn't entitled to do that to us

Faith is trusting God when we don't have all of the answers

- Faith is submitting to God's absolute and sovereign power over nature, animals, weather, and our lives

Listen to these words

- "Job was still diseased and without his children and possessions, and God had not changed anything, except for the humbling of the heart of His servant"⁶

The only thing that changed from chapter 1 to chapter 42 is Job's heart attitude!

- He came to a place of submission and trust

Remember what Satan said back in chapter 2?

- "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face" (emphasis mine)

The LORD showed Satan that a righteous man can endure great trials and still hold fast his/her integrity

- Satan figured that Job would curse God (Satan would win)
- The LORD knew that He would sustain His servant in the midst of his suffering (the LORD wins)

⁶ Ibid., 593.

The LORD then turns to Job's three friends – Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar

- God tells them, “you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has”

In other words, the LORD exposes their faulty counsel and upholds Job

- This isn't to say that all of their counsel was bad

Rather, their assumptions and presumptions were wrong

- About Job
- And about God

Job's three friends were to go to Job and offer up a burnt offering, “and My servant Job will pray for you” (42:8)

- They obey the LORD according to verse 9

God is remarkably gracious to Job

- The story could have ended here
- But it doesn't

The LORD restored to Job what he had lost

- An additional 7 sons and 3 daughters are given to him, even in old age
- His livestock has doubled since chapter 1

He was so wealthy that even his daughters received an inheritance

- This was very rare
- Normally, daughters would only receive an inheritance if the father had no sons⁷

Why didn't the LORD give Job double the amount of children like He did with the livestock?

- Actually, He did!

Remember, Job's first sons and daughters had died

- But Job would see them again after his death

Job lived another 140 years after the events that took place in the book of Job

- Back in chapter 3, Job wished that he would die
- But that wasn't a part of the LORD's plans

The book of James has some fitting words as a conclusion to this great book

- “We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful”

⁷ New American Commentary, Job, 415.

James would have us remember two fundamental truths from the life of Job

- Job endured, even in the midst of tremendous difficulty and tragedy
- The Lord is “full of compassion and is merciful”

I was talking to Sarah recently, and we both started listing how many people at GCC are going through trials

- Health
- Financial
- Marital
- Children

God hasn't promised that our lives will be comfortable and plush

- He has promised grace to those who follow Him

As you give counsel to hurting people around you, keep Job in mind

- Don't give perspective only from your vantage point
- Bring the Word of God to bear upon that person's life
- Allow the Word of God to do its work, just as it did in the life of Job

Any questions or comments about the book of Job?

- If not, let's take a short break before we discuss the book of Psalms