

A Man Named Job (c. 2200 BC)

Job 1–2

A Man Named Job

1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. And that man was pure and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

2 Seven sons and three daughters were born to him.

3 His possessions included 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys; in addition he had a very great household. Thus he was the greatest of all the people in the east.

4 Now his sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one in turn, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

5 When the days of their feasting were finished, Job would send for them and sanctify them; he would get up early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job thought, “Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” This was Job’s customary practice.

“Have you considered my servant Job?”

6 Now the day came when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD—and Satan also arrived among them.

7 The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” And Satan answered the LORD, “From roving about on the earth, and from walking back and forth across it.”

8 So the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a pure and upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil.”

9 Then Satan answered the LORD, “Is it for nothing that Job fears God?”

10 Have you not made a hedge around him and his household and all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his livestock have increased in the land.

11 But extend your hand and strike everything he has, and he will no doubt curse you to your face!”

12 So the LORD said to Satan, “All right then, everything he has is in your power. Only do not extend your hand against the man himself!” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

The First Test

13 Now the day came when Job’s sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house,

14 and a messenger came to Job, saying, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing beside them,

15 and the Sabeans swooped down and carried them all away, and they killed the servants with the sword! And I—only I alone—escaped to tell you!”

16 While this one was still speaking, another messenger arrived and said, “The fire of God has fallen from heaven and has burned up the sheep and the servants—it has consumed them! And I—only I alone—escaped to tell you!”

17 While this one was still speaking another messenger arrived and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and carried them all away, and they killed the servants with the sword! And I—only I alone—escaped to tell you!”

18 While this one was still speaking another messenger arrived and said, “Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house,

19 and suddenly a great wind swept across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they died! And I—only I alone—escaped to tell you!”

20 Then Job got up and tore his robe. He shaved his head, and then he threw himself down with his face to the ground.

21 He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will return there. The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away. May the name of the LORD be blessed!”

22 In all this Job did not sin, nor did he charge God with moral impropriety.

“He still holds fast his integrity”

2:1 Again the day came when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also arrived among them to present himself before the LORD.

2 And the LORD said to Satan, “Where do you come from?” Satan answered the LORD, “From roving about on the earth, and from walking back and forth across it.”

3 Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a pure and upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil. And he still holds firmly to his integrity, so that you stirred me up to destroy him without reason.”

4 But Satan answered the LORD, “Skin for skin! Indeed, a man will give up all that he has to save his life!

5 But extend your hand and strike his bone and his flesh, and he will no doubt curse you to your face!”

6 So the LORD said to Satan, “All right, he is in your power; only preserve his life.”

The Second Test

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and he afflicted Job with a malignant ulcer from the sole of his feet to the top of his head.

8 Job took a shard of broken pottery to scrape himself with while he was sitting among the ashes.

9 Then his wife said to him, “Are you still holding firmly to your integrity? Curse God, and die!”

10 But he replied, “You’re talking like one of the godless women would do! Should we receive what is good from God, and not also receive what is evil?” In all this Job did not sin by what he said.

Job’s Friends Come to Comfort Him

11 When Job’s three friends heard about all this calamity that had happened to him, each of them came from his own country—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They met together to come to show sympathy for him and to console him.

12 But when they gazed intently from a distance but did not recognize him, they began to weep loudly. Each of them tore his robes, and they threw dust into the air over their heads.

13 Then they sat down with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights, yet no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great.

Job’s First Speech (c. 2200 BC)**Job 3****Job Curses the Day He Was Born**

1 After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day he was born.

2 Job spoke up and said:

3 “Let the day on which I was born perish,
and the night that said,
‘A man has been conceived!’

4 That day—let it be darkness;
let not God on high regard it,
nor let light shine on it!

5 Let darkness and the deepest
shadow claim it;
let a cloud settle on it;
let whatever blackens the day terrify it!

6 That night—let darkness seize it;
let it not be included among the days of the year;
let it not enter among the number of the months!

7 Indeed, let that night be barren;
let no shout of joy penetrate it!

8 Let those who curse the day curse it—
those who are prepared to rouse Leviathan.

9 Let its morning stars be darkened;
let it wait for daylight but find none,
nor let it see the first rays of dawn,

10 because it did not shut the doors of my mother’s womb on me,
nor did it hide trouble from my eyes!

Job Wishes He Had Died at Birth

11 “Why did I not die at birth,
and why did I not expire
as I came out of the womb?

12 Why did the knees welcome me,
and why were there two breasts
that I might nurse at them?

13 For now I would be lying down
and would be quiet,
I would be asleep
and then at peace

- 14 with kings and counselors of the earth
who built for themselves places now desolate,
15 or with princes who possessed gold,
who filled their palaces with silver.
16 Or why was I not buried
like a stillborn infant,
like infants who have never seen the light?
17 There the wicked cease from turmoil,
and there the weary are at rest.
18 There the prisoners relax together;
they do not hear the voice of the oppressor.
19 Small and great are there,
and the slave is free from his master.

Job Bemoans His Fate—God Grants Him Life When He Longs for Death

- 20 “Why does God give light to one who is in misery,
and life to those whose soul is bitter,
21 to those who wait for death that does not come,
and search for it
more than for hidden treasures,
22 who rejoice even to jubilation,
and are exultant when they find the grave?
23 Why is light given to a man
whose way is hidden,
and whom God has hedged in?
24 For my sighing comes in place of my food,
and my groanings flow forth like water.
25 For the very thing I dreaded has happened to me,
and what I feared has come upon me.
26 I have no ease, I have no quietness;
I cannot rest; turmoil has come upon me.”

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Chronological Notes

- 1) The following internal evidence argues for the patriarch period as the historical setting of Job:
 - A) Job lived to be much older than 140 (Jewish tradition holds that his age at death was 70 + 140 = 210; cf. Job 42:16).¹ This age matches the ages of those who lived immediately after the flood (Gen 11:13–23). Also, the patriarchs lived to similar ages: Abraham lived to be 175, Isaac 180, Jacob 147, and Joseph 110.
 - B) Job’s wealth consisted primarily of his possessions, his animals and his servants (Job 1:3; 42:12; cf. Gen 12:16). This is consistent with what we know of wealth during the time of the patriarchs (cf. Gen 13:1–2; 24:35).
 - C) Job indicated no knowledge of organized religion—Mosaic, Levitical or otherwise; like the patriarchs he was a priest to his own household (Job 1:5).²
- 2) A placement of the story of Job before Abraham seems best—such a position gives Job a good chronological placement and avoids interrupting the patriarch narratives of Genesis 12–50.

¹ Job 42:16 LXX says that “Job lived after his affliction a hundred and seventy years: and all the years he lived were two hundred and forty” (a variant says that all Job’s years were 248).

² Robert L. Alden, *Job*, New American Commentary Vol. 11, 26.