

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 blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.

2 Seven sons and three daughters were born to him.

3 His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

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

5 When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings *according to* the number of them all; for Job said, “Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually.

“Have you considered my servant Job?”

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

7 The LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.”

8 The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.”

9 Then Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job fear God for nothing?”

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

11 But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.”

12 Then the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.” So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

The First Test

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

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

15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house,

19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

21 He said, “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.”

22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

“He still holds fast his integrity”

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

2 The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.”

3 The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.”

4 Satan answered the LORD and said, “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.”

6 So the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.”

The Second Test

7 Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

8 And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes.

9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"

10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Job's Friends Come to Comfort Him

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, they came each one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite; and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him.

12 When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky.

13 Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking 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 Afterward Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth*.

2 And Job said,

3 "Let the day perish on which I was to be born,
And the night *which* said, 'A boy is conceived.'

4 "May that day be darkness;
Let not God above care for it,
Nor light shine on it.

5 "Let darkness and black gloom claim it;
Let a cloud settle on it;
Let the blackness of the day terrify it.

6 "As *for* that night, let darkness seize it;
Let it not rejoice among the days of the year;
Let it not come into the number of the months.

7 "Behold, let that night be barren;
Let no joyful shout enter it.

8 "Let those curse it who curse the day,
Who are prepared to rouse Leviathan.

9 "Let the stars of its twilight be darkened;
Let it wait for light but have none,
And let it not see the breaking dawn;

10 Because it did not shut the opening of my *mother's* womb,
Or hide trouble from my eyes.

Job Wishes He Had Died at Birth

11 "Why did I not die at birth,
Come forth from the womb and expire?

12 "Why did the knees receive me,
And why the breasts, that I should suck?

13 "For now I would have lain down and been quiet;
I would have slept then, I would have been at rest,

14 With kings and *with* counselors of the earth,
Who rebuilt ruins for themselves;

15 Or with princes who had gold,
Who were filling their houses *with* silver.

16 "Or like a miscarriage which is discarded, I would not be,
As infants that never saw light.

- 17 “There the wicked cease from raging,
And there the weary are at rest.
- 18 “The prisoners are at ease together;
They do not hear the voice of the taskmaster.
- 19 “The small and the 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 is light given to him who suffers,
And life to the bitter of soul,
- 21 Who long for death, but there is none,
And dig for it more than for hidden treasures,
- 22 Who rejoice greatly,
And exult 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 groaning comes at the sight of my food,
And my cries pour out like water.
- 25 “For what I fear comes upon me,
And what I dread befalls me.
- 26 “I am not at ease, nor am I quiet,
And I am not at rest, but turmoil comes.”

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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.