

THE BOOKS OF POETRY

Lesson 1

JOB, A MAN TO BE TESTED

Job 1 - 2

General Scriptural References: Ezekiel 14: 14, 20; James 5:11

Quotation from Tennyson concerning the book of Job : "... the greatest poem whether of ancient or of modern times ".

Brief Outline of Book of Job

- I. Prologue: A presentation of Job's troubles and the reasons for them.
Job 1,2
- II. Job's perplexed cursing. Job 3
- III. Job and his three friends argue over the justice of Job's calamity.
Job 4 - 31
- IV. Elihu's indignant criticism of Job's friends and his analysis of
Job's speeches and of God's justice. Job 32 - 37
- V. God intervenes. Job 38 - 42:6
- VI. Epilogue. Job 42:7 --end

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1. Describe the character of Job. Job 1:1, 4:1-4

"Perfect and upright, ~~and~~ tam veyashar; COMPLETE as to his mind and heart, and STRAIGHT or CORRECT as to his moral deportment ".

-- Adam Clarke

"... the word translated perfect does not mean what we understand by perfect. It does not mean sinless and without fault. It means, rather, that Job was a man of integrity: a trustworthy, honourable man, one who always kept his word and was, at all times, straight and upright in his business dealings ".

-- T. W. Phillips

2. How large was his family? Job 1:2, 2:9

3. Was he a man of great wealth and importance? Job 1:3; 29:7-10

"Courts of justice were held at the gates of entrances to the cities of the east!"

-- Adam Clarke

4. Was Job meticulous in his religious observances? Job 1:5

5. When the sons (or angels) of God came before Him, who also came?
Job 1:6

6. Did God esteem Job highly? Job 1:8

7. How did Satan account for Job's good behavior and attitude? Job 1:9-10

8. What test of Job did Satan first propose to God? Job 1:11

9. To what extent did God limit Satan in agreeing to the test of Job?
Job 1:12

10. What calamities then fell upon Job? Job 1:13-19
11. How did Job react to being deprived of all that he had including his children? Job 1:20-21
12. How would you have behaved if you had been in Job's place?
13. Did Job pass the test? Job 1:22
14. How did God speak of Job when Satan again came before Him? Job 2:3
15. What test did Satan next propose? Job 2:4-5
16. How did God limit Satan in this second testing of Job? Job 2:6
17. How did Satan afflict Job? Job 2:7
18. What advice did Job's wife give Job? Job 2:9
19. What did Job answer his wife? Job 2:10
20. Did Job pass Satan's second test up to this time? Compare the statements made about Job after each of the two tests. Job 1:22; 2:10
21. Who came to see Job and why? Job 2:11
22. Were they aghast at Job when they saw him? Job 2:12
23. What did they do? Job 2:12-13
24. How long did they sit in silence with Job? Job 2:13 Why did they do this?
(It was customary in those days for people to mourn seven days for the dead. See, for example, I Sam. 31:13.)
25. Would you agree with James 5:11 that Job had been remarkably patient up to this point?
26. What would you have done if you had been in Job's place?

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The poetic part of the book of Job begins with the next chapter (3). One cannot fully appreciate the poetic value of the Book of Job without reading it in the original Hebrew. However, one can best get the full impact of the English translation of this great work by reading it out loud. Read the third chapter orally and try to express it with the feeling Job must have felt.

Next Lesson: Job's Problem And Ours Job 3 - 7.

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If this is your first lesson, you can easily pick up Lesson One on your own. However, from this point on it becomes difficult to get the sense of the Book of Job on one's own. The Book of Job is difficult in part because the arguments are long and each speech takes on its full meaning only in the light of all of the previous speeches. Since the argument covers most of the book, it is difficult to keep the main line of the argument in mind throughout the whole discussion. Moreover, the main lesson of the book lies not in the main line of the argument, but in the study of Job's character as it is revealed in his speeches. Job's very soul is laid bare in his trial. It behooves us to examine our own in the light of this book. In view of the unity of the book it is necessary to study all of the lessons in order to get real benefit from any one of them.

Because of the great amount of material that must be covered during the coming six weeks, it will be impossible to read and discuss all of it in class. However, if each student will carefully study the lessons and write out the answers during the week, we will be able to devote most of the class period to discussing the meat of the lesson and to answering (as well as one can) questions that may arise in the mind of each student. Those who do not study before class will bog down and be benefitted but little in the classroom. We have only seven weeks for our study of the Book of Job, a book that is longer than any single book of the New Testament.

The questions in this and the following three lessons are designed to lead the student to the central ideas expressed by Job and his friends and to an understanding of Job's character. The references given after the questions cover slightly less than one third of the recorded argument between Job and his three friends. Of course, the full message of the Book of Job cannot be obtained without reading the other two thirds of the scripture. If the student has time, he is therefore encouraged to read the passages not covered by the questions as he goes through each lesson.

Poetry is notoriously difficult to translate because much of the sense and power is carried in the sound and connotation of the particular words used and in the way in which they are combined. The American Standard Version (ASV) and the Revised Standard Version (RSV) are superior to the King James (KJ) in the translation of Job (See question 25 in this lesson.).

The poetic part of the book of Job begins with the third chapter. One cannot fully appreciate the poetic value of the Book of Job without reading it in the original Hebrew. However, one can best get the full impact of the English translation of this great book by reading it out loud. Read the third chapter in this manner, trying to express Job's words with the feeling Job must have felt in his anguish. If this method helps you to feel the sense and power of the words, use oral reading on other passages of the Book of Job as you have time.

You can almost always tell who is speaking by looking at the first verse of the chapters. If the speaker is not mentioned at the beginning of one chapter, he will be given at the beginning of an earlier chapter.

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Lesson 2

JOB'S PROBLEM AND OURS

Job 3-7

1. What do you suppose Job was thinking during the seven days of silence?
What would you have been thinking if you had been in Job's condition?
2. What does Job curse in Job 3:1-10?
3. What does Job's cursing indicate about his attitude toward his maker?
4. What does Job wish for in Job 3:11-19?
5. What seems to be Job's conception of death?
6. What puzzles Job in Job 3:20-23?
7. What does Job accuse God of in Job 3:23?
8. How does Job picture his own condition in Job 3:24-26?
9. Would the author's statement in Job 1:22 and the last sentence of Job 2:10 be appropriate at this point? Does the author make a similar comment after this first speech of Job?
10. To what extent is Job (up to this point) a good example for us in time of trouble? See Eliphaz's statement in Job 4:1-5.

Outline of The Argument

- I. First Cycle of Argument.

Eliphaz	Job 4,5
Job	Job 6,7
Bildad	Job 8
Job	Job 9,10
Zophar	Job 11
Job	Job 12,13,14
- II. Second Cycle of Argument.

Eliphaz	Job 15
Job	Job 16,17
Bildad	Job 18
Job	Job 19
Zophar	Job 20
Job	Job 21
- III. Third Cycle of Argument.

Eliphaz	Job 22
Job	Job 23,24
Bildad	Job 25
Job	Job 26,27,28, 29,30,31
- IV. Elihu

Elihu	Job 32,33,34,35,36,37
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Job 27:7 to Job 28:28 is felt by some to be the missing speech of Zophar in the Third Cycle. The caption to this passage could easily have been lost in copying the text by hand years ago before the advent of the printing press. It is also possible that Elihu simply interrupts the argument and the cycle is never completed. However, remarks are made in this passage that are quite out of harmony with Job's general point of view as expressed in other speeches, both before and after this passage. Whatever the answer to this problem, our study will not be affected by it.

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Lesson 2 (cont.)

11. Was Eliphaz pleased with Job's attitude? Job 4:1-5
 12. What does Eliphaz seem to think is the cause of Job's trouble? Job 4:7-8
 13. Do you think Eliphaz should have used a more tactful approach?
 14. Does Eliphaz expect Job's indignation to help him? Job 5:2
 15. What does Eliphaz say he would do if in trouble? Job 5:8-9
 16. Does Eliphaz think that the trials of this life are valuable? Job 5:17-18
 17. Does James agree with Eliphaz? James 1:1-4
 18. Does the author of Hebrews agree with Eliphaz? Hebrews 12:1-13
 19. What does Eliphaz say would happen if Job were to follow his advice?
Job 5:25-26
 20. Does Job feel up to his trial? Job 6:8-12
 21. Does Job seem to feel any guilt? Job 6:24-30
 22. Does Job seem to feel that God is being unreasonably severe to him?
Job 7:11-12
 23. Does Job rest well in his sleep? Job 7:13-15
 24. Does Job feel hounded by God? Job 7:19-21 (ASV or RSV)
 25. Does Job seem to expect forgiveness without repentance? Job 7:20-21
- Note: Both the American Standard Version (ASV) and the Revised Standard Version (RSV) read 'If I have sinned,...' at the beginning of the 20th verse. However, even the King James (KJ) version makes Job's attitude clear in Job 19:4.
- Note: If your Bible has marginal references, notice that 'watcher' is an alternative meaning for the word translated 'preserver' in verse 20 of the King James translation. ASV and RSV both use the word watcher. Which seems to fit in best with Job's remarks in the preceding and following verses?
26. How does Job expect to escape God? What does this indicate with regard to Job's conception of death and of God? Job 7:21
 27. Discuss Job's spiritual condition in the light of his physical condition.

THE BOOKS OF POETRY**Lesson 3****JOB, A DISILLUSIONED MAN****Job 8-14**

1. Was Bildad shocked at Job's accusations of God? Job 8:1-3
2. What is his advice to Job? Job 8:5-6
3. Does Bildad have hopes for Job? Job 8:20-21
4. Does Job realize God's power? Job 9:7-10
5. Does this power cause Job to worry about God's justice? Job 9:12(ASV,RSV)
6. Does he think God just? Job 9:17-24; 28-31
7. Does he suspect that God judges after the fashion of men? Job 10:2-7
8. What does Zophar think of Job? Job 11:1-6
9. Does Zophar seem to suspect that Job is secretly evil? Job 11:11
10. Does he offer hope to Job? Job 11:13-16
11. Does Job compliment his friends on their wisdom? Job 12:1-3
12. What is Job's opinion of himself? Job 12:4(ASV,RSV)
13. What does Job's selection of examples of God's power tell you about Job's estimate of God's goodness? Job 12:17-25
14. What is Job's opinion of his friends' arguments? Job 13:12(ASV,RSV)
15. Does Job still find nothing wrong in himself? Job 13:18
16. What would Job really like to have happen? Job 14:13-15 (ASV,RSV)
17. Is Job doubtful of a life after death? Job 14:14
18. Does he really expect the above wish to come true? Job 14:16,17
19. This lesson completes the first of the 3 cycles of the argument. Summarize the attitudes of Job and his three friends regarding the cause of suffering and of Job's suffering in particular.
20. Consider their attitudes in the light of John 9:1-3; Rom.3:23; Matt.27:46
21. What other passages from the Bible throw light on the problem of Job and his friends?
22. What attitude should Job's friends have had toward Job, his suffering and his disillusionment?
23. What attitudes should Job have had toward his suffering, God, and life itself?

Next lesson: Job, A Critic of God Job 15-24

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Lesson 4

JOB, A CRITIC OF GOD

Job 15-21

Review pages 5 and 6 briefly in order to get the thread of the argument that is continued in this lesson.

The Second Cycle of the Argument.

1. What condemns Job according to Eliphaz? Why does he say this? Job 15:5,6
2. Does Eliphaz feel that Job is against God? Job 15:12-13
(Eliphaz continues describing the fate of the wicked assuming that Job is one of them. Job 12:20-35)
3. How does Job describe his relationship with God? Job 15:9 (See also Job 13:24 and Job 19:11.)
4. Does Job seem to think of God as a chastening father or as a monster? Job 16:9
5. Does Job seem to feel that God takes cruel pleasure in setting him up as a target for persecution? Job 16:12,13
6. Describe Job's picture of his face. Does he see any justice in his condition? Job 16:16,17
7. What does Job think is in heaven? What does he mean by this? Job 16:19
(In Job 18, Bildad now reproves Job's attitude and describes the punishment that the wicked receive in this life. Bildad is no longer friendly. No words of hope are expressed.)
8. Does Job feel that his friends should be ashamed of treating him as they have instead of being sympathetic? Job 19:2,3,21
9. Does Job suggest a possibility of error in Job 19:4? Do you agree that our errors affect only ourselves? WHY?
10. Does Job question God's justice in Job 19:7?
11. What does Job know about his redeemer (actually vindicator is a better translation here)? Job 19:25-27
12. What is the difference between a redeemer and a vindicator?
13. What does Job mean in this outburst of hope?
14. What does Zophar say about how much and how long the wicked may prosper? Job 20:4-7
15. How does Zophar describe the result in this life of the enjoyment of wickedness? Job 20:12-14
16. What does Zophar say happens to the rich oppressor of the poor? Job 20:15, Job 20:19
17. Does Job agree with Zophar that the triumph of the wicked is short? What does he believe? Job 21:7-13
18. Do these people feel any need of God? Job 21:14,15
19. Who do you think is right, Zophar or Job?
20. Summarize the points of view of Job and his friends up to this point. Comment on these points of view. (Use the reverse side of this sheet.)

Next Lesson: Job, A Proud Man

Job 22-31

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Lesson 5

JOB, A PROUD MAN

Job 22-31

Review pages 5, 6 and 7 briefly in order to get the thread of the argument that is continued in this lesson.

The Conclusion of The Argument

1. What does Eliphaz accuse Job of? Job 22:5-10
2. What does Eliphaz still advise Job to do? Job 22:22
3. What does Eliphaz say Job will learn about humility? Job 22:29
See also 1 Pet.5:5,6
4. Would you classify Job as humble?
5. Why does Job want to find God? Job 23:1-7
6. Who, or what does Job seem to think is on trial?
7. Does Job think he should be vindicated if he had this chance to argue with God? Job 23:10-12
8. Is he afraid that God might be too stubborn to change his mind?
Job 23:13-15
9. According to Job, God does not ascribe folly to what group of people?
Job 24:2-13
10. How does man appear to God according to Bildad? Job 25:4-6
11. What does Job 26:7 mean?
12. Is Job conscious of any wrong in his speaking? Job 27:2-6
13. Compare Job 27:8 with Matt.16:26.
14. Chapter 28 is known as 'The Wisdom Poem'. Read it. What does this poem contribute to the book of Job?

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Lesson 5 (cont.)

Job's Final DefenseChapter 29 Job's Former Wellbeing

15. Name some of the things Job missed from his former life.
16. Summarize Job's character from his own description of his virtues.
17. What does the fact that Job includes Job 29:7-11,14,21-23,25 in his final defense tell you about Job's character?
18. How does Job account for the respect he had formerly received?
Job 29:12-17

Chapter 30 Job's Present Predicament

19. Describe the outcasts of Job 30:1-10
20. What was Job's attitude toward these outcasts and their children?
Job 30:1-10. What does this tell you about Job's character?
21. Summarize Job's description of his present condition.

Chapter 31 Job's Claim of Integrity

22. Job lists about 13 sins of which he claims innocence. Select from this list those that many very good people might overlook in their own lives.
23. Do you feel that Job has been seeking to sustain his faith in God? Justify your answer.
24. What is your evaluation of Job's character (both his strengths and weaknesses) as it has been revealed in the first 31 chapters of the Book of Job?
25. To what extent has Satan been successful with Job?
26. To what extent has Job passed Satan's test?

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Lesson 6

IN DEFENCE OF GOD

Job 32-37

1. Why was Elihu angry with Job? Job 32:2.
2. Why was Elihu angry with Job's three friends? Job 32:3,
3. Why had Elihu waited so long to speak? Job 32:4,6-7.
4. Why did he speak out anyhow? Job 32:8-13,16-20.
5. Did Elihu seem to feel that he could speak without prejudice? Why?
Job 32:14,21-22.
6. Does Elihu think of himself as speaking in God's stead? Job 33:6
7. Why does Elihu feel that Job would be more at ease before him than before God? Job 33:6-7. See also Job 13:20-22 where Job is speaking.
8. What does Elihu accuse Job of saying? Job 33:9-11.
9. Do you think Elihu accused Job justly? Job 9:30-31; 10:7; 13:24; 13:27.
10. Should we strive against God if he does not inform us of all of his plans for us? Job 33:13
11. Does Elihu think that God speaks to men in ways that he may not notice?
Job 33:14
12. In what three distinctly different ways does Elihu think God 'speaks' to man? Job 33:15-16, 19-24
13. According to Elihu, what is God's purpose in speaking to man?
Job 33:17-18, 29-30
14. Is a consciousness of wrong doing and a recognition of the futility of sin essential according to Elihu? Job 33:27-28
15. Does Elihu think prayer is an important part of returning to God?
Job 33:26
16. Is a ransom (or atonement) required to save man? Job 33:24
17. What does Elihu wish to do concerning Job? Job 33:32
18. Does the fact that Job did not say anything when given a chance indicate that he may have been quite interested in Elihu's approach?
Job 33:32-34:1
19. What further does Elihu accuse Job of saying in Job 34:5-9?
20. Does Elihu admit that God is sometimes wicked and unjust? Job 34:12
21. Does Elihu believe that God rewards men according to his works?
Job 34:11
22. Does Elihu think there is any way that man can escape from God's observation? Job 34:21-22

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Lesson 6 (cont.)

IN DEFENCE OF GOD

23. What does Elihu think is proper to say to God? Job 34:31-32
24. Why does Elihu desire that Job be tried? Job 34:35-37
25. Do you agree with Elihu in Job 35:5-8 regarding the effect of our sins and righteousness on God?
26. How does Elihu explain the fact that God sometimes does not hear the cries of the oppressed? Job 35:9-13
27. Does Elihu believe that God judges justly without prejudice?
Job 35:5-6, 15
28. What is Elihu's opinion of Job and what does he warn Job of?
Job 36:16-21
29. What does Elihu tell Job to consider in Job 37:14?

(Elihu describes the workings of God in the weather in most of Job 36:27-37:22. These remarks may have been prompted by an actual storm building up at the time that he was speaking.)
30. What does Elihu finally conclude about God? Job 37:23
31. What words of Elihu were confirmed by God? Job 34:35; 38:1-2; 37:19
32. What has Elihu added to what had already been said by Job and his friends?
33. Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and now Elihu have given their judgement of Job. What is your opinion of Job?
34. Why do you suppose that Elihu is never mentioned before he starts to speak nor after he finishes his speech?

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Lesson 7

JOB'S LESSON IN HUMILITY

Job 38-42

1. What visible phenomenon was associated with God's voice? Job 38:1
2. God charged Job with doing what? Job 38:2
3. How had Job darkened counsel without knowledge?
4. What does God demand Job to do as He examines Job? Job 38:3

(God now delivers question after question, probing Job's limitations, and exposing his lack of qualifications to pass judgement on God's regulation of the universe. Job 38:4 - 39:30)

5. Which of God's questions do you feel were among the five or so best ones? Job 38 - 39
 6. Which of God's questions do you think that scientists have the answer for today? Job 38 and 39
 7. Does the fact that we know the answers to some of these questions mean that they were not good questions for Job?
 8. Are there questions today that are just as puzzling to us as those were to Job? Name a few.
 9. What does God accuse Job of in Job 40:2 ?
 10. How did Job reply to God? Job 40:3-5
 11. What else does God accuse Job of in Job 40:8?
 12. What would Job have to do before God would confess that Job could even save himself? Job 40:10-14
- (God now describes behemoth and leviathan which some scholars believe to be the hippopotamus and the crocodile respectively. A minority suggest an elephant for behemoth or a whale for leviathan. Others feel that leviathan is symbolic of some great natural or supernatural power. Job 40:15 to 41:34.)

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Lesson 7 (cont.)

JOB'S LESSON IN HUMILITY

13. To what does Job confess? Job 42:1-3
 14. What did Job say he saw after his confession? Job 42:5
 15. What do you think he might have meant by seeing God?
 16. How did Job then feel about himself and what did he do? Job 42:6
 17. Why did God criticize Job's three friends? Job 42:7
 18. What did God command Job's three friends to do? Job 42:8
 19. What was Job's part in this? Job 42:8 Why do you suppose God requested it?
 20. What happened to Job after his prayer for his friends? Job 42:9-13
- (According to one recent scholar (Crook), the three daughters' names have the following interesting meanings: Jemima - Turtle Dove; Kezia - Cinnamon; Kerenhuppuch - Perfume-horn.)
21. What significance may there be in the fact that everything of Job's was doubled except his children and the fact that he ended up with exactly the same number of boys and girls as before?
 22. What important lesson did Job learn?
 23. What is the greatest lesson for us from the book of Job?
 24. Compare Job and his transforming experience with Saul of Tarsus and his experience on the road to Damascus.
 25. Compare Job and the Prodigal son.
 26. In what sense are we like Job?
 27. Do you think that Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu were real people?
 28. In what sense do you think Job is a record of actual history?

Next Lesson: Portions from Proverbs .