

Job and His Family

Job 1:1-5

Job 1:1-5 - *“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. ² And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. ³ Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East.*

⁴ And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵ So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, “It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” This Job did regularly.”

Background Notes

The story of Job is a true story. Although the book of Job is primarily written in Hebrew poetry, it is not an ancient play. It is the real-life history of a man named Job, who literally went through all the sufferings described in the book. Two books of Scripture mention Job as a real historical person. He is listed with Noah and Daniel in Ezekiel 14, and his patience is mentioned in James 5:11: *“we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.”*

Who wrote the Book of Job? We don't know for sure. Various authors are suggested. Job himself is one possibility, because the author seems to have firsthand knowledge of the events and conversations in the book. It's also possible that Elihu, one of Job's counselors, was the author. Elihu may have recorded the dialogs between Job and his friends, including the one between himself and Job.

Jewish tradition says that Moses wrote the Book of Job. All indications are that the events of the book of Job took place very early, in Patriarchal times, well before the time of Moses, so Moses certainly could have been the author. When Moses ran away from Egypt he lived in the land of Midian for 40 years. Tradition postulates that while Moses lived in Midian, someone from the area (perhaps Jethro, his father-in-law) told him the true story of Job, because Job had lived in that area. Lamentations 4:21 says, *“Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, you who dwell in the land of Uz! The cup shall also pass over to you and you shall become drunk and make yourself naked.”* This verse puts the land of Uz in the vicinity of Edom, which (along with Midian) was southeast of the Dead Sea.

Moses may have written up Job's story as an *apologetic* to show that God has a purpose in suffering. He then brought the book of Job back to Egypt to share with God's people who were suffering there as slaves. That's one possible scenario. If so, Job may be the oldest book in the Bible (although Moses may have compiled Genesis before he ran away from Egypt to Midian).

I'm reading a section from an excellent commentary entitled [The Remarkable Record of Job](#), by Dr. Henry Morris. This section is entitled "The Oldest Book."

"The Book of Job may be the oldest book in the Bible, with the probable exception of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. There can, at least, be no question about its setting in the patriarchal period, certainly before Moses, and possibly even before Abraham. The events described in Job obviously took place before Israel was established as God's covenant nation. In the book, there is no hint of the nation of Israel—no mention of Moses, or Abraham, or any of the judges, kings, or prophets of Israel. Yet the Book of Job has always been accepted by the children of Israel as one of the canonical books of Scripture.

Even more significant is the fact that there is no mention of the Ten Commandments or any of the Mosaic Laws. Many of the discourses in the book center on questions of right and wrong, sin and judgment, reward and punishment, but they never are placed in the context of God's Mount Sinai revelations.

Divine laws were given to men and women long before Moses. Abraham was guided by such laws. "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Genesis 26:5). Exactly how these primeval laws were given, and in what form, we do not know, for they have not been preserved. They have been superseded - first by the Mosaic Laws, then by the Law of Christ. They were known by Abraham, however, and no doubt by his ancestors. They were also known by Job, for he testified: "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips; I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). Job's friends also were aware of them. Their chief spokesman, Eliphaz, urged Job as follows: "Receive, I pray thee, the law from His mouth, and lay up His words in thine heart" (Job 22:22).

The Laws of Moses laid great stress on the sacrificial system and set aside the tribe of Levi to officiate at the sacrifices for the sins of the people. Before this system was established, however, the patriarchal head of each family offered the sacrifices. Note that this was the practice of Noah and Abraham (Genesis 8:20; 22:13). This was also the practice of Job, and even of his three friends (42:7-9).

Perhaps the most significant evidence of all (that the story of Job predated the Mosaic Laws) is that the almost universal drift of the early nations into pantheistic idolatry after the dispersion at Babel had not yet infected the tribes mentioned in Job. Job the Uzite, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite, and Elihu the Buzite all believed in the true God of creation. Their concepts of God's ways with man proved inadequate, but none of the men was inclined toward other gods. There is no hint of pantheism, polytheism, idolatry, or evolutionism anywhere in the book, and such a situation is inconceivable anywhere in any nation much after the time of Abraham.

Furthermore, quite a number of references in Job refer to the early events recorded in Genesis—for example, the creation, the Fall, the Flood, and the dispersion. A number of ancient tribes and places mentioned in Job such as the Sabateans, the Chaldeans, and Ophir tie into the “Table of Nations” in Genesis 10 or other early sections of Genesis - but none that characterize later periods.

Job lived 140 years after the events described in the book (42:16). By figuring in the approximate number of years he lived prior to those events (the exact number is unknown, but at least enough to have ten grown children), we can place him in the time of the early patriarchs, perhaps around 2000 B.C.”

It is important to keep in mind that the book of Job is a **theodicy**. A *theodicy* is a vindication of God, even through times of suffering and what appear to be unjust situations in life. So the theme of Job is the **purpose of suffering**, or even the **mystery of suffering**.

Doctrinal Points

1. A godly life is no guarantee against suffering.

Job 1:1 leaves no doubt that Job was a godly man. He was blameless and upright, a man who feared God and turned away from evil. *Blameless*, of course, **does not mean sinless**. No one other than our Lord Jesus has ever lived a sinless life. Blameless means “without moral blemish and morally whole.” Job was a man of highest integrity. He was spiritually mature. He turned away from evil.

God blessed Job with ten children and great wealth: “*seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household...*” In that day, a large family and wealth was an indication of a godly man who was highly favored by God.

But Job’s godly life was no guarantee against suffering. Before long Job would suffer the loss of all his children, the loss of his material possessions, and the loss of his health. Notice - this tremendous loss did not occur because Job had backslidden in his faith, or that he had become ungodly. The “prosperity gospel” preachers need to read the book of Job, because Job was godly and faithful - but that didn’t guarantee that he wouldn’t suffer. A godly life is no guarantee against suffering.

The good news is that the book of Job teaches that there is **a purpose for suffering**. Suffering is not an indication that God doesn’t love us, or that God has lost control of the events of our lives. No – in fact, just the opposite! In the book of Job we learn that God is very much in control, right down to the last detail of our lives. He is not only in control - He has a purpose when He allows suffering to come into our lives, even though we may not understand it. So if you as a believer are experiencing a time of suffering right now, that doesn’t mean you’ve sinned or that you’ve done something wrong. God loves us. He has a purpose for allowing suffering to come into our lives, and His purposes are *always good*.

2. A godly life is doesn't guarantee a godly family.

Verses 4-5: *"And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵ So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' This Job did regularly."*

It seems that Job's sons and daughters loved to party. Notice that the text does not say that these parties were sinful. Verse 5 says that Job offered sacrifices *just in case* his sons and daughters had sinned. But the implication is that Job's sons and daughters were not as godly as Job was.

A godly life is not a guarantee of a godly family. How often we see that situation today: the parents are godly, but the children are not. What's the answer? Did the parents fail to bring their children up properly? Not necessarily. Are the parents reaping what they sowed in their earlier years? Not necessarily. Are the parents involved in secret sin, or sin that they're not aware of? Not necessarily. The bottom line is that **a godly life doesn't guarantee a godly family**. Parents are responsible before the Lord to raise their children *"in the discipline and instruction of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4) – but a godly life doesn't guarantee a godly family.

Practical Applications

1. Turn away from evil!

Job turned away from evil. Do we? What kind of books do you think Job read? What kind of movies and TV shows did he watch? What websites did he visit? Job **turned away from evil** - and so should we. 2 Timothy 2:22 says, *"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."*

2. Pray for your children!

As Job continuously brought his children before the Lord, so should we. Notice that Job didn't pray for his children only when they were teens. Job brought his adult children before the Lord. And so should we. When our children become adults and go on to live their own independent lives, we shouldn't stop praying for them. No - we must pray for them as long as we live!

Never stop praying for your children, no matter where they are in their lives or in their relationship with the Lord. Pray for your children!