AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE
BOOK OF JOB
An Introduction to the Book of Job

by

Stephen R. Bradd

1. The Book of Job has been called the world’s greatest literary work.

   A. It is a worthy book to challenge our minds and to cause us to reflect upon our own existence.

   B. Join us as we introduce this wonderful book and prepare to begin a study of it.

II. When I consider the life of the patriarch Job, as recorded in the Old Testament, I think of tragedy as well as triumph.

   A. Job was rich in every way, and then suffered incredible loss.

      1. However, he triumphed in the end because of his patient faith and was again abundantly blessed.

III. Job’s name means “persecuted one” or “object of enmity.”

   A. It is unknown who actually wrote the book bearing his name.

      1. Many believe Job himself to be the author, although some have suggested Moses or even Solomon.
A. Despite not being able to identify the human penman with certainty, we know that the Holy Spirit inspired it to be written.

1. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). (KJV)

IV. It is also unknown as to exactly when the events of the book took place.

A. Some suggest 2000 B.C. as a good estimate due to certain details given in the text (cf. Job 1:5, 42:16)

1. Job 1:5, When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom. (NIV)

2. Job 42:16, After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. (NIV)

B. The book covers a span of approximately 150 years.

1. There are several passages that support the historicity of the book (e.g., Ezek. 14:14 mentions Job along with Noah and Daniel; James 5:11 refers to “the perseverance of Job”; Jer. 25:20 and Lam. 4:21 both refer to the land of Uz, where Job lived).
a. Ezekiel 14:14, even if these three men—Noah, Daniel and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD. (NIV)

b. James 5:11, Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. (KJV)

c. Jeremiah 25:20, and all the foreign people there; all the kings of Uz; all the kings of the Philistines (those of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the people left at Ashdod (NIV)

d. Lamentations 4:21, Rejoice and be glad, O Daughter of Edom, you who live in the land of Uz. But to you also the cup will be passed; you will be drunk and stripped naked. (NIV)

V. A fundamental lesson that all should learn from the book of Job is this: The Creator is worthy of our devotion even when we do not know or understand what He is doing.

A. God deserves our praise simply on the basis of who He is, apart from the blessings He bestows.

1. Those who can embrace this lesson and cling to it in times of distress-and even tragedy-are wise.

VI. This book has been described by many as a literary masterpiece.
A. Professor Richard G. Moulton suggests that the book is esteemed by numerous writers as the greatest poem in the world’s great literature.

1. Victor Hugo once stated: “Tomorrow, if all literature was to be destroyed and it was left to me to retain one work only, I should save Job.”

2. Tennyson declared that Job is “the greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature.”

3. Daniel Webster said: “The book of Job, taken as a mere work of literary genius, is one of the most wonderful productions of any age or of any language.”

4. Thomas Carlyle exclaimed that it is “one of the Grandest things ever written.”

5. Historian Phillip Schaff wrote: “The Book of Job rises like a pyramid in the history of literature, without a predecessor and without a rival.”

B. Friends, even if the book of Job was uninspired, we would be wise to study it.

1. But, because it is from God himself, we would be fools to ignore it!

VII. The book of Job can be outlined with three simple points: (1) the prologue, (2) the dialogue, and (3) the epilogue.

A. The prologue spans the first two chapters and the epilogue covers the last eleven verses of the book.
1. Everything in between centers on dialogue among Job, his friends and Jehovah.

VIII. Let’s take a brief look at this time at an analysis of the book of Job from Wayne Jackson’s outstanding commentary on it.

A. JOB’S TESTING

1. Almighty God challenged Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?” (Job 1:8)

   a. This, of course, does not imply that Job was sinlessly perfect; it does affirm that he was a spiritually mature, devoted servant of God.

2. Satan retorted that job did not serve his Maker for “Nothing” (1:9).

   a. If his prosperity were removed, “he will curse You to Your face!” (1:11).

3. And so, Satan was granted permission to test the patriarch.

4. The range of Job’s affliction covers every facet of human endurance.

   a. First, all of his material possessions are lost, he is financially bankrupt (weaker men have committed suicide for less!).
b. Second, his children are killed in a series of disasters (consider what your grief would be if your child were killed, and multiply it by ten).

c. Third, he is afflicted with a dreadful disease from head to foot and thus sat among the ashes of the city dump.

d. Fourth, his wife spiritually forsakes him and urges Job to “curse God, and die.”

e. Finally, he becomes the utter contempt of his contemporaries.

5. Yet, through it all, he does not renounce his Creator, but later says: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (13:15).

B. THE CONTROVERSY

1. Job’s three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) having heard of his horrible plight came to comfort him.

   a. They are stricken mute by the awesomeness of his appearance and sit for seven days in respectful silence.

2. The philosophy of Job’s friends can simply be expressed in this fashion: (1) Suffering is the direct result of personal sins (and in proportion thereto), (2) Job is suffering greatly, and (3) Therefore, Job has committed some great sin.

3. Their error, of course, was in the major premise of their argument.
a. There is no basis for the assumption that suffering is always the consequence of personal wrongdoing.

4. Job responds that observation reveals that piety does not necessarily exempt one from suffering.

a. In fact, it is frequently the case that “the tents of robbers prosper” (12:6)

b. The man from Uz thus defends his innocence.

c. He does not claim that he is absolutely sinless, but he does believe that his misfortune is out of proportion with any transgression he might have committed.

d. Occasionally, Job does seem to make some rather drastic statements, but he acknowledges that his utterances are those of a “desperate” man (6:26).

C. ELIHU’S POSITION

1. Elihu, a fourth friend of Job’s who enters the controversy later, is angry with the patriarch’s “comforters” because they condemned him and yet offered no solution.

2. He was further agitated with Job himself because he “justified himself rather than God” (32:2);

a. That is, he had been more concerned with his own honor than the Lord’s.
3. Moreover, Elihu contends that suffering is not necessarily punitive.

   a. It may serve to teach, to strengthen, or it may be preventive in nature.


D. GOD SPEAKS TO JOB

1. The Lord does not condescend to quibbling with Job; rather, He majestically overpowers him with a grand affirmation of His universal sovereignty as evidenced by the unparalleled glories of the created world.

2. Read and be thrilled by the record of Job 38-41.

   a. Job 38:1-41, Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said: "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone- while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? "Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, 'This far
you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'? "Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it? The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment. The wicked are denied their light, and their upraised arm is broken. "Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the shadow of death? Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me, if you know all this. "What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside? Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings? Surely you know, for you were already born! You have lived so many years! "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of the hail, which I reserve for times of trouble, for days of war and battle? What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed, or the place where the east winds are scattered over the earth? Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain, and a path for the thunderstorm, to water a land where no man lives, a desert with no one in it, to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass? Does the rain have a father? Who fathers the drops of dew? From whose womb comes the ice? Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens when the waters become hard as stone, when the surface of the deep is frozen? "Can you bind the beautiful
Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs? Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you set up God's dominion over the earth? "Can you raise your voice to the clouds and cover yourself with a flood of water? Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you, 'Here we are'? Who endowed the heart with wisdom or gave understanding to the mind? Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens when the dust becomes hard and the clods of earth stick together? "Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket? Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food? (NIV)

b. Job 39:1-30, "Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn? Do you count the months till they bear? Do you know the time they give birth? They crouch down and bring forth their young; their labor pains are ended. Their young thrive and grow strong in the wilds; they leave and do not return. "Who let the wild donkey go free? Who untied his ropes? I gave him the wasteland as his home, the salt flats as his habitat. He laughs at the commotion in the town; he does not hear a driver's shout. He ranges the hills for his pasture and searches for any green thing. "Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Will he
stay by your manger at night? Can you hold him to the furrow with a harness? Will he till the valleys behind you? Will you rely on him for his great strength? Will you leave your heavy work to him? Can you trust him to bring in your grain and gather it to your threshing floor? "The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, but they cannot compare with the pinions and feathers of the stork. She lays her eggs on the ground and lets them warm in the sand, unmindful that a foot may crush them, that some wild animal may trample them. She treats her young harshly, as if they were not hers; she cares not that her labor was in vain, for God did not endow her with wisdom or give her a share of good sense. Yet when she spreads her feathers to run, she laughs at horse and rider. "Do you give the horse his strength or clothe his neck with a flowing mane? Do you make him leap like a locust, striking terror with his proud snorting? He paws fiercely, rejoicing in his strength, and charges into the fray. He laughs at fear, afraid of nothing; he does not shy away from the sword. The quiver rattles against his side, along with the flashing spear and lance. In frenzied excitement he eats up the ground; he cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds. At the blast of the trumpet he snorts, 'Aha!' He catches the scent of battle from afar, the shout of commanders and the battle cry. "Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread his wings toward the south? Does the eagle soar at your command and build his nest on high? He dwells on a cliff and stays there at night; a rocky crag is his
stronghold. From there he seeks out his food; his eyes detect it from afar. His young ones feast on blood, and where the slain are, there is he." (NIV)

c. Job 40:1-24, The LORD said to Job: "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!" Then Job answered the LORD: "I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer—twice, but I will say no more." Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm: "Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his? Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor, and clothe yourself in honor and majesty. Unleash the fury of your wrath, look at every proud man and bring him low, look at every proud man and humble him, crush the wicked where they stand. Bury them all in the dust together; shroud their faces in the grave. Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you. "Look at the behemoth, [a] which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox. What strength he has in his loins, what power in the muscles of his belly! His tail [b] sways like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are close-knit. His bones are tubes of bronze, his limbs like rods of iron. He ranks first among the works of God, yet his Maker can approach him with his sword. The hills bring
him their produce, and all the wild animals play nearby. Under the lotus plants he lies, hidden among the reeds in the marsh. The lotuses conceal him in their shadow; the poplars by the stream surround him. When the river rages, he is not alarmed; he is secure, though the Jordan should surge against his mouth. Can anyone capture him by the eyes, or trap him and pierce his nose? (NIV)

d. Job 41:1-34, "Can you pull in the leviathan with a fishhook or tie down his tongue with a rope? Can you put a cord through his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook? Will he keep begging you for mercy? Will he speak to you with gentle words? Will he make an agreement with you for you to take him as your slave for life? Can you make a pet of him like a bird or put him on a leash for your girls? Will traders barter for him? Will they divide him up among the merchants? Can you fill his hide with harpoons or his head with fishing spears? If you lay a hand on him, you will remember the struggle and never do it again! Any hope of subduing him is false; the mere sight of him is overpowering. No one is fierce enough to rouse him. Who then is able to stand against me? Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me. "I will not fail to speak of his limbs, his strength and his graceful form. Who can strip off his outer coat? Who would approach him with a bridle? Who dares open the doors of his mouth, ringed about with his fearsome teeth?"
His back has rows of shields tightly sealed together; each is so close to the next that no air can pass between. They are joined fast to one another; they cling together and cannot be parted. His snorting throws out flashes of light; his eyes are like the rays of dawn. Firebrands stream from his mouth; sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke pours from his nostrils as from a boiling pot over a fire of reeds. His breath sets coals ablaze, and flames dart from his mouth. Strength resides in his neck; dismay goes before him. The folds of his flesh are tightly joined; they are firm and immovable. His chest is hard as rock, hard as a lower millstone. When he rises up, the mighty are terrified; they retreat before his thrashing. The sword that reaches him has no effect, nor does the spear or the dart or the javelin. Iron he treats like straw and bronze like rotten wood. Arrows do not make him flee; slingstones are like chaff to him. A club seems to him but a piece of straw; he laughs at the rattling of the lance. His undersides are jagged potsherds, leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge. He makes the depths churn like a boiling caldron and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment. Behind him he leaves a glistening wake; one would think the deep had white hair. Nothing on earth is his equal—a creature without fear. He looks down on all that are haughty; he is king over all that are proud." (NIV)

3. This incomprehensible chronicle of divine power reduces Job to the proper level of humility.
a. Professor Newton Wray compares it to Peter’s humiliation, “I am a sinful man,” when he was so impressed with the awesome power of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 5:6-9).

b. Job thus confesses, “Therefore, I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.” (Job 42:3)

c. And again, “Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (42:6)

E. JOB IS BLESSED

1. Because Job maintained his integrity, he is commended and blessed by Jehovah.

a. As to material prosperity, “The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before” (42:10) (NIV)

b. He was again blessed with ten children.

2. The sterling character of this man of God is revealed by his prayer for his three pseudo comforters.

a. Truly, he was a great man.
QUESTIONS

On

An Introduction to the Book of Job

By

John C. Sewell

1. Who was Job? ______________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________

2. How can the story of Job be regarded as a *tragedy* and a *triumph*? __________________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________

3. Who wrote the book of Job? When was the book of Job written? ________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________

4. Cite other biblical references which indicate Job was an actual historical person. _______________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________

5. Into what three sections can the book of Job be divided? What chapters verses compose each section? ______________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________

6. Summarize each of the three (3) sections. _________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________

7. How and why was Job tested? _______________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________

8. Name Job’s four friends?  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  

9. What position did each of these friends take in regard to Job’s troubles?  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  

10. There is no basis for the __________ that __________ is ______________ the __________ of __________ does not ___  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  

11. What fault did Elihu find with Job’s friends? How often are we guilty of this same fault?  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  

12. What did God say to Job? What were the Lord’s main points?  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________
13. Job responded to God’s speech by saying, “I have ________ ________ what I did not ________, things too ________ for me which I did not ______________.”

14. How was Job blessed at the end of his ordeal? __________________________

15. Are all who are faithful to God always richly blessed in the end? __________________________