

Job

Introduction

No one knows who wrote the book, when it was written, or where the events occurred. However, it seems likely that Job lived in the time of the patriarchs. The central character of the book is Job and the speeches revolve around his circumstances. However, the book of Job is not primarily dealing with the subject of the righteous (Job's) suffering. It would be more accurate to view Job's suffering as a catalyst to explore the central concern of the book, *God's administration of justice*.

The book of Job is wisdom literature, and it follows a beautiful poetic structure. Though the book's central theme is easy to discern, some of the individual elements of the various speeches can be difficult to interpret due to the poetic flare of the book.

Things to think about in each chapter/speech:

1. Subject – Complement
2. Key verse / Focal point
3. Theme / Big Idea
4. Observations
- Why is it in the Bible?
- Why here (how does it relate to the other sections)?
5. Outline; tracing the argument of the book

Job 1

- Job – Selected/Tested
- Key verse – v. 8
- Theme: *The LORD selected Job to be a test case of the response of a godly man.*
- Observations: God has the sovereign right to do as he pleases. Job's response shows that people can be godly apart from material blessing.
- Outline

PROLOGUE

- I. Background – vv. 1–5
 - A. Job was righteous – v. 1
 - B. Job was kiddy-full – v. 2
 - C. Job was rich – v. 3
- II. Test of wealth – vv. 6–22
 - A. God's question & authorization – vv. 6–12
 - B. Job's bereavement – vv. 13–19
 1. Animals stolen – v. 15
 2. Sheep burned – v. 16
 3. Camels stolen – v. 17
 4. Servants killed – v. 17
 5. Children dead – v. 19
 - C. Job's response – vv. 20–22
 - Job praised the LORD and did not sin.

Job 2

- Health – Tested
- Key verse – v. 3
- Theme: *The LORD again allows Satan to probe Job's response to testing; this time, Job's health is taken.*
- Observations: By Job's reaction God is vindicated over Satan. The godly can respond in faith when facing severe oppression.

- Outline
- III. Test of health – vv. 1–10
- A. God’s question & authorization – vv. 1–6
 - B. Job’s body afflicted – vv. 9–10
- IV. Consolation – vv. 11–13
- Three friends gather to console and mourn with Job.

Job 3

- Life – Lamented
- Key verse – v. 1
- Theme: *Job laments his suffering, wishing that he had never been born at all.*
- Observations: Job voiced the intensity of his plight, yet he still did not curse God. Impressed on Job was a sense of loss; moreover, he was experiencing relentless pain. As a result, he reflected on the “injustice” of his condition.
- Outline

THE DEBATE

- I. Job’s lament – vv. 1–26
- A. Job curses his birth – vv. 2–10
 - B. Job longs for death – vv. 11–19

Job 4

- Rebuke – Delivered
- Key verse – v. 8
- Theme: *Eliphaz rebukes Job—God only punishes those who do evil.*
- Observations: Eliphaz plans to correct Job’s impatient outburst. Eliphaz propounds a theory of God only afflicting those who deserve it—God would not harm those who are innocent. Eliphaz supports his viewpoints by appealing to his own experiences (v. 8). It is interesting that Eliphaz either considers himself as a non-sinner or in his “theology” only those who commit “really bad” sins are punished in mechanical retribution by God.
- Outline

THE DEBATE – ROUND 1

- I. Eliphaz’s response – 4:1–5:27
- A. A rebuke of Job – vv. 1–6
 - B. A mechanical view of retribution & reward – vv. 7–11

Job 5

- “Theology” – Expounded
 - Key verse – v. 17
 - Theme: *Eliphaz further explains God’s actions—God punishes the bad and delivers the repentant.*
 - Observations: Eliphaz had a cause-and-effect view of sin and retribution. He tells Job that since bad things had happened to him it was certainly punishment for some sin Job had committed. Therefore, Job should turn to God; He will be merciful.
 - Outline
- C. The punishment of the fool – vv. 1–7
 - D. The recommendation to Job – 8–27
 - The repentant one is blessed – vv. 17–27

Job 6

- Anguish – Justified
- Key verses – vv. 10, 30
- Theme: *Job justifies his life and his anguish, explaining that though God was responsible (v. 4) it was not because of some wrong Job had committed.*
- Observations: Job explains that his anguish is heavy. Job was disappointed in the friends' lack of kindness in his time of despair. He justifies his life and explains that he has done nothing wrong. By strong innuendo Eliphaz explained Job's suffering was based on God's strict laws of retribution. Job, on the other hand, maintained his integrity (vv. 29–30).
- Outline

II. Job responds to Eliphaz – 6:1–7:21

- A. Job's pain is "unbearable" – vv. 1–13
- B. Job chastises his friends for their false accusations – vv. 14–30
 - Job maintains his integrity

Job 7

- Suffering – Questioned
- Key verses – vv. 20–21
- Theme: *Job questions God as to why He continues to cause Job to suffer.*
- Observations: Job reminds us that his pain is quite miserable. He goes on to address God, speaking without restraint in bitter complaint to Him. Job said that God was not only watching but also harassing him (vv. 13–14). Job's life was quickly passing away, and he thought God was constantly tormenting him with no relief in sight.
- Outline
 - C. Job's pain is terrible – vv. 1–5
 - D. Job addresses God – vv. 6–21
 1. Life is short – vv. 6–10
 2. Why must God torment him – vv. 11–16
 3. Why does God bother with him – vv. 17–21

Job 8

- Repentance – Implored
- Key verses – vv. 3, 5–6
- Theme: *Bildad implores Job to repent from the sin he has "obviously" committed for God most assuredly will punish the ungodly.*
- Observations: Bildad implies that Job's complaints against God are an accusation that God is unjust. Of course, Bildad views God's actions as punishment for sin. God does not pervert justice, and anyone who sins against Him will suffer the consequences. In contrast to Eliphaz, who gained his knowledge from his own experience, Bildad appealed to the former generations (vv. 8–10; history). The wicked always suffer. In Bildad's thinking, if Job were blameless he would not have been treated this way by God (vv. 20–22); therefore, he should repent and turn to God.
- Outline

III. Bildad responds to Job – vv. 1–22

- A. A defense of God's justice – vv. 1–7
- B. The godless perish – vv. 8–19
 1. Proof from history – vv. 8–10
 2. Proof from nature – vv. 11–19
- C. A call to repent – vv. 20–22

Job 9

- Innocence – Pleaded
- Key verses – vv. 19–20
- Theme: *Job desires to plead his innocence before God, but he believes God is unconcerned, or unfair.*
- Observations: Job knew that the wicked perish (v. 2). But why then was *he* suffering? To dispute with God, as Eliphaz had suggested (5:8), would be impossible. Furthermore, since he would be speechless in God’s presence, all he could hope for from such a Judge would be mercy. Whether blameless or wicked, God would arbitrarily destroy him, Job contends. Here Job accused God of unfairness (vv. 28–31).
- Outline

IV. Job responds to Bildad – 9:1–10:22

- A. God is just – vv. 1–4
- B. God is powerful & sovereign – vv. 5–10
- C. God cannot be summoned to court – vv. 14–20
 - 1. God is inaccessible – vv. 15–18
 - 2. God is strong – v. 19a
 - 3. God is just – v. 19b
- D. Job is innocent and God is unconcerned – vv. 21–24
- E. Job’s life is fleeting; he cannot win – vv. 25–31
- F. Job desires a mediator – vv. 32–35

Job 10

- Unfairness – Charged
- Key verses – vv. 13–14
- Theme: *Job charges God with unfairness and once again desires death.*
- Observations: There is little new material in this chapter. However, after complaining to his friends, Job now turned to complaining to God. This is not a new prayer but a rehashing of what he had said before, concluding with *another* death wish. He ends verse 9 by saying he had no mediator, so he has become his own attorney. Job charges God with unfairness and inconsistency (vv. 8–17), for Job’s innocence meant nothing to God, since the Sovereign was against him, no matter what.
- Outline
 - G. Job entreats God – vv. 1–7
 - Condemned without charges
 - H. Job blames God – vv. 13–17
 - God was watching/waiting for Job to sin
 - I. Job asks God – vv. 18–22
 - Why didn’t God kill him at birth

Job 11

- Foolishness – Warned
- Key verses – vv. 13, 20
- Theme: *Zophar posits Job has “obviously” foolishly sinned against God; therefore, he should act wisely and repent of his sin.*
- Observations: Zophar was furious and his words are vitriolic. Zophar said God was letting Job off easy, giving him less punishment than he deserved! Zophar extols God’s wisdom, in response to Job’s words in chap 9. He concludes his speech by expressing that God is wise and discerns that Job is false. Zophar charged Job to repent of his sin (hidden sin). Zophar ends (v. 20) with a clear shot against Job’s refusal to admit guilt and continual pleas for death to come.
- Outline

V. Zophar responds to Job – vv. 1–20

- A. Should I remain silent? – vv. 1–6
 - You claim you are pure, but if God were here we would know differently—*God is punishing you.*
- B. Do you know the mind of God? – vv. 7–12
 - God is all-wise, and He knows worthless men.
- C. Repent completely and you will find blessing – vv. 13–19
- D. Wicked men are blinded and can only hope for death – v. 20

Job 12

- Conventions – Reversed (by the LORD)
 - Key verses – vv. 13, 20
 - Theme: *God is sovereign over His world—He can do whatever He chooses to do, and sometimes He chooses to do the opposite of what one would expect.*
 - Observations: Job makes a point then of saying that his disaster has come from the LORD. God sends disaster, but not necessarily as the result of some evil that has been committed. God is sovereign and powerful; He can reverse the fortunes of leaders and even entire nations. Job’s point seems to be that while one might expect leaders to be powerful and elders to be wise (v. 12), God sometimes reverses that. Job’s advisers, older than he, were not as wise, for they did not accurately represent God’s administration of justice.
 - Outline
- V. Job responds to the three (v. 2a – “you people”) – 12:1–14:22
- A. Job addresses his friends – 12:1–13:19
 - 1. You are not wise – vv. 1–3
 - Everyone knows these things
 - 2. God is sovereign (two testimonies) – vv. 7–12
 - i. Nature knows it – vv. 7–8
 - ii. Humans know it (esp. the old v.12) – vv. 10–12
 - 3. God is powerful and in control – vv. 13–25
 - God can do the opposite of what is expected

Job 13a

- Wisdom – Argued
 - Key verses – vv. 5, 13
 - Theme: *Job contends he is wise and his friends are foolish; therefore, he will argue his case before the all-wise God.*
 - Observations: Job argues that he was wiser than his friends and would take his case before God, for it was worthless to argue before fools. God would not benefit from their partiality. Certainly they could not be God’s defense attorneys. In fact, He would rebuke and terrify them for their words. Fearlessly Job was ready to speak out to God and argue his case.
 - Outline
4. Continued rebuttal—defense and complaint – vv. 1–19
- i. I am wiser than you are – vv. 1–6
 - ii. Do not argue (as lawyer) on God’s behalf using lies – vv. 7–12
 - iii. Be silent and listen to me argue my case (as lawyer) – vv. 13–19

Job 13b, 14

- Presentation – Despair
- Key verses – 13:26–28
- Theme: *Job desires to present his case before God and inquire of God why he is suffering, but he suddenly sinks to despair of life.*

- Observations: Job pleads, “Stop afflicting me, and explain why I am suffering.” However, after this dash of daring, Job quickly withdrew into a feeling of despair (13:28–14:22). The themes that fill this speech are ones we have heard before: desire for a hearing, thoughts on the brevity of life, and despair that death ends all.
- Outline
 - B. Job addresses God – 13:20–14:22
 1. Job’s plea—allow me to present my case – 13:20–28
 1. What have I done wrong? (13:23–25)
 2. Why are you holding my youthful sins against me? (13:26–27)
 2. Job’s despair
 - i. Life is short (14:1–6)
 - ii. Death is final (14:7–12)
 - iii. Hope in death—“Let me die” (14:13–17)
 - iv. No hope—“Your word is final” (14:18–22)

Observations from the 1st round of speeches:

Thus far Job’s friends have failed to understand that God does not mechanically dole out punishment and material blessing based on one’s actions. However, it is equally clear that Job had a similar theology, for he felt God was unfair in His dealings with him. After all, Job thought, he had not sinned (was a righteous man) so why was God punishing him like this. Only if Job had a similar retributive understanding of God’s workings would he phrase his argument like this (cf. 14:16b).

Job 15

- Reprimand – of Folly
- Key verses – v. 4–5
- Theme: *Eliphaz rebukes Job of ignorance and arrogance, for God only punishes those who do evil.*
- Observations: Eliphaz is perturbed by Job’s irreverent talk and assumed wisdom. Job’s speeches only compound his wickedness, or at least they are full of error because of the evil in his heart. Eliphaz again submits a theory of God afflicting those who deserve it; God would not harm those who are innocent. Eliphaz again supports his viewpoints by appealing to his own experiences (v. 17) and says his wisdom is the same wisdom of older, wiser men (v. 10). Eliphaz recounts all the terrible things that await the sinner. But Eliphaz did not have all the facts. His attempt to jolt Job into repentance failed.
- Outline

THE DEBATE – ROUND 2

- I. Eliphaz responds to Job’s summary rebuttal – vv. 1–35
 - A. *You are not wise* – vv. 1–10
 - B. *You are not pure* – vv. 11–19
 - Job speaks ignorantly and arrogantly
 - C. *The wicked are punished* – vv. 20–35
 - Though they seem prosperous they are ruined

Job 16

- Injustice – Charged
- Key verses – v. 12
- Theme: *Job complains to God, charging that He has acted unjustly toward Job—subjecting him to suffering without cause.*
- Observations: Job criticizes his friends because they compounded rather than eased his trouble. Job bemoans his torment at the hands of God. God had worn him down (v. 8), attacked him (v. 9), and had

left him in the hands of wicked men (vv. 10–11). Job pleaded with the earth that it not cover his blood, that his injustice be vindicated. Job wanted a spokesman, a heavenly defense attorney who could speak on God’s level. Job’s companions had not spoken on his behalf, so he needed someone who would.

- Outline

- II. Job responds to Eliphaz – 16:1–17:16
 - A. Friends criticized – vv. 1–6
 - Job has already heard the same arguments before from Eliphaz
 - B. Complaint to God – vv. 7–17
 - “God tears me apart”
 - “He has tossed me into the hands of sinners”
 - “His arrows pierce me”
 - “I have done no wrong, and my prayer is pure”
 - C. Hope for vindication – vv. 18–22
 - Earth will cry out on my behalf
 - My advocate is in heaven
 - I need someone to mediate between me and God

Job 17

- Despair – Crushing
- Key verse – v. 1
- Theme: *Job voices his overwhelming despair to God.*
- Observations: Job was truly depressed and with good reason. Everything is gone, his only friends are against, and in Job’s eyes it seems God is against him as well. But though God was against him, only God could provide a pledge for him in court and defend his innocence. Just as Job had concluded in his three previous speeches (6:11; 7:6; 14:19), he had no hope of ever recovering and anticipates death.
- Outline
 - D. DESPAIR – vv. 1–16
 - 1. My spirit is crushed – vv. 1–2
 - 2. Defend me God—Parenthesis of hope – vv. 3–5
 - 3. I am loathed by the righteous – vv. 6–9
 - 4. I have no hope – vv. 11–16
 - Once again, death is welcomed

Job 18

- Punishment – Certain
- Key verse – v. 11
- Theme: *The wicked are always punished for their sins, and since Job is undergoing suffering he must be a wicked man (though hidden).*
- Observations: Bildad berates Job for his insistence on righteousness when the wicked are obviously always punished for their sins. Often the friends spoke in terms of God’s discipline or chastisement, but in this speech the dynamism¹ of creation executes justice on the evildoer. An evil man will get what is coming to him. Since Job refused to repent, how could he possibly be righteous?
- Outline

III. Bildad responds to Job – vv. 1–21

¹There is a subtle difference between divine retribution and dynamistic retribution. In the former God is active in the administration of his justice and in the punishment of the offenders. In the latter a natural system of justice built into the universe takes over to enforce its laws. I.e. The law of gravity: God is not directly involved every time something or someone falls. Rather, gravity is the outworking of laws that he incorporated into the creation. See NAC: Job, p. 196.

- A. Job reprimanded – vv. 1–4
- B. Job reminded—the wicked will be punished – vv. 5–21
 - It is a virtual guarantee.

Job 19

- Experience – Lamented
- Key verses – vv. 7–8
- Theme: *Job reflects on his life situation and laments his friends, relatives, and God’s treatment of him.*
- Observations: Job laments the animosity of his accusers (vv. 1-6), of God (vv. 7-12), and of his relatives and friends (vv. 13-22). But Job then rises to a new level of spiritual confidence—he is certain that he will see God and be vindicated by Him (vv. 23-29). Job cries that in eight hostile actions, God had treated Job with disregard. Forlorn, wracked by pain, and maligned by both God and people, Job then expresses confidence of future vindication of his cause.
- Outline
 - IV. Job responds to Bildad – vv. 1–29
 - A. My friends are a hindrance – vv. 1–6
 - B. I am being treated unfairly – vv. 7–12
 - C. My family despises me – vv. 13–20
 - D. I beg you to stop persecuting me, my friends – vv. 21–22
 - E. I have hope in death – vv. 23–27
 - F. I advise you to stop persecuting me, my friends – vv. 28–29

Job 20

- Punishment – Terrible
- Key verse – v. 22
- Theme: *Zophar explains that all who are wicked receive terrible punishment, and since Job is undergoing such circumstances he must be wicked.*
- Observations: Zophar argued that from the beginning of human history any joy experienced by a sinner is brief and momentary. Job will be brought low and die, for God will not let a wicked person escape. The implication, of course, is that Job is certainly sinning because God has brought him to ruin. Zophar made no allowance for a person being afflicted for any reason other than divine retribution for sin.
- Outline
 - V. Zophar responds to Job – vv. 1–29
 - A. The wicked are only successful for a short period – vv. 4–11
 - B. The wicked will certainly find ruin – vv. 12–21
 - C. The wicked are punished by God – vv. 22–29

Job 21

- Wicked – Spared
- Key verse – v. 30
- Theme: *Job complains about God’s “injustice” of sparing the wicked and allowing them to prosper.*
- Observations: Job was exasperated that his friends could not just listen instead of criticizing and accusing. Job explains that his complaint is with God, not them. Job filled his response with illustrations of how the wicked escape unscathed. This is the crux of the irreconcilable difference between the friends’ view of retribution and Job’s sure conviction that he was an innocent sufferer. Job asked his friends to consider the prosperity of the wicked. Why can those who have nothing to do with God be so blessed by him? They seem immune to God’s judgment and wrath.
- Outline
 - VI. Job responds to Zophar – vv. 1–34

- A. My complaint is with God – vv. 4–6
 - 1. The wicked prosper – vv. 7–18
 - 2. The wicked escape punishment – vv. 19–21
- B. The wicked are spared – vv. 22–26
- C. Consider that the wicked do not always suffer ruin – vv. 27–33
- D. Job castigates his friends – v. 34

Job 22

- Reason – Suffering
- Key verses – vv. 10–11
- Theme: *Eliphaz assigns guilt to Job, giving the reason why Job is suffering.*
- Observations: Eliphaz does not present any new material. Without evidence, Eliphaz ascribes wicked actions to Job, saying that this is why God has afflicted him. The only evidence he had *was* Job's suffering. From it he deduced that Job must have sinned. Eliphaz took it for granted that God was rebuking Job—God afflicts those who deserve it. Contrary to his second speech, Eliphaz again gives a call to repentance (which his first speech also had), and if Job would meet those conditions God would then restore him and give him blessings.
- Outline

THE DEBATE – ROUND 3

- I. Eliphaz responds to Job – vv. 1–30
 - A. God is uninterested in you – vv. 1–3
 - B. You acted in overt wickedness – vv. 4–11
 - That is why you suffer
 - C. You are defiant before God – vv. 12–18
 - D. The righteous react to the sinner's demise – vv. 19–20
 - E. Submit to God and repent – vv. 21–30
 - Then you will enjoy spiritual blessings

Job 23

- Hearing – Sought
- Key verses – vv. 3–4
- Theme: *Job seeks a hearing with God so he can present his innocence and be acquitted.*
- Observations: Job is still undergoing intense suffering and thus wants to plead his case before God. Job is certain that he would be acquitted so he seeks to find God but cannot (vv. 8–9). To Job, God was evading him, for if He did show up in court He would have to declare Job not guilty. Job was innocent and declared himself such. However, vv. 13–17 show that God was in total control of the case, for not only was God inaccessible, he acted independently and like an absolute sovereign. It is interesting to note that no longer does Job seek an impartial mediator, he now wants to confront God directly.
- Outline
 - II. Job responds to Eliphaz – 23:1–24:25
 - A. Job desires to find God – vv. 1–9
 - Cannot find God – vv. 8–9
 - B. Job declares his innocence – vv. 10–12
 - C. Job frustrated at God's indifference – vv. 13–17

Job 24

- Wicked – Unpunished
- Key verse – v. 1
- Theme: *Job is frustrated by God's apathy to evil, often allowing the wicked to go unpunished in this world.*

- Observations: Job laments God’s seeming indifference to evil, for the wicked are allowed to do what they want. And they often prosper as a result. Moreover, the injustices that are perpetrated on the poor and needy are allowed to continue. Job wanted God to explain why he, a righteous man, had to suffer as he did. Also he wanted an explanation of why so many wicked folks went through life unpunished. God does not necessarily mechanically bring calamity to those who commit evil.

Note: The words of vv. 18–25 seem to contradict the preceding section, but we must understand Job’s point that God gives blessing and suffering to both the innocent and the wicked.

- Outline
 1. The wicked can do as they please – vv. 1–8, 13–17
 2. The injustices are allowed – vv. 9–12
 3. The wicked are eventually punished – vv. 18–25

Job 25

- God – Incomparable
- Key verse – v. 2
- Theme: *God is glorious and powerful; mortals are nothing in comparison.*
- Observations: Bildad’s brief speech probably indicates that he was running out of arguments for Job. He says that God is great and humans are nothing in comparison to him. This was a last-ditch effort to get Job to see how useless it is for an impure human to try to schedule a court hearing with the majestic God.
- Outline
 - III. Bildad responds to Job – vv. 1–6
 - A. God is far above humans – vv. 2–3, 5
 - B. Mortals are nothing in comparison to God – vv. 4, 6

Job 26

- Sovereign – Entirely
- Key verse – v. 14
- Theme: *God is completely sovereign over all his creation, acting upon it according to His own will.*
- Observations: Job abruptly sprang into praise of the powers of God. The focus is on evidences of divine power far beyond human control or understanding—He is in complete, sovereign control of the universe. The elements have no will of their own. God is active in the administration of his cosmos. How odd then that Job should assert God’s absolute power and ability to do as He desires in creation and still object to God’s sovereign treatment of Job. The chapter concludes with one of the loftiest and most beautiful expressions in the entire Bible: “These are but the outer fringe of his works.”
- Outline
 - IV. Job responds to Bildad – vv. 1–14
 - A. Job mocks Bildad’s wisdom – vv. 1–4
 - B. God is immense in power – vv. 5–14
 - God is powerful in creating and doing as he wants in creation – vv. 7–12
 - And this is just the beginning of his power

Job 27

- Enemies – Cursed
- Key verse – v. 7
- Theme: *Job asks God to punish his enemies.*
- Observations: After what was evidently a brief pause anticipating Zophar’s words (which were not forthcoming – v. 1) Job continued. Job again affirmed his innocence (cf. 6:29–30; 9:15, 20–21; 10:2;

13:23; 16:17; 19:7; 23:10–12) and informs that he will *never* concede this to his friends. Job speaks imprecations against his enemies (his “friends” included??) and describes the God’s treatment of such wicked people. Job tells his friends (vv. 11–12) that he will teach them about God and his power.

This is the end of the debate cycle, and the parties have not come to any resolution.

- Outline
- V. Job’s final speech – vv. 1–23
 - A. Job will maintain his integrity until he dies – vv. 1–6
 - B. Job asks for punishment of his enemies – vv. 7–10
 - C. Job describes the fate of the wicked – vv. 11–23

Job 28

- Wisdom – God’s
- Key verses – vv. 23, 28
- Theme: *God alone possesses wisdom; man possesses wisdom only by fearing the LORD and forsaking evil.*
- Observations: Job affirmed man’s inability to ascertain God’s wisdom fully, in contrast with the three friends who claimed they had wisdom. Job’s emphasizes both ¹man’s inability to know God’s wisdom and ²God’s sovereignty over death and nature (cf. 28:24–27 with 26:5–13). Job’s discourse on wisdom indicates that only God has wisdom. And God told man that the essence of wisdom is to fear (“venerate and submit to”) the Lord, even when man cannot understand His ways.
- Outline

WISDOM DISCOURSE

- I. Job discusses wisdom – vv. 1–28
 - A. Men find the earth’s treasures – vv. 1–11
 - B. Wisdom cannot be mined – vv. 12–19
 - Wisdom is worth far more than the earth’s treasures
 - C. Wisdom cannot be found – vv. 20–22
 - D. Wisdom is with God – vv. 23–28

Job 29

- Position (former) – Blessing
- Key verse – v. 2
- Theme: *In the past God had blessed Job with an honored position in his community because of Job’s righteousness.*
- Observations: Job reminisces about his former estate, the esteem he had enjoyed in the community, and his ministries of charity among the needy. His lot in life had been a good one, and he acknowledged that it was a gift of God and not based on his own merit. Job had received honor as a leader in the community and his words had been respected because of his righteous life.
- Outline

FINAL DEFENSE

- I. Job recalls former blessings – vv. 1–25
 - A. God blessed me – vv. 1–6
 - 1. I was respected in the city – vv. 7–10
 - 2. I was known for my righteousness – vv. 11–17
 - 3. My words were honored – vv. 21–25
 - B. I expected God’s continued blessing – vv. 18–20

Job 30

- Position (current) – Mistreatment
- Key verse – v. 16
- Theme: *Job posits that he is presently undergoing mistreatment by both foolish men and by God, for Job is righteous and does not deserve this kind of treatment.*
- Observations: Job laments his present misery, which contrasted so starkly with his pre-affliction days. He now is disrespected socially (vv. 1-15), in pain physically (vv. 16-19), abandoned spiritually (vv. 20-23), and undeserving of this misfortune and present wretched condition (vv. 27-31). Job responds to an analysis of his calamity by saying that he does not deserve this treatment.
- Outline
 - II. Job laments his current position – vv. 1–31
 - A. I am mocked and persecuted by fools – vv. 1–15
 - B. I am tormented by God – vv. 16–23
 - C. I am being mistreated – vv. 24–31
 - I don't deserve this suffering because I have been a righteous man.

Job 31

- Innocence – Maintained
- Key verses – vv. 35–37
- Theme: *Job maintains his innocence before both God and men and longs for an opportunity to plead his case before God.*
- Observations: Job was so convinced of his integrity and righteousness that he listed seven categories of crimes, whose consequences he would be glad to suffer *if* he had committed them. By disavowing the sorts of sins his friends had in mind, he would clear himself of their charges and prove to them that God is indeed arbitrary and sends trouble to the innocent.
- Outline
 - III. Job asserts his innocence – vv. 1–40
 - A. I have not acted in wickedness – vv. 1–8
 1. I have not been immoral/lustful – vv. 8–12
 2. I have not been unfair – vv. 13–15, 31–32
 3. I have not been merciless/uncharitable – vv. 16–23
 4. I have not been money-hungry – vv. 24–25
 5. I have not been idolatrous – vv. 26–28
 6. I have not been vengeful – vv. 29–30
 7. I have not hid sin – vv. 33–34
 - B. I deserve an opportunity to give my defense – vv. 35–37
 - C. If I have sinned I deserve punishment – vv. 38–40

Observations from the debate

The last three Hebrew words announce that we will hear no more from Job. The reader can judge whether “Job did not sin in what he said” (1:10). The author tilts toward his acquittal even after twenty-eight chapters of debate, anger, frustration, charges, and countercharges. Neither his grievous circumstances nor his unsympathetic friends with their tightly knit orthodox theology of retribution could persuade Job that he was anything other than a righteous man.

Job 32

- Rejoinder – Angry
- Key verse – v. 5
- Theme: *Elihu establishes his reason and right to speak as he angrily answers Job.*

- Observations: Elihu was angry with both sides of the debate. He was incensed with Job because he defended himself against all wrongdoing *while accusing God of doing wrong*. Job was more willing to cast aspersions on God's character than to admit to any sin. Also, Elihu was inflamed with the three...because they were unable to prove Job's guilt. Before Elihu actually began his argument (starting in 33:1) he first took a number of sentences to justify his right to speak. He is ready to burst with the words that have been pent up in him.
- Outline

ELIHU RESPONDS

- I. Job's friends silenced – v. 1
- II. Elihu speaks out, angrily – vv. 2–22
 - A. Elihu pipes up in anger – vv. 2–5
 - Job's insistence on innocence and friends lack of ability to respond are the targets of Elihu's anger.
 - B. Elihu speaks out in frustration – vv. 6–22
 - There is some arrogance in Elihu's attitude—he has wisdom, over his elders.
 - Listen to him and he'll set everyone straight.

Job 33

- Affliction – Teaches
- Key verse – v. 30
- Theme: *Elihu establishes his reason and right to speak as he angrily answers Job.*
- Observations: Elihu had listened carefully to Job, as evidenced by his frequent quotations of Job's very words (this is true in throughout Elihu's speeches). He accurately recounted Job's arguments. Elihu tells Job that in accusing God of injustice, "you are not right." Elihu asserts that God does speak to people, sometimes directly through dreams, etc. and at other times he gets their attention through causing pain. And in sickness God may send an angel as a mediator to remind a person of the proper actions he should maintain in his life.

Note: For Elihu, suffering, though related to sin (v. 27), was more protective than punitive. The first three speakers said God afflicts in order to punish; Elihu said God afflicts in order to teach. He emphasized that suffering can *help divert* one from sin and death; the three older men felt that sin would *surely lead* to death. All four counselors were wrong about Job's case, however, for all assumed a sin-results-in-suffering viewpoint

- Outline
- III. Elihu presents his case – 33:1–37:24
 - A. Elihu's first speech – vv. 1–33
 1. Elihu recaps Job's argument—God is unjust – vv. 8–11
 2. Elihu presents why Job is wrong – vv. 12–30
 - i. God is great and no human can bring a charge against him – vv. 13–18
 - ii. God disciplines but is gracious if an angel intercedes – vv. 19–28
 - If the afflicted then repents he will be accepted by God – vv. 25–28
 3. Elihu challenges Job to heed his words – vv. 31–33

Job 34

- Justice – Maintained
- Key verse – v. 12
- Theme: *Elihu argues that God is just, maintaining that He acts in consistence with His character.*
- Observations: Elihu again accurately represents Job's argument and seeks to refute it. He affirms that God can do nothing evil or wrong. Job claimed God was unjust, so Elihu points out that ¹God gives man what he deserves, meting out punishment for sin. ²For God to do wrong (v. 10) or pervert justice (cf.

8:3) would be inconsistent with His character (v. 12).³As Sovereign, no one could influence Him away from justice (v. 13).⁴As the Sustainer of human life God could withdraw His spirit and everyone would perish at once.⁵God is not influenced by men; he is impartial. Elihu concludes that in light of all these things which are true about God, how then could Job maintain that God had acted unjustly. Elihu says that Job was in fact acting rebelliously.

Note Elihu's pattern—move from the accepted, incontestable, theological truth to items on which there might be disagreement.

- Outline
 - B. Elihu's second speech – vv. 1–37
 - 1. Elihu recaps Job's argument – vv. 1–6
 - 2. Elihu maintains God's justice – vv. 7–30
 - i. God does not sin or twist justice – vv. 10–15
 - He treats people as they deserve
 - He cares for the world.
 - ii. God is impartial– vv. 16–20
 - He could not govern if He was unjust.
 - He does not care about status.
 - iii. God is involved – vv. 21–30
 - He watches all men.
 - He judges for sin
 - 3. Elihu believes Job is foolish to rebel – vv. 31–37

Job 35

- Inconsistency – Expounded
- Key verse – v. 16
- Theme: *Elihu accuses Job of inconsistency and nonsense, explaining that God though not affected by a person's sin does care and respond to a person's cry.*
- Observations: Elihu again responds to Job's argument—"why should I be righteous if I am treated this way?" Elihu points out the inconsistency of such reasoning, for how could Job truly hope to be vindicated if he accused God of not caring about Job's righteousness. Elihu combats both Job and the three, stating that God is higher than all; He is not injured or affected by men's sin. When God shows mercy it is not because man has persuaded Him to do so, and if He inflicts judgment it is not because man has injured Him. God is sovereign and therefore self-determining. His standards for judging people are firm, impartial, and uninfluenced.
- Outline
 - C. Elihu's third speech – vv. 1–16
 - 1. Elihu recaps Job's argument – vv. 2–3
 - 2. A person's actions do not affect God – vv. 4–8
 - 3. God listens and responds to a person's cry – vv. 9–16

Job 36

- Justice and Power – Instructed
- Key verses – vv. 22–23
- Theme: *Elihu proclaims God's purpose in affliction and instructs Job to not question God, for He is great and powerful.*
- Observations: Elihu proclaims that God deals justly with both the righteous and the wicked. He afflicts those who sin so that they might learn from it and turn to God. He tells Job that he has a great opportunity to learn from this and to repent, which will certainly bring blessing. No one has the right to question God for He is transcendent—He is all-powerful and unending (v. 26).

- Outline
 - D. Elihu's final speech – 36:1–37:24
 1. Elihu continues defending God – vv. 1–4
 2. Mechanical view of retribution and blessing – vv. 5–15
 - God blesses the innocent (v. 7)
 - God sends affliction to the wicked in order to teach them and cause them to turn from sin (vv. 8–10, 15)
 - God blesses those who turn from their sin (v. 11)
 - The godless don't turn from sin, and they die (vv. 1–14)
 3. Job, allow God to teach you; do not fall prey to wealth – vv. 16–21
 4. God is transcendent! – vv. 22–33
 - Glorify Him for His power (v. 24); do not question Him.

Job 37

- Majesty – Overwhelming
- Key verses – vv. 1, 14, 20, 24
- Theme: *God is so majestic it is overwhelming—no one can stand before him but in fear.*
- Observations: Elihu explains that God is so brilliant, so splendid, so awesome, and so exalted that the only proper response to the Almighty is reverent fear, trusting him to respond graciously to the submissive piety of the truly wise. How could anyone even think of asking to appear before God in court. Elihu put his finger on Job's problem—pride before God (cf. 33:17; 36:9).
- Outline
 5. God is majestic – vv. 1–5
 6. God is in complete control of the weather – vv. 6–18
 - Elihu calls Job to pay attention, to consider that God is in complete control (v. 14)
 7. God's power is beyond imagination and He should be feared – vv. 19–24
- NOTES ON ELIHU'S SPEECHES: Job said nothing after Elihu's speeches, possibly because he saw some truth in what Elihu was saying (though it was mixed with false views of God and recapitulations of the friends' argumentation). According to Elihu, ¹God's justice should not be questioned or His sovereignty challenged, because His ways are beyond human understanding. ²Calamities can serve as a teaching tool, removing pride and protecting from more grave difficulties. ³God is to be worshiped, not criticized; He is to be extolled, not examined. ⁴Job's basic problem was pride in justifying himself and condemning God.

Job 38–39

- Questions – Barrage
- Key verse – 38:2
- Theme: *The LORD shows His power and wisdom by challenging Job with a barrage of questions.*
- Observations: At last Job's plea that God answer him was granted. But instead of answering Job's charges about the Sovereign's injustices, God asked Job questions! Job is asked a series of questions regarding God's creation. Job was dumbfounded by this barrage of questions! By displaying His power and wisdom, God showed Job his ignorance and impatience. Since Job could not answer God on these matters how could he hope to debate with God? God was rebuking Job for challenging His ways.
- Outline

THEOCRATIC RESPONSE

- I. The LORD challenges Job – vv. 1–3
- II. The LORD interrogates Job – 38:4–39:30
 - A. The LORD questions Job regarding creation – 38:4–38

- Creation (38:4-7)
 - The Sea (38:8-11)
 - The Earth's Administration (38:12-15)
 - The Underworld (38:16-18)
 - Light and Darkness (38:19-21)
 - Storm (38:22-30)
 - Stars (38:31-33)
 - Clouds (38:34-38)
- B. The LORD questions Job regarding nature – 38:39–39:30
- Lions and Ravens (38:39-41)
 - Mountain Goats (39:1-4)
 - Wild Donkeys (39:5-8)
 - Wild Oxen (39:9-12)
 - Ostriches (39:13-18)
 - Horses (39:19-25)
 - Hawks (39:26-30)

Job 40a

- Response – Overwhelmed
- Key verse – v. 4
- Theme: *The LORD asks for Job's response, but an overwhelmed Job can respond only in contrite silence.*
- Observations: Since Job had longed for an opportunity to argue his case before God, the LORD asks him what his response will be. Job responds, saying he is unworthy and repents that he has said as much as he already has.
- Outline

III. The LORD's concluding challenge – vv. 1–2

- “Job, do you still want to argue with the Almighty?”

JOB REPONDS HUMBLY

- I. Job acknowledges his worth – v. 4
- II. Job repents of his accusations – v. 5

Job 40b–41

- Power – Presented
- Key verse – 40:9
- Theme: *The LORD presents His power over man and creation—Job has no right to challenge God's justice.*
- Observations: The LORD challenges Job regarding his justice and his strength. The LORD confronts Job about his statements concerning divine justice and his innuendoes that God was apathetic and uninvolved in the administration of his world. God ordered Job to enforce the laws and punish the wicked, which Job of course cannot do. God also emphasizes his power with impossible questions regarding the 2 most fearsome creatures on earth. Through these questions God reminds Job that He is the only one who has power over men and beast; He is the only one who can act in justice. God demonstrated that Job's impugning of His actions in this universe were totally absurd and uncalled for.
- Outline

2nd THEOCRATIC RESPONSE

- I. The LORD challenges Job – vv. 6–7
- II. The LORD interrogates Job – 40:8–41:34
 - A. Why do you discredit My justice? – v. 8

- B. Are you as strong as I am? – 40:9–41:34
 1. Show your power by administrating justice on the wicked – 40:10–14
 2. Consider the Behemoth – 40:15–24
 - I made it and have power over it – vv. 15, 19
 - It is powerful – vv. 16–18
 - It does as it pleases – vv. 20–24
 3. Consider the Leviathan – 41:1–34
 - It cannot be controlled – vv. 1–11
 - It has a foreboding presence – vv. 12–21
 - It cannot be hurt – vv. 22–30
 - It has no equal – vv. 31–34

Observation from the LORD's speeches

Upon conclusion of the LORD's speeches we realize that He has said nothing about Job's case. He instead discoursed on many animals over which Job had no control. The overall message is that these are God's creations. They are under his control. He is the sovereign. The complementary lesson for Job was that he had no authority in these spheres. He too was a creature made by God to be submissive to his dominion. Job had more in common with leviathan, an angry creature stirring up his world, than he did with God, who effortlessly created and continues to control both Job's world and the entire cosmos.²

Job 42a

- Repentance – Stimulated
- Key verse – v. 6
- Theme: *The LORD's words stimulate Job to repent of his accusations regarding God and His justice.*
- Observations: Job takes in everything God has said and realizes that he has no response. He cannot argue his case before God because it has no merit in light of what he has just seen (v. 5b) of God. Job repents of his accusations, which were the result of having a wrong understanding of God and his sovereign justice.
- Outline

JOB'S RESPONSE

- I. Job recognizes God's sovereignty – v. 2
- II. Job repents of his view of God – vv. 3–6
 - Job was unable to answer the LORD's questions – v. 4
 - Job's eyes had been opened spiritually – v. 5

Job 42b

- Blessing – Re-instituted
- Key verse – v. 12
- Theme:
- Observations: In conclusion, the three friends are chastised for their false views of Job's integrity and God's character. They must make restitution (apologies) to Job for their actions. God blesses Job for successfully passing the tests of life (cf. 1:8). Job never cursed God or turned his back on Him, in spite of his intense suffering.
- Outline

CONCLUSION

- I. The LORD addresses Job's 3 friends – vv. 7–9
 - A. The LORD was angered by their accusations against Job – v. 7

²Alden, *Job* NAC, p. 407.

- B. The LORD demands offerings be presented to Job for restoration – v. 8
- II. The LORD blesses Job – vv. 10–17
 - A. Job’s fortunes were restored two-fold – v. 10
 - B. Job’s family was replenished – v. 13
 - C. Job’s life was long and full – vv. 16–17

Observations from the book’s omissions

The book draws to a close with some questions still left unresolved *in our minds*.³ However, we understand everything that the author intends for us to understand from his recounting of these events. The author’s theological purpose is achieved—the LORD is majestic, great, and sovereign; He controls this world according to His own will. The LORD wisely administers justice, but not through mechanical retribution.

Conclusion

As wisdom literature, the book of Job was written so that we might understand how to live our lives skillfully (or wisely). The book stresses man’s finite, limited nature and understanding; he needs to depend on God since He is the ultimate source of true wisdom.

We have been given an entire book of God’s Word that corrects our natural, mistaken theology that God always mechanically punishes for bad actions and blesses for good. We assume that if I do right I will receive material blessing and if I am undergoing tough circumstances I must have done something that God is displeased with. Yet this book shows us that this is not the case. Though God can certainly send punishment as a result of sin (and sin does have consequences), He does not administer justice so mechanically. Why does suffering or blessing occur? It is all based on God’s sovereign will. God is sovereign and incomprehensible; He rightly administers justice and sustains His creation. Man must therefore submit to the Lord and His sovereign will.

God’s sovereign freedom in administering justice should produce in man a submissive faith.

³Why is there no mention of Elihu in the final chapter? What was Satan’s response to all this? Why is Job’s wife not mentioned at the end? Etc. etc.