

SESSION 6

# *BOOK OF JOB*

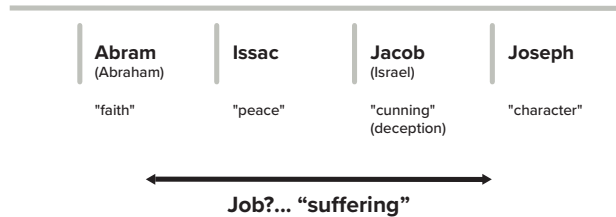
## SESSION 6

# BOOK OF JOB

### I. PRAYER

### II. PANORAMA TIMELINE

#### A. Movement #2: Patriarchs



#### B. Literature Type

In the English Bible, the first seventeen (17) books are historical; the last seventeen (17) are prophetic. The middle five (5) are poetical in structure, often called "wisdom" literature.

While the overall imperative of the Scriptures can be summarized as "trust" and "obey", the wisdom books demand that man "stop", "consider", "reflect."

The Book of Job is the first of the poetical, wisdom books.

### III. DATE AND AUTHORSHIP

#### A. Authorship

The author of Job is not specifically given. It could have been the historical man, Job, or an inspired writer who composed his story from oral or written sources available. Elihu has been suggested. Some Jewish traditions point to Moses, others see Solomon as likely due to the wisdom-type composition of Job. Even later Jewish writers have been suggested (such as Hezekiah, Isaiah, Ezra).

#### B. Date

##### 1. Of composition

Dependent upon the identity of the author, the composition date could be as early as 2000 BC or as late as the second century BC. Due to the wisdom motif (theme and style), perhaps the writing approximates the time of other wisdom literature (perhaps around 1000 BC).

2. Of Job's story

While questions of who wrote the book and when are indecisive, the historical setting of the Book of Job is the patriarchal period. The chart which follows gives 12 reasons for dating Job's story during that time.

C. Theme

A common view is that Job provides a living proof of the justice of God in light of human pain and suffering. Parsons (DTS dissertation, 1980) sees the theme as "to show that the proper relationship between God and man is based solely upon the sovereign grace of God and man's response of faith and submissive trust."

**Twelve reasons to date Job's story during the time of the patriarchs:<sup>1</sup>**

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1. Length of Job's life (200 yrs; 42:16) corresponds to the long life of Abraham (175), Isaac (180), Jacob (147) and Joseph (110).
2. Job's wealth was measured in livestock (1:3; 42:12) which was also true of Abraham (Gen. 12:16; 13:2).
3. Sabeans and Chaldeans are referred to as nomads (1:15, 17), but such was not true in later history.
4. Job was the priest of his family (1:5), therefore there was not yet a national priesthood.
5. Hebrew for "piece of silver" or "money" is elsewhere only used in reference to Jacob (Heb. "kesitah").
6. Musical instruments in Job are also referenced in Genesis.
7. Job's daughters were heirs of his estate along with their brothers (42:15); this was not later possible under Mosaic Law (Num. 27:8).
8. Similar literary works to Job are from Mesopotamia about the same time.
9. No Mosaic legislation mentioned.
10. "Shaddai" as a name for God is used 31 times in Job; it also occurs in Genesis.
11. Some personal and place names are also associated with the patriarchal period.
12. Stylistic parallels to certain Ugaritic literature points to a patriarchal setting.

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Zuck, *Job*, 9-11

#### IV. STRUCTURE OF JOB

##### A. Overview: Charted

Job				
Prologue	Conversations			Epilogue
1 – 2	3 – 31	32 – 37	38 – 42:6	42:7 – 17
Job and Satan + 2 Tests	Job's Monologue + 3 Cycles (Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar)	Elihu's Four Speeches	YHWH + Job 2 Dialogues	Job's Repentance
Prose	Poetry			Prose

##### B. Uniqueness

1. The Book of Job introduces Satan as a player in the Job drama.
2. The Book of Job combines prose with poetry, somewhat rare in Biblical literature. Prose-poetry-prose pattern is only found in this Biblical book.
3. The Book of Job is considered a masterpiece of literature (Victor Hugo, "perhaps the greatest masterpiece of the human mind"), (Thomas Carlyle, "a noble Book; all men's Book!").
4. The Book of Job possesses a rich vocabulary in the original language (110 hapex legomenas, i.e., a one-time occurrence of a word in the Hebrew Bible); also, there are language influences evident from ancient Akkadian, Arabic, Aramaic, Sumerian, Ugaritic.
5. The Book of Job is replete with vivid metaphors and similes (poetic comparisons).
6. The Book of Job wrestles with the age-old question of evil and suffering in the world; specifically, why do bad things happen to good people (or, is all suffering and calamity due to personal sin?).
7. The Book of Job has God as an active participant in the drama.

### Three reasons for the book of Job: <sup>2</sup>

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1. Historical Purpose  
“Job reminds God’s people of His providential purposes in allowing their pain.”
2. Doctrinal Purpose  
“The presence of pain is allowed by the providence of God for the purifying and perfecting of His people.”
3. Christological Purpose  
Job cries for a Mediator (9:33; 33:23), acknowledges a Redeemer (19:25), foreshadows the innocent suffering of the just (for the unjust... namely, Jesus).

## V. EXPOSITION/OVERVIEW

### A. Prologue (chapters 1-2)

#### 1. The man

##### JOB 1:1-3

“In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.  
<sup>2</sup> He had seven sons and three daughters, <sup>3</sup> and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.”

#### a. Character

- (1) “blameless” (without moral blemish)
- (2) “upright” (straight; no deviation from God’s standards)
- (3) “feared God” (awe, reverential respect)
- (4) “shunned evil” (rejected that which is in moral opposition to God’s nature)

#### b. Wealth

Seven sons (an evidence of God’s blessing – Ruth 4:15; 1 Sam. 2:5) and three daughters head the list of his blessings. He is also considerably wealthy in his abundance of possessions as well as servants.

#### c. Status

“He was the greatest man among all the people of the east” (1:3).

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Geisler, *Popular Survey of the Old Testament*, 187.

## INSIGHT

“Will anyone serve the Lord if he enjoys no personal gain from it? Is worship a coin that buys a heavenly reward? Is piety part of a contract by which to gain wealth and ward off trouble?”

(Zuck, BKC:OT, 720)

## 2. The challenge

### a. Satan's first test (1:6-22): material blessings

JOB 1:6-11

“One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. <sup>7</sup> The LORD said to Satan, ‘Where have you come from?’ Satan answered the LORD, ‘From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.’ <sup>8</sup> Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.’ <sup>9</sup> ‘Does Job fear God for nothing?’ Satan replied. <sup>10</sup> ‘Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. <sup>11</sup> But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.’”

- (1) Satan (lit. “the adversary”) presents himself before God as do the angels (lit. “sons of God”) who appear in order to report to God on their activities. His presence in heaven does not appear unusual (Rev. 12:10), but his activities of roaming on the earth hearkens to 1 Peter 5:8:

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

- (2) God acknowledges Job to be a godly man (1:8), yet Satan challenges Job's motives for his displayed character. “Does Job fear God for nothing?” (1:9)
- (3) Satan suggests that Job only serves God for what he gets from it, namely material blessings (1:10-11). Take it away, suggests Satan, and Job will curse God face to face.

### b. God's permissive will

JOB 1:12

“The LORD said to Satan, ‘Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.’”

- (1) Satan is permitted to afflict Job, but with limits.
- (2) Satan's challenge concerning Job's motives also impugns God's integrity; that is, people only worship God because of utilitarian payback—thus, as Satan implies, it's the only way God can get people to serve (worship) Him.
- (3) As a result of the Satanic test, Job loses his wealth (and servants) and his children (1:13-19).

c. Job's response

JOB 1:20-22

"At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship <sup>21</sup> and said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb,

and naked I will depart.

The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;  
may the name of the LORD be praised.'

<sup>22</sup> In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing."

d. Satan's second test (2:1-10): physical health

JOB 2:3-6

"Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.' <sup>4</sup> 'Skin for skin!' Satan replied. 'A man will give all he has for his own life. <sup>5</sup> But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.' <sup>6</sup> The LORD said to Satan, 'Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.'"

- (1) Satan again challenges the integrity of Job and God. "Skin for skin" speaks of the accusation of Satan that Job would give up the "skin" or lives of his livestock, servants, even children in order to save his own "skin" (2:4). Again, implied in the rebuke is a challenge that Job only serves for personal motives, the ultimate being his own life.
- (2) The physical ailment afflicted Job severely. Perhaps it was modern-day smallpox, elephantiasis, or any of another set of skin diseases. For certain the wealthy and healthy Job who commanded respect at the city gates (29:7ff) now resides among the ashes of the garbage dump (2:8).
- (3) Further, even Job's wife challenges him. "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (2:9)

e. Job's response

JOB 2:10

"He replied, 'You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?'"

- (1) God has permissively allowed a second, most severe test (2:6).

◆ **INSIGHT**

The Serpent-Satan tempted the first woman to rebel against God's clear command. Here, another woman, the wife of Job, succumbs to the Enemy's devices and tells (tempts) Job to curse God.

(2) Job has passed the test. His integrity is evident (“did not sin”). God’s integrity is vindicated. Man as evidenced in the remarkable person of Job can worship God though all temporal and material benefits are taken away. The story should end here...but it does not.

### 3. The consolers

#### JOB 2:11-13

“When Job’s three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him.<sup>12</sup> When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads.<sup>13</sup> Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.”

- (1) The text refers to Job’s three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (2:11). Later, a fourth will join Job and his friends (32:1-2).
- (2) The three express their dismay in three ways:
  - (a) “began to weep aloud” (emotional shock)
  - (b) “tore their robes” (broken heartedness – see 1:20)
  - (c) “sprinkled dust” (deep grief)
- (3) The three do not speak for seven days.
  - (a) One week was the customary length of mourning for one dead (Gen. 50:10; 1 Sam. 31:13). Perhaps Job and his hopeless condition seemed as if dead to his friends.
  - (b) The friends may have simply held their words as a sign of sympathy, concern and respect.
  - (c) By custom the friends would wait until the suffering one spoke before speaking their own personal thoughts.

#### INSIGHT

This two-chapter prologue has introduced the background to the drama and resultant theological debate. The reader (unlike Job’s friends) understands that this was a Satanic temptation for Job to sin but God has permissively allowed it to be a test of Job’s character. Job’s friends will be in error. Job’s pitiful condition is not a result of his sin.



## B. Conversation

### 1. Charted

#### Job 3:1 – 42:6

##### Conversations

Job's Monologue (3)	Elihu's Four Speeches (32-37)	YHWH and Job: 2 Dialogues (38-42)
3 Cycles of Dialogue (4-31)		
Poetry		

### 2. Job's Monologue (Job 3)

Apparently some time has passed since Job's rebuke of his wife's foolish talk and his friends' arrival. Chapter 3 begins with a monologue and the description, "After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth" (3:1). Note, however, that while Job will express bitterness, anger and despair in the chapters (dialogues) to come, he never "curses" God as Satan predicted he would (1:11; 2:5).

Note the three statements of Job's supreme frustration.

#### a. Wish to never have been born

JOB 3:3-4

"May the day of my birth perish,  
and the night that said, 'A boy is conceived!'

<sup>4</sup> That day—may it turn to darkness;  
may God above not care about it;  
may no light shine on it."

#### b. Wish to have died at birth

JOB 3:11

"Why did I not perish at birth,  
and die as I came from the womb?"

#### c. Wish to be dead now

JOB 3:20, 23

"Why is light given to those in misery,  
and life to the bitter of soul,

Why is life given to a man  
whose way is hidden,  
whom God has hedged in?"

#### ◆ INSIGHT

Job does not curse God. Rather, he bemoans the intensity of his physical state and suffering. He does not challenge the injustice of it, just the severity ("I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil" – Job 4-14)

## SYLLOGIST REASONING

The Philosophical Argument of  
Job's Friends

1. Major premise: All suffering is punishment for sin.
2. Minor premise: Job has suffered.
3. Conclusion: Therefore, Job has sinned. Yet, this reasoning is flawed (1:1, 8; 2:3).

### 3. Cycle #1 (Job and Friends) (Job 4-14)

#### a. Dialogue #1: Eliphaz speaks (Job 4-5)

- (1) Rebuke: "But now trouble comes to you and you are discouraged ... should not your piety be your confidence...." (4:5, 6)
- (2) Proposition: "Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished?" (4:8)... those who sow trouble reap it (4:8)
- (3) Dream/Vision (4:12ff):  
"Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his Maker? <sup>18</sup> If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, <sup>19</sup> how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth!" (4:17-19)
- (4) Observation:  
"For hardship does not spring from the soil, nor does trouble sprout from the ground.  
<sup>7</sup> Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward." (5:6-7) [i.e., you brought this on yourself]
- (5) Advice:  
"Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty." (5:17)
- (6) Conclusion:  
"We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself." (5:27)

#### b. Dialogue #1: Job replies (Job 6-7)

- (1) I have reason to complain (6:1-7)
- (2) I have reason to despair of life (6:8-13)
- (3) I have reason to despair in my friends (6:14-23)  
"Anyone who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty.  
<sup>15</sup> But my brothers are as undependable as intermittent streams..." (14-15a)
- (4) I have reason to rebut your argument (6:24-30)  
"Teach me, and I will be quiet;  
show me where I have been wrong.  
<sup>25</sup> How painful are honest words!  
But what do your arguments prove?" (24-25)
- (5) I have seemingly unending suffering (7:1-6)  
"My body is clothed with worms and scabs,  
my skin is broken and festering." (5)

- (6) I have nothing but frustrated prayer (7:7-21)  
 “If I have sinned, what have I done to you,  
 you who see everything we do?  
 Why have you made me your target?  
 Have I become a burden to you?” (20)
- c. Dialogue #2: Bildad speaks (Job 8)  
 If Eliphaz rebuked Job for spurning God’s disciplining hand upon Job’s supposed sin (5:17), then here Bildad will accuse Job of spurning God’s justice (against supposed sin).
- (1) Bildad’s premise: God is just; Job is sinful (8:1-7)  
 “How long will you say such things? Your words are a blustering wind. <sup>3</sup> Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right? <sup>4</sup> When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin. <sup>5</sup> But if you will seek God earnestly and plead with the Almighty, <sup>6</sup> if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your prosperous state.” (2-6)
- (2) Bildad’s verification: Our fathers believed this (8:8-10)
- (3) Bildad’s illustration: Nature shows it (8:11-19)
- (4) Bildad’s summary: Job must be sinful (8:20-22)  
 “Surely God does not reject one who is blameless or strengthen the hands of evildoers.” (20)
- d. Dialogue #2: Job replies (Job 9-10)
- (1) Yes, God is great (9:1-13)
- (2) But, God is arbitrary (9:14-24)  
 “How then can I dispute with him? How can I find words to argue with him? (14)  
 ...Although I am blameless, I have no concern for myself; I despise my own life.  
<sup>22</sup> It is all the same; that is why I say, ‘He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.’”(21-22)
- (3) So, God is unfair (9:25-10:22)  
 “I say to God: Do not declare me guilty, but tell me what charges you have against me. <sup>3</sup> Does it please you to oppress me, to spurn the work of your hands, while you smile on the plans of the wicked?” (10:2-3)
- e. Dialogue #3: Zophar speaks (Job 11)
- (1) Zophar’s stern rebuke of Job (11:1-6)  
 “You say to God, ‘My beliefs are flawless and I am pure in your sight.’ <sup>5</sup> Oh, how I wish that God would speak, that he would open his lips against you...” (4-5)

- (2) Zophar's high praise of God (11:7-12)
 

"Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?  
<sup>8</sup> They are higher than the heavens above—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths below—what can you know?" (7-8)
- (3) Zophar's appeal to Job (11:13-20)
 

"Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him,  
<sup>14</sup> if you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent,  
<sup>15</sup> then, free of fault, you will lift up your face; you will stand firm and without fear." (13-15)

f. Dialogue #3: Job replies (Job 12-14)

- (1) Job repudiates his friends (12:1 - 13:19)
 

"I have become a laughingstock to my friends, though I called on God and he answered—  
 a mere laughingstock, though righteous and blameless!" (12:4)

"Your maxims are proverbs of ashes;  
 your defenses are defenses of clay." (13:12)

"Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;  
 I will surely defend my ways to his face." (13:15)
- (2) Job pleads his case with God (13:20-28)
 

"How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin." (23)
- (3) Job loses hope (14:1-22)
 

"If only you would hide me in the grave  
 and conceal me till your anger has passed!  
 If only you would set me a time  
 and then remember me!" (13)

"But as a mountain erodes and crumbles  
 and as a rock is moved from its place,  
<sup>19</sup> as water wears away stones and torrents wash away the soil, so you destroy a person's hope." (18-19)

4. Cycle #2 and #3 (15-31)

There are three cycles of dialogue of Job with his friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar). Each cycle has 3 dialogues (one for each friend) followed by Job's reply. The third cycle has only two dialogues; Zophar is silent (yet Job has extended monologues in chapters 27-28 and 29-31).

The present study has summarized the first cycle with three dialogues with Job's friends. From this point on in this overview of Job, the highlights of the remaining two cycles are given. Note first the chart overviewing the literary structure of Job 4-31.

a. Chart of the Initial Cycles of Conversation

3 Cycles: Initial Conversation		
Job 4 – 31		
Cycle #1	Cycle #2	Cycle #3
4 – 14	15 – 21	22 – 31
Discourse 1 (Eliphaz)	Discourse 1 (Eliphaz)	Discourse 1 (Eliphaz)
Discourse 2 (Bildad)	Discourse 2 (Bildad)	Discourse 2 (Bildad)
Discourse 3 (Zophar)	Discourse 3 (Zophar)	Extended Monologues (Job)

b. Highlights of the intensified dialogues

- (1) Cycle #1: Job's friends argue that he must be a sinner (else why the suffering) and he must repent.
- (2) Cycle #2: Job's friends more viciously hammer away at Job's sinfulness. There is no call to repent.
- (3) Cycle #3: Job's friends attack and charge him with specific sins. Through all three cycles, Job maintains his innocence.

5. Cycle #2 Highlights (Job 15-21)

a. Eliphaz

"What are mortals, that they could be pure, or those born of woman, that they could be righteous?

<sup>15</sup> If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, <sup>16</sup> how much less mortals, who are vile and corrupt, who drink up evil like water!" (15:14-16)

b. Job

"Then Job replied: <sup>2</sup> "I have heard many things like these; you are miserable comforters, all of you!

<sup>3</sup> Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing?" (16:1-3)

"But come on, all of you, try again! I will not find a wise man among you." (17:10)

### INSIGHT

In spite of Job's deepening depression, accusations from his friends and the seeming silence of heaven, a ray of faith bursts through.

"I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. <sup>26</sup> And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; <sup>27</sup> I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (19:25-27)

- c. Bildad  
"Fire resides in his tent; burning sulfur is scattered over his dwelling." (18:15)  
"People of the west are appalled at his fate; those of the east are seized with horror.  
<sup>21</sup> Surely such is the dwelling of an evil man; such is the place of one who does not know God." (18:20-21)
- d. Job  
"How long will you torment me and crush me with words?  
<sup>3</sup> Ten times now you have reproached me; shamelessly you attack me." (19:2-3)  
"Though I cry, 'Violence!' I get no response; though I call for help, there is no justice." (19:7)
- e. Zophar  
"My troubled thoughts prompt me to answer because I am greatly disturbed. <sup>3</sup> I hear a rebuke that dishonors me, and my understanding inspires me to reply." (20:2-3)  
"A flood will carry off his house, rushing waters on the day of God's wrath. <sup>29</sup> Such is the fate God allots the wicked, the heritage appointed for them by God." (20:28-29)
- f. Job  
"Can anyone teach knowledge to God, since he judges even the highest? <sup>23</sup> One person dies in full vigor, completely secure and at ease, <sup>24</sup> well nourished in body, bones rich with marrow. <sup>25</sup> Another dies in bitterness of soul, never having enjoyed anything good. <sup>26</sup> Side by side they lie in the dust, and worms cover them both." (21:22-26)

### 6. Cycle #3 (Job 22-31)

The final cycle consists of only two dialogues: with Eliphaz and Bildad. Additionally, following his reply to Bildad, Job launches into extended monologues or discourses. See the phrase, "And Job continued his discourse" (27:1), then "Job continued his discourse" (29:1). The end of all cycles and discourses concludes with these extended monologues, then the Scriptures record, "The words of Job are ended" (31:40). Job has rested his case. He has said all that he will say to these friends.

The third cycle focuses upon Eliphaz and Bildad's charge of specific sins to Job. Job stands his ground against these accusations and, in effect, denies their philosophical-theological reasoning (refer back to page 122 and their "Syllogistic Reasoning").

- (1) I deny my suffering is from my sin.
- (2) I deny that the wicked always suffer for sin.
- (3) I deny that I am a deliberate transgressor.

7. Elihu's four speeches (Job 32-27)
  - a. His anger
 

"But Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. <sup>3</sup> He was also angry with the three friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him." (32:2-3)
  - b. His qualifications (Job 32)

**Elihu's Self-Justification to Speak:**

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- (1) I delayed due to my age (32:4, 6)
  - (2) I expected wisdom but heard none (32:3, 7, 11-12)
  - (3) I have the Spirit who gives understanding (32:8)
  - (4) I have better arguments (32:12-14)
  - (5) I have plenty to add (32:15-17)
  - (6) I have a compunction to speak (32:18-19)
  - (7) I am completely impartial (32:21)
- c. Speech #1: God is not silent (does not hear) as Job charged (33)
  - d. Speech #2: God is just in His dealings with man (34)
  - e. Speech #3: God is sovereign in all His works and ways (35)
  - f. Speech #4: God is magnificent in His dealings with man and in His created world (36-37)

8. Summary: Basic views of Job's four friends:

Three Friends	Elihu
Sin leads to suffering.	Suffering leads to sin.
Suffering is retributive.	Suffering is protective.
Suffering is punitive.	Suffering is educational.
Job should repent.	Job should learn.
Job should initiate restoration.	God had initiated restoration.

(Constable, *Job*, 61)

9. Final conversation: YHWH and Job (Job 38:1-42:6)

a. YHWH's first speech (38:1-40:2)

"Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said:  
<sup>2</sup> 'Who is this that obscures my plans with words without  
knowledge? <sup>3</sup> Brace yourself like a man; I will question you,  
and you shall answer me.'" (38:1-3)

- (1) God finally responds to Job's persistent cry (note 13:22; 31:35).
- (2) God never mentions Job's suffering.
- (3) God never discourses about a theology of sin.
- (4) God does not specifically reply to Job's charge of injustice.
- (5) God does pose a list of 70 unanswerable questions designed to test the limits of Job's understanding (38:4-39:30).

"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand." (38:4)

"What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside?" (38:19)

"Can you raise your voice to the clouds and cover yourself with a flood of water?  
<sup>35</sup> Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you, 'Here we are?'" (38:34-35)

"Do you give the horse its strength or clothe its neck with a flowing mane?" (39:19)

"Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread its wings toward the south?" (39:26)

b. YHWH's speech summarized (40:1-2)

"The LORD said to Job: <sup>2</sup> 'Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!'" (1-2)

c. Job's reply (40:3-5)

"I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth." (4)

d. YHWH's second speech (40:6–41:34)

"Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. <sup>8</sup> 'Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? <sup>9</sup> Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his?'" (40:7-9)



e. Job's reply (42:1-6)

"I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. <sup>3</sup> You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. <sup>4</sup> 'You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' <sup>5</sup> My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you." (2-5)

C. Epilogue (42.7-16)

1. The Lord expresses anger toward Job's friends.

a. They spoke in error ("have not spoken of me what is right" – 42:7)

b. They must offer sacrifices for their sins.

c. They must ask Job to intercede in prayer for them (42:8).

2. The Lord prospered Job even more abundantly than before.

◆ **INSIGHT**

Now, the climax from Job's mouth:

"Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes" (42:6)

◆ **INSIGHT**

Note the irony. They never once prayed for Job during the disputes. Now, they must ask him to intercede for them in prayer.

◆ **JOB'S EPITAPH**

"After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. <sup>17</sup>And so Job died, an old man and full of years." (42:16-17)