

Old Testament Survey—Job

How well do you know the Old Testament? Our goal in our current Wednesday evening series is to get to know it better! Why is this important?

Discuss: Why do we need to know the Old Testament?

Review: (from OT Survey part 1) There are various views of the Old Testament:

1. The Old Testament is useless (Marcion, 150 A.D.). The God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New Testament.

2. The Old Testament is important, but is inferior to the New Testament (for instance, in ethical issues like polygamy, vengeance, etc.).

3. We must allegorize and typologize the Old Testament (for instance, the blue, purple, and scarlet linen in the tabernacle typified the character and glories of Jesus Christ).

4. We must let the Old Testament speak for itself, and see it as the foundation of the revelation given in the New Testament.

Guidelines for our Survey of the Old Testament:

1. As a general rule, we will devote one week to one book.
2. Read (or scan) the book prior to our study, looking for the big picture.
2. Our aim is to discover and remember the following details about each book:

Who wrote the book?

When was the book written?

Why was the book written?

What is the outline of the book?

What is the message of the book in one sentence?

What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?

Who wrote the book?

--Unknown

--Archer discusses Moses as a possibility

When was the book written?

--Job, apparently, lived quite early. The book presents a patriarchal setting--there are no priests for sacrifices; wealth is measured by animals; long life-span (140 years)

--It's difficult to determine when the book itself was written (L.H.B. suggests between 700-600 B.C.).

Why was the book written?

Job addresses several issues:

1. Why do the righteous suffer?
2. What is God like? Can God be both sovereign and good?

Three choices...

God is good, but not sovereign.

God is sovereign, but not good.

God is both good and sovereign. That's the message of Job.

What is the outline of the book?

(adapted from L.H.B, p. 564)

I. Prologue (Prose, 1-2)

- A. Job is righteous and prosperous.
- B. Satan accuses Job to God.
- C. God grants Satan permission to test Job.

II. Job's Lament (Poetry, 3)

III. Job's Dialogue with His Three Friends (Poetry in three rounds, 4-27)

The Friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar

A. Round One (4-14) -- Job's friends attempt to persuade him.

1. Friends: "Job, listen to what you are saying."

2. Job defends himself.

B. Round Two (15-21) -- Job's friends dispute with him.

1. Friends: "Job, you are speaking wrongly." (see 15:4-6)

2. Job defends himself, and asks to be heard.

C. Round Three (22-27) -- Job's friends accuse him.

1. Friends: "Job, you have done wrong against God and man." (see 25:5-6)

2. Job speaks of God.

IV. Poem on Wisdom (Poetry, 28)

A. This is the center of book.

1. Job's friends have been arguing that they are wise.

2. Job says they are not wise.

3. Thus, in chapter 28, the question, "Where do we find wisdom?"

4. The answer, "Wisdom is found with God alone."

B. It communicates the central message of the book.

God as Creator is both sovereign and good.

V. Dialogue with Job and Elihu (Poetry, 29-37)

Key: They talk *at* each other, not *with* each other.

A. Job's Speeches (29-31)

C. Elihu's Speeches (32-37)

1. He defends God. (see 33:12)

2. He accuses Job. (see 34:10-11)

VI. Yahweh's Speeches to Job (Poetry, 38-42)

A. Round One (38-39)

1. God reproves Job for talking to Him as an equal.

2. Job submits to God's rebuke (40:3-5).

B. Round Two (40-42)

1. God affirms that He is Creator.

2. God does not tell Job why he suffered.

C. Job responds with repentance (42:1-6).

VII. Epilogue (Prose, 42:7-17)

A. God rebukes Job's friends (7-9).

B. God prospers Job twice as much as before (10-17).

Professor David Kennedy offers this helpful comparison for Job, his friends, and the things they say about God and life (class notes).

--Elihu is like a Bible school student. He has learned enough truth to be dangerous. He has all the answers, and condemns others. He says some good things, but we become restless listening to him. He causes us to see that "textbook answers" are shallow when dealing with people's problems.

--Job's three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) are like seminary students. They, too, have all the answers, although they're not as quick to judge Job as Elihu was.

--Job is like an experienced Senior Pastor who has been through the war, and has come to know God.

Elihu is the controversial figure in the book. He's not mentioned in the epilogue as are the three friends. He says some good things, but again, he's shallow. He spends a whole chapter convincing people why he has a right to be heard! After reading Elihu's speeches for awhile, we're ready to get the book over. We're anxious to find out what the real answer is to Job's predicament.

What is the message of the book in one sentence?

Fill in the blank: "The book of Job teaches us _____."

The book of Job teaches us through the experience of Job's suffering that we can trust God because He is both sovereign and good.

What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?

1. Job teaches us about the freedom of God.

L.H.B. state (583), "This, if any, doctrine should be singled out. Both Job and his friends were utterly baffled by God's freedom. The friends assumed that suffering was always and only the sign of God's retribution. Job could imagine no worthy divine purpose to his unmerited suffering."

The book shows us, however, that God is free to work His surprises. He was free to enter into Satan's test and not tell anyone about it, free to make Job wait in silence while he prayed in agony, and above all, free to care enough to confront Job and to forgive his friends.

God is free. What He does springs from His own character and will.

Discuss: L.H.B. states (583), "Nothing is more frustrating and restricting than to set up rules for God and then wonder why he does not follow them." Can you think of a time when you have done this?

2. Job teaches us about the purpose of suffering.

Key Texts: Isaiah 53:3 "...a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering"

In the NT, Jesus fills up the suffering of Job. In Jesus, we also see the model of One Who trusted in God in the midst of suffering (e.g. in the garden, "Not my will, but Thy will be done")

Discuss: So what is the purpose of God in our suffering?

3. *Job teaches us about our need for an arbitrator.*

Who is that arbitrator that Job (as well as the whole world) needed? Christ!

See: 9:33; 19:25

4. *Job teaches us how to help others who are suffering.*

It's not through long speeches (16:2-3), nor through careless assessments of the problem (19:1-3). Remember, Job's friends said things that were theologically correct, but were inappropriate.

Discuss: What does Job teach us about helping those who are suffering?

Key: Questioning and doubting may be a valuable part of the growth process (Kennedy). We must be careful not to hurry people through these times.

e.g.--"Pastor, we need to do something for so-and-so. He or she cries..." Frankly, the reason the person says that is because THEY feel uncomfortable for THEMSELVES, more than for the person in grief. Give God time to bring about the growth He intends through the trial. Minister through *presence*.

God uses suffering to help us know Him better. Job was a righteous man before the trial, but do you think Job knew God better at the end of the episode than he did at the beginning? No question about it. The suffering forced him to reevaluate the things he had always "believed." It forced Him to look at the Word in a way he hadn't before.

See: Job 23:10

Discuss: Part of the Christian life is living with questions. What does that mean? The fact is, Christians don't have all the answers in life. But life must go on in spite of our lingering questions. We must trust God for what we don't understand.