

# Job

The background of the slide is a photograph of a dramatic sky. It features dark, heavy, grey-blue clouds that fill most of the frame. In the center, a bright light source, likely the sun or moon, is partially obscured by the clouds, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the surrounding cloud layers. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

Living Between What Is  
And What Ought To Be

## Job, The Oldest Wisdom Literature

- This profound discussion of suffering is rooted in antiquity
- Is timelessly relevant

*Second Hand Lions*, “some things should be believed even if they aren’t true.”



Psalm 1:4 the ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

Psalm 73:3 For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

# Suffering is at the heart of Job

- Since all suffer, this book has universal significance.
- Job raises one major question;
  - “Are God’s ways just?”
  - This is the question of *theodicy*.
- However, Job does not answer the question directly,
  - it makes no effort to explain or rationalize God’s actions.
- This removes it from the genre of theodicy.

# Genre

- Job is unique
  - Job is not a theodicy,
  - Job is not typical of most wisdom literature.
  - There are other examples of literature something like Job.
- *Babylonian Job*
  - called Ludlul bel nemeqi “I will praise the Lord of wisdom”
  - The main character protests his suffering because he is loyal to the gods and the king.
  - This writing is a monologue, and the protagonist, Subsi-mekri-Sakkan, never questions the “gods” it is rather a story about his restoration and his subsequent vindication. It dates to 2nd millennium B.C.

## *Babylonian Theodicy*

- A dialogue between one who suffers, and another pious man.
  - The victim complains about his innocence and suffering,
  - The pious man warns against blasphemy.
  - He however eventually concludes:
    - They harm a poor man like a thief,  
They lavish slander upon him and plot his murder,  
Making him suffer every evil like a criminal,  
because he has no protection,  
Terrifyingly they bring him to his end,  
and extinguish him like a flame.  
lines 284-86

# What is Job then?

- Is it history?
  - Job's intention is not to be history.
  - There is a definite historical venue to this book.
  - We are supposed to understand from it that:
    - Job actually lived,
    - he suffered,
    - his experience has meaning for people in all ages.
  - Compare the following passages:

- Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name *was* Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.

– אִישׁ הָיָה

– ʾîš hāyā<sup>h</sup>

– there was a man

- 1 Samuel 1:1 Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name *was* Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.

- Judges 17:1 Now there was a man from the mountains of Ephraim, whose name *was* Micah
- The similarity of these initial sentences argues for the intention of the writer that Job should be regarded as historical.
- Consider Ezekiel 14:14-20

- “Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,” says the Lord GOD. “If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they empty it, and make it so desolate that no man may pass through because of the beasts, even though these three men were in it, as I live,” says the Lord GOD, “they would deliver neither sons nor daughters; only they would be delivered, and the land would be desolate. Or if I bring a sword on that land, and say, 'Sword, go through the land,' and I cut off man and beast from it, even though these three men were in it, as I live,” says the Lord GOD, “they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but only they themselves would be delivered. Or if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out My fury on it in blood, and cut off from it man and beast, even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live,” says the Lord GOD, “they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness.”

# Historical

- [ Daniel, contrary to modern critics is unlikely to be the Danel of the *Ugaritic tale of Aqhat* ]
- These are considered as three men who are outstanding in there environment for being righteous men.
- Job is here represented as historical as Noah or Daniel.
- Also it seems likely that there is a reference to Job 22:29, 30 here:
  - He will save the humble person. He will even deliver one who is not innocent; Yes, he will be delivered by the purity of your hands.

# More Than History

- The clues of style:
  - the shift in the dialogues to poetic style is also a clue that we are not dealing with *history* as we understand it.
  - The dialogues are *historical* but not precise transcriptions. CNN & Thucydides
  - The use of the poetic form is a clue that we are to take these conversations as more significant than a record of what was said but as wisdom sayings that are worth learning and following.

# The Where of Job?

- Where does Job come from?
  - The east!
  - Job 1:3 this man was the greatest of all the people of the East.
  - Did it come through Midian & Moses?
  - Or is there a Canaan connection with Abraham?

## The When of Job

- We must be careful when we consider the time of writing:
  - We do not need to conclude that the setting of the story and the time of authorship are one and the same.
- The story of Job is clearly very ancient.
  - Job lived in a time when wealth was measured in real property and not in terms of exchangeable wealth.
  - Job lived at a time prior to the levitical system.
  - Job lived earlier than the Abrahamic covenant.
- His age is earlier than that of the patriarchs in the history of redemption.

# The Who?

- There is no internal or external attribution of authorship.
  - So we must regard Job as an anonymous work.
- Some have suggested a Mosaic authorship,
  - this is supported by some Jewish tradition,
  - several commentators that have noted a similarity between Deut 28 and the book of Job.
  - It is possible that the story of Job was learned by Moses in Midian when he was a shepherd for forty years.
  - It is also possible that Moses was the original source of the prologue and epilogue.

# The Monarchal Hypothesis

- the language is thought by many to reflect the monarchal period.
  - This is not a scientific judgement, but a subjective impression of style.
  - It is not unlikely that the poetic expression did not reach its final form until a later time.
  - David Wolfers has suggested Isaiah as the author of Job (*Deep Things Out Of Darkness*)
  - We can certainly assert that it must have been written in the present form prior to the exile.

# Structure of Job

- The First Level of Structure
  - Job is a three part, A-B-A' structure.
    - Prologue ch. 1 & 2
    - Dialogues 3 — 42:6
    - Epilogue 42:7 ff
  - The dialogues are introduced by Job's complaint monologue

# The Integrity of Job

- Job 1:21 "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."
- Reverent acceptance of:
  - the **Womb**
  - the **Tomb**
  - of **God**
  - Plus a **statement of theocratic praise**
- These must be contrasted to Job's complaints against;
  - The womb, the Tomb, God
  - Plus a statement of egocentric lament

# The Integrity of Job

- Job's Complaint against
  - The Womb:
    - Job 3:3-4 May the day perish on which I was born, And the night in which it was said, 'A male child is conceived.' May that day be darkness;
  - The Tomb:
    - Job 3:12-13 Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breasts, that I should nurse? 13 For now I would have lain still and been quiet, I would have been asleep; Then I would have been at rest

# The Integrity of Job

## – God

- Job 3:20&23 "Why is light given to him who is in misery, And life to the bitter of soul,  
23 Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,  
And whom God has hedged in?"

## – Ego-centric Lament

- Job 3:24-26 For my sighing comes before I eat,  
And my groanings pour out like water. 25 For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, And what I dreaded has happened to me. 26 I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes."

# Job and His Riv

- Job 9:2 & 3
- Job 10:1-3
- Job 13:6-23
- Job 23:1-7
- Job 31:35-36

# Satan

- First use of the term
  - Adversary
    - Job 1:7 And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."
  - Accuser
    - Job 1:9-10 "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 "Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side?"

## God's Role

- Job 1:8 Then the LORD said to 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?"
- What does this mean?
- Is God inviting Satan to test Job
- Or looking to protect his servant?

# Inspired vs. Normative

- Is every word of the Bible inspired?
- Is every word normative?
  - Job 2:9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"
  - Genesis 3:4-5 "You will not surely die. 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,

# The Dialogues

- Cycle 1
  - Eliphaz & Job
  - Bildad & Job
  - Zophar & Job
- Cycle 2
  - Eliphaz & Job
  - Bildad & Job
  - Zophar & Job
- Cycle 3
  - Eliphaz & Job
  - Bildad & Job

# Cycle 1: Eliphaz and Job

## – Eliphaz

- **Job 4:4-9**

Your words have upheld him who was stumbling,

And you have strengthened the feeble knees; 5 But now  
it comes upon you, and you are weary;

It touches you, and you are troubled.

6 *Is* not your reverence your confidence?

And the integrity of your ways your hope?

7 "Remember now, who *ever* perished being innocent?

Or where were the upright *ever* cut off?

8 Even as I have seen,

Those who plow iniquity

And sow trouble reap the same.

9 By the blast of God they perish,

And by the breath of His anger they are consumed.

# Eliphaz cycle 1 continues

– **Job 5:15-19**

But He saves the needy from the sword,  
From the mouth of the mighty,  
And from their hand.

16 So the poor have hope,  
And injustice shuts her mouth.

17 " Behold, happy *is* the man whom God corrects;  
Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.

18 For He bruises, but He binds up;  
He wounds, but His hands make whole.

19 He shall deliver you in six troubles,  
Yes, in seven no evil shall touch you.

- Eliphaz argues that God does not afflict the poor, and Job's suffering must be chastening.

# Job Responds

- God's Hand is heavy on me

- **Job 6:3-5**

- For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea –

- Therefore my words have been rash.

- 4 For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me;

- My spirit drinks in their poison;

- The terrors of God are arrayed against me.

- 5 Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass,

- Or does the ox low over its fodder?

- Job argues that his complaints were valid, because God's hand was against him.

# Job Continues

- **Job 7:16-21**

I loathe *my life*;

I would not live forever.

Let me alone,

For my days *are but* a breath.

17 "What *is* man, that You should exalt him,

*That* You should set Your heart on him,

18 That You should visit him every morning,

*And* test him every moment?

19 How long? Will You not look away from me,

And let me alone till I swallow my saliva?

20 Have I sinned?

What have I done to You,

O watcher of men?

Why have You set me as Your target,

So that I am a burden to myself?

21 Why then do You not pardon my transgression,

And take away my iniquity?

For now I will lie down in the dust,

And You will seek me diligently,

But I *will* no longer *be*."

- Job wonders why God will not forgive him,
- he has a dread of God's continued "attention."

# Bildad and Job

- If you were innocent this suffering would end:
  - **Job 8:1-6** Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said: 2  
"How long will you speak these *things*,  
And the words of your mouth *be like* a strong wind?  
3 Does God subvert judgment?  
Or does the Almighty pervert justice?  
4 If your sons have sinned against Him,  
He has cast them away for their transgression.  
5 If you would earnestly seek God  
And make your supplication to the Almighty,  
6 If you *were* pure and upright,  
Surely now He would awake for you,  
And prosper your rightful dwelling place

# Job Responds to Bildad

- **Job 9:4-18**

4 God *is* wise in heart and mighty in strength.

Who has hardened *himself*  
against Him and prospered?

5 He removes the mountains, and they do  
not know

When He overturns them in His anger;

6 He shakes the earth out of its place,  
And its pillars tremble;

7 He commands the sun, and it does not rise;  
He seals off the stars;

8 He alone spreads out the heavens,  
And treads on the waves of the sea;

9 He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,  
And the chambers of the south;

10 He does great things past finding out,  
Yes, wonders without number.

11 If He goes by me,  
I do not see *Him*;

If He moves past,  
I do not perceive Him;

- 12 If He takes away, who can hinder Him?

Who can say to Him,  
'What are You doing?'

13 God will not withdraw His anger,  
The allies of the proud lie  
prostrate beneath Him.

14 " How then can I answer Him,  
*And* choose my words *to reason*  
with Him?

15 For though I were righteous,  
I could not answer Him;  
I would beg mercy of my Judge.

16 If I called and He answered me,  
I would not believe that He was  
listening to my voice.

17 For He crushes me with a tempest,  
And multiplies my wounds without  
cause.

18 He will not allow me to catch my breath,  
But fills me with bitterness.

# Zophar to Job

- **Job 11:4-11**

For you have said,

'My doctrine *is* pure,  
And I am clean in your eyes.'

5 But oh, that God would speak,  
And open His lips against you,

6 That He would show you the secrets of wisdom!  
For *they would* double *your* prudence.

Know therefore that God exacts from you  
*Less* than your iniquity *deserves*.

7 "Can you search out the deep things of God?  
Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?

8 *They are* higher than heaven -- what can you do?  
Deeper than Sheol -- what can you know?

9 Their measure *is* longer than the earth  
And broader than the sea.

10 "If He passes by, imprisons, and gathers *to judgment*,  
Then who can hinder Him?

11 For He knows deceitful men;  
He sees wickedness also.  
Will He not then consider *it*?

# More of Zophar

- **Job 11:13-19**

"If you would prepare your heart,

And stretch out your hands toward Him;

14 If iniquity *were* in your hand, *and you* put it far away,

And would not let wickedness dwell in your tents;

15 Then surely you could lift up your face without spot;

Yes, you could be steadfast, and not fear;

16 Because you would forget *your* misery,

And remember *it* as waters *that have* passed away,

17 And *your* life would be brighter than noonday.

*Though* you were dark, you would be like the morning.

18 And you would be secure, because there is hope;

Yes, you would dig *around you*, *and* take your rest in safety.

19 You would also lie down, and no one would make *you* afraid;

Yes, many would court your favor.

# Job Answers Zophar

- **Job 12:1-10**

Then Job answered and said:

2 "No doubt you *are* the people,  
And wisdom will die with you!

3 But I have understanding as well as you;  
I *am* not inferior to you.  
Indeed, who does not *know* such things as these?

4 "I am one mocked by his friends,  
Who called on God, and He answered him,  
The just and blameless *who is* ridiculed.

5 A lamp is despised in the thought of one who is at ease;  
*It is* made ready for those whose feet slip.

6 The tents of robbers prosper,  
And those who provoke God are secure –  
In what God provides by His hand.

7 " But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you;  
And the birds of the air, and they will tell you;

8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you;  
And the fish of the sea will explain to you.

9 Who among all these does not know  
That the hand of the LORD has done this,

10 In whose hand *is* the life of every living thing,  
And the breath of all mankind?

# The First Transition

- He contrasts God's transcendence to man's finiteness
  - **Job 14:1-5**
- He contrasts the renewal of nature to the finality of death
  - **14:7-12**
- He longs for oblivion and hopes for resurrection
  - **14:13-17**
- He sinks into despondency
  - **14:18-19**

# The Second Transition

- The Wisdom Poem (Ch. 28)
- One of the most intriguing features of Job
  - Many feel that it is placed at the main hinge
  - Others believe it is misplaced
  - Some believe that it has displaced Zophar's last speech.
  - Stylistically it is very simple poetry, very simple vocabulary
    - **18** No mention shall be made of coral or quartz, For the price of wisdom *is* above rubies.
    - **28** And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom, And to depart from evil *is* understanding.' "

# Monologues

- Job & Elihu
  - Job's monologue (29-31)
  - Elihu's monologue (32-37)
- God
  - First Speech (38:1-40:5)
  - Second Speech (40:6-42:6)

# Elihu

- Is often maligned
  - As brash and youthful
  - Boring and repetitive
  - This is not accurate
- As a Literary device, Elihu is a “forerunner” to God’s speech from the whirlwind
  - Job 37:14
- Dramatically he balances Job’s riv
  - He actually listens to Job
  - And addresses his riv
    - Job 33:8-24

# Elihu

- Elihu is mostly normative he speaks of inspiration 32.8,18 and 36.4.
- He speaks well on chastening value of suffering. 33.16,19
- He is not condemned in the book;
- he introduces and explains the ultimate coming of God in the storm 36.26-32, 37.1-4.

## Eliphaz, Bildad & Zophar

- His friends are censured in 42.7 for what they *said*.
  - They restricted God to their own concept of retribution, 13.7-8,
  - imputed crime to a righteous man 22.6-9;32.3,
- Yet they did not speak only wrongly
  - cf 5.13 & 1 Cor 3.19.
- Some theological highpoints in
  - Eliphaz 5.17, 22.12-14
  - Zophar 11.7-9

## Job's Words

- Job 13:15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.
- Job 19:25-27 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; 26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, 27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

## Job's Lowest Ebb

- Job 9:22-24 He destroys the blameless and the wicked.' If the scourge slays suddenly, He laughs at the plight of the innocent. The earth is given into the hand of the wicked. He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, who else could it be?
  - The character of God?
  - The stumbling block for “the reformed”

# The Science of Job

- 26:7 – 8 & 10 cosmology
- 36:27 – 28 hydrology
- 38:31 astronomy
- 40:7 - 41:10 God's character witnesses  
Behemoth and Leviathan

## Job's Answer

- Job asked “why?”
- God's answer “who!”
  - Job 42:1-6 Then Job answered the LORD and said: "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."

# The Epilogue

- Some regard the epilogue as a weakening of the poetry.
  - A capitulation to theodicy
- Yet in returning double livestock to Job, God is affirming his innocence indeed.

# The Secret Fear

- Job's friends became his accusers because their world view was shaken up by Job's sufferings.
- They needed to find a reason for Job's sorrow, or they might have to suffer also.
- How does Job help you minister to
  - a terminal patient
  - some one with a debilitating degenerative disease
  - some one who has lost a child.