

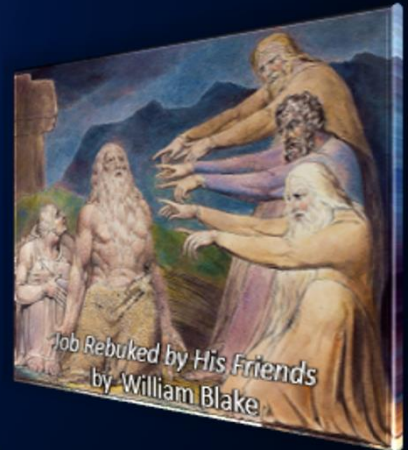
THE BOOK OF JOB

- *the limits of wisdom*

I. Introduction

Purpose

- The book of Proverbs teaches us how to navigate life successfully - financially, relationally, morally, & spiritually. The focus in Proverbs is on how things *usually* work, not how they *must* work, or how they *always* work. Proverbs recognizes that life doesn't always work the way it should. Like passing clouds briefly obscuring the sun, sometimes the wicked get wealthy (11:18; 28:6), the poor are oppressed (13:23), governments rule badly (29:2, 4, 12), & the righteous may suffer (24:15-16; 28:6).

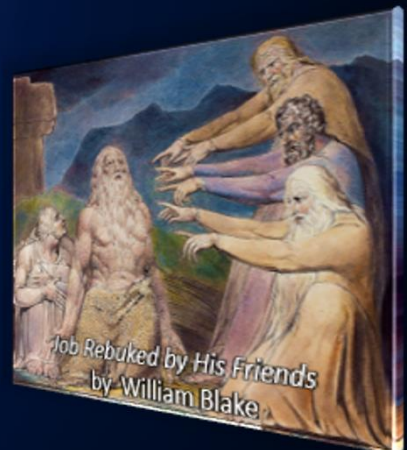


THE BOOK OF JOB

I. Introduction

Purpose

- While Proverbs acknowledges these exceptions to the "rules" of wisdom, the book of Job confronts us with the hard limits of wisdom, where human understanding fails.
- From this perspective, the book of Job examines the meaning of human suffering; the justice, sovereignty, & purposes of God; & the proper human response to God.
- The author does not present rational arguments, proverbial wisdom, or pious platitudes. He tells a story that reveals both the mystery & hope at the heart of reality.

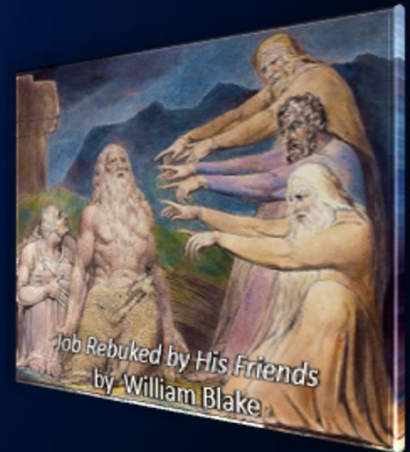


THE BOOK OF JOB

I. Introduction

Background

- The man Job most likely lived in the patriarchal period, perhaps as early as 2000 B.C. The name "Job" is attested in ancient documents from about that time. Apart from the Bible, nothing is known of him.
- The story of Job may have existed in oral form outside Israel for many years before the biblical author brought it into its present written form.

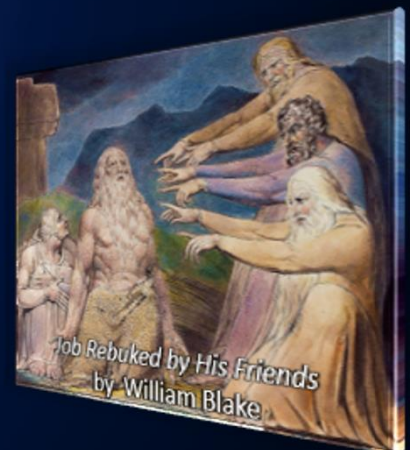


THE BOOK OF JOB

I. Introduction

Background

- The book of Job is a carefully constructed literary masterpiece, written by an unknown Israelite author, most likely in the 7th or 8th century B.C.
- The book is written as an extended set of poetic dialogues & monologues, with a prose prologue and a prose epilogue.

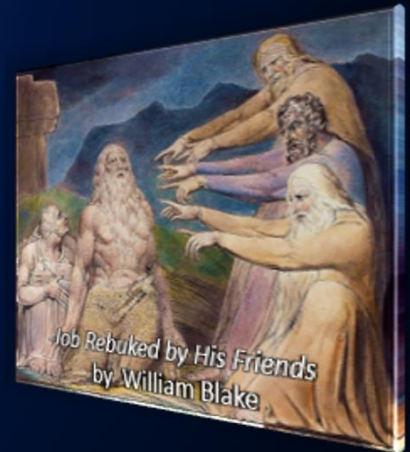


THE BOOK OF JOB

III. The Story

Characters (in order of first appearance)

- Job – Job was a wealthy & respected tribal leader, known for his integrity & compassion. His homeland, Uz, was the region east of the Jordan, extending from Aram in the north to Edom in the south. Though not an Israelite, he was a monotheist who feared God and acted as priest for his family, scrupulously observing atoning sacrifices for his children.

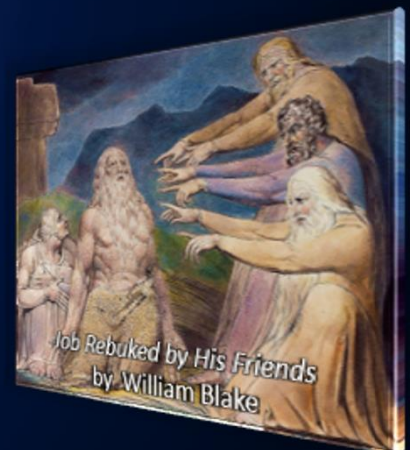


THE BOOK OF JOB

III. The Story

Characters (in order of first appearance)

- God, the LORD (*Yahweh*) – In the Prologue, God is *Yahweh* (typically translated “the LORD”), the covenant God of Israel. With two exceptions (12:9 – *Yahweh*; 28:28 – *adonay*, the Lord) only the generic names for God (*ēl*; *elôah*) are used throughout the dialogues, until “the LORD (*Yahweh*) answered Job out of the storm” (38:1).
- Through this device, the author stresses that the God of Israel alone is God, the God of all, the one sovereign Creator and Lord.

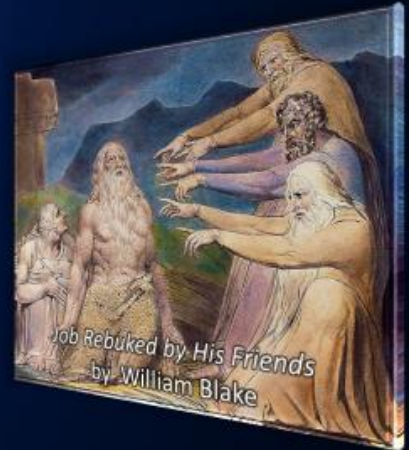


THE BOOK OF JOB

III. The Story

Characters (in order of first appearance)

- The Satan (Heb. – *haśśāṭān*) – The Satan (the “accuser”) is an angelic being, but one whose words indicate he is contemptuous & insolent towards God. His name is his role – he accuses Job of self-serving devotion & God of buying worship.
- Despite some academic arguments to the contrary, there is no reason not to identify the Satan here with the same Satan who tempts Jesus and opposes Christian believers in the New Testament.

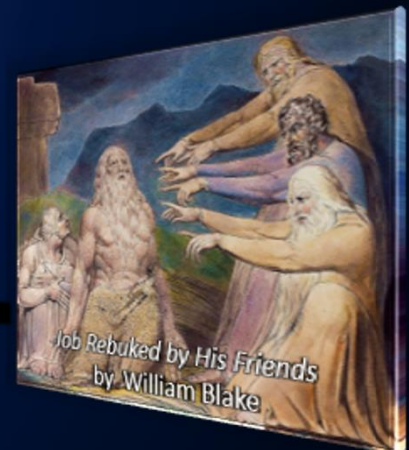


THE BOOK OF JOB

III. The Story

Characters (in order of first appearance)

- Job's wife – Job's wife appears only once, in the Prologue. Her words, “Curse God and die!”, indicate her role resembles Eve's in tempting her husband.
- Job's friends – They all counsel Job that if he repents, he will be restored.
 - Eliphaz – An Edomite, he is the most respectful, at least at first. Yet even he eventually accuses Job of a list of sins Job has not committed (22:4 -11).
 - Bildad – He tells Job his children got what they deserved (8:4) & warns Job he faces a similar fate.
 - Zophar – Recounts the awful fate of the wicked, a class he places Job in (ch. 20).

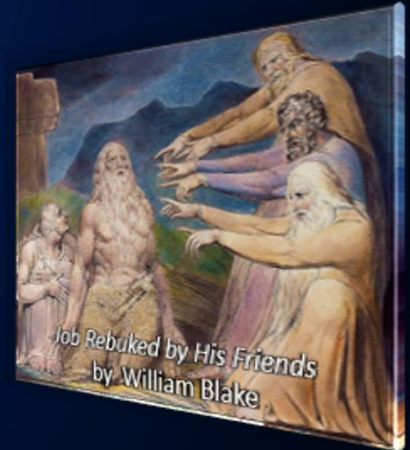


THE BOOK OF JOB

III. The Story

Characters (in order of first appearance)

- Elihu – Elihu is a younger man who has held his peace in deference to his elders. In the first five verses of chapter 32 he is described as “angry” three times: at Job for “justifying himself rather than God”, and twice at the friends for failing to refute Job, thus condemning God. Elihu intends his words to rectify this situation, to correct Job & justify God.



THE BOOK OF JOB

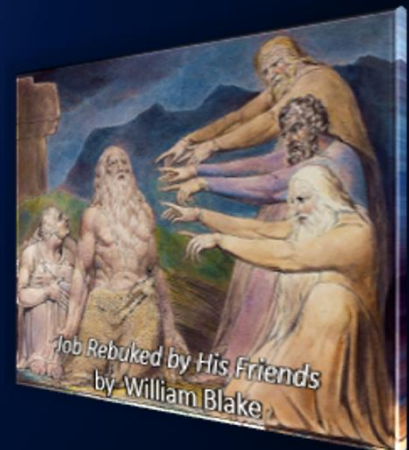
III. The Story

Plot

Prologue (chs. 1 – 2)

- Job's opening lament (ch. 3).
- The friends' counsel & Job's replies (chs 4 – 27).
- Interlude on wisdom (ch. 28).
- Job's final complaint (chs. 29 – 31).
- The speeches of Elihu (chs. 32 – 37).
- God answers Job (chs. 38 – 41).
- Job repents (42:1-6).

Epilogue (42:7-17)



THE BOOK OF JOB

III. The Story

Plot

THE STORY OF JOB

Prose

Poetry

Prose

Prologue

Job's
opening
lament

The
friends'
counsel
& Job's
replies

Interlude
on
Wisdom

Job's final
complaint

The
speeches
of Elihu

God
answers
Job

Job
repents

Epilogue

Intro

Conflict

Climax

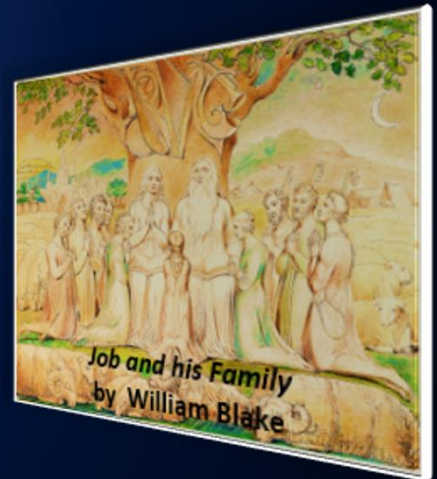
Resolution

THE BOOK OF JOB

III. The Story

Plot

- The Prologue (chs. 1 & 2) sketches quickly the setting & the situation.
 - Job is described as a genuinely pious man who was "blameless & upright; [who] feared God and shunned evil" (1:1) and acts as a priest for his family (1:5). This portrayal prepares us to know & accept that Job's suffering is not due to any guilt of his; that this is "innocent" suffering.
 - Job is presented as a paradigm of the wise & righteous man who is blessed by God with family & wealth.



THE BOOK OF JOB

III. The Story

Plot

- The Prologue (chs. 1 & 2)
 - As though in a vision, we are taken with the angels, and the Satan, into the throne room & council chamber of the LORD (see 1 Ki. 22:19-22; Pss. 82:1; 89:5-8; Is. 6:1-3; Rev. 4:1-11).
 - God holds up Job as one who is “blameless & upright”; the Satan accuses Job of a self-serving fear of God.



THE BOOK OF JOB

III. The Story

Plot

- The Prologue (chs. 1 & 2)
 - God gives the Satan permission to test Job by destroying his wealth & family. God sets up the test and sets the parameters, not Satan. Job knows none of this.
 - In a series of disasters, Job loses first all his livestock and servants & then his sons and daughters.
 - Job responds with deep grief, but he “did not sin or charge God with wrong” (1:22).



II. The Story

- **The Prologue (chs. 1 & 2)**

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

Job's Lament

THE BOOK OF JOB

III. The Story

Plot

- Job's Lament (ch. 3)
 - Out of the anguish of his heart and the agonizing pain of his body, Job curses the day he was born and longs for death.
 - Though Job expresses his despondency & bitterness, he does not curse God or consider suicide.
 - Job longs for immediate relief & rest, which he believes death will bring him. (3:11-19).



THE BOOK OF JOB

III. The Story

Message

- Chapters 1 – 3
 - The central tension that Job feels —and we feel—throughout the story is between his belief in God & the way he works, and Job's personal experience.
 - The “cosmic” struggle between God & the Satan is the framework within which we must understand the book of Job, as well as a key to understanding God's plan in history to *defeat* evil, rather than simply annihilate it, and redeem his creation.



THE BOOK OF JOB

II. The Story

Message

- Chapters 1 – 3
 - The Divine permission God gives the Accuser “reflects the consistent practice of God” (Kidner) in dealing with & defeating evil.
 - A central question the author wants to confront us with, is “*why do we worship God?*”. Do we worship him only for his benefits or for who he truly is.
 - The author establishes firmly the theme of the “righteous sufferer”; we know immediately & firmly that Job is innocent & does not suffer because of his own sin.



THE BOOK OF JOB

II. The Story

Message

- Chapters 1 – 3
 - There are affinities between the book of Job & Isaiah chs. 40-55. The most significant is the theme of the “righteous sufferer,” developed in Job and in Isaiah’s portraits of the Suffering Servant, who suffers vicariously for the sins of others (Hartley).
 - While vicarious suffering is only hinted at in Job (22:30; 42:7-9), “the message of the book of Job prepared the people to understand & receive Isaiah’s bold new message that that God was going to redeem his people & the world through the innocent suffering of his obedient Servant” (Hartley).



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