

# Book of Job

## THE BOOK OF JOB.

In what age of the world Job lived, is hard to tell. As his sons were housekeepers, before his afflictions began, we will allow him to have been sixty years old ; after this he lived one hundred and forty years

by this rule, he was two hundred years old when he died

from which one might conclude that he was contemporaneous with, or before Abraham : but he did not live until after government was established that punished men for idolatry and adultery ; and after the arts of printing, engraving and book- keeping were understood in the world ;

Job 31:11 For this *is* an heinous crime; yea, it *is* an iniquity *to be punished by the judges.*

Job 31:28 This also *were* an iniquity *to be punished by the judge:* for I should have denied the God *that is* above.

Job 19:23-24 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! ( 24) That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

### Richest and Best man in the earth

From this it looks as if he did not live until after Moses. But in whatever age of the world he lived, he was the richest man in the east, and the best man on earth. Yet, neither his wealth nor his piety secured him from the most excruciating afflictions. The loss of his property and family he bore with saint-like fortitude and acquiescence, to a degree that has gained him the title of the most patient man that ever lived. In all this, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." He was next attacked with personal affliction and smitten with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head ; but still he retained his integrity and sinned not with his lips.

### Guilty of Some Specific Sin?

On hearing of his calamity, his three old friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, made an agreement to visit him in his distress, and bemoan and comfort him. They were accompanied by young Elihu, who, in the event, acted as stenographer. When they beheld his great distress, they gave full vent to their sympathy, and sat down with him on the ground, and watched in painful silence seven days. Job then broke silence, and opened his mouth, and cursed the day of his birth, and spake unadvisedly with his lips. This speech caused a long debate between him and his friends. The question in debate was on sovereignty and contingency . Job maintained that God afflicted him, when he had been guilty of no specific crime. His friends contended, that God was righteous and would not afflict without cause and, therefore, that Job must have been guilty of some enormous wickedness, which brought the heavy curse upon him but could not specify what wickedness he had done, and support the charge. Had the friends of Job heard what God said to Satan, although thou movest me against him to destroy him without cause," perhaps they would have been less censorious.

Job 2:3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

## Interrogation and Assertions

**The book of Job is a true journal of the debate between Job and his three friends.** The truth of the journal is no proof that all or any of the speeches were true. The debate was conducted partly by **interrogations, and partly by bold assertions**, and in both of which much satire and hard bearing on character is seen. Conquer a man by bold assertions and you kill him, but conquer him by asking questions, and you make him kill him-self. As Job was but one to three, it reminds us of Patrick Henry, in the Virginia legislature and convention, combating the great Dons of that state. The speakers borrowed similes from all creation—used all the figures of rhetoric—enlisted all the passions of the mind, and spoke with all the pomp of dictation that the eastern world afforded. Their speeches were awfully sublime, covered with a little obscenity. When they introduce anything to elucidate their arguments, they would treat of it in all its qualities and ramifications, and seem to **forget the object before them**, like an old man telling a story so many circumstances occur, that he loses the track.

### Eight, Three and Two Speeches

How long the war of words lasted, is uncertain. **Job made eight speeches, Eliphaz three, Beldad three, and Zophar two.** They all appear to have been men of great research and eloquence, but they ended as they began, without a reconciliation in sentiment.

### What Job did wrong

What appeared to the others clear as sunshine, to Job looked as dark as midnight, and vice versa. The error of Job appears to be this : **he was so zealous to clear himself from the false charges of his friends, that he lost sight of his own blindness and pollution in the sight of a wise and holy God.** His three friends ceased their replications, seeing him so righteous in his own eyes. During the debate, young Elihu sat by, a close observer, and probably kept a record of their speeches : but when the debate ended, he was much displeased with Job for justifying himself rather than God, and as much with the others, for accusing Job of defects which they failed to substantiate. He was determined, therefore, to show his opinion.

### Jobs Repentance

Elihu was a handsome speaker, but did not dress his speeches with fine clothes so much that the body could not be seen. But his inspired eloquence, (as he is not implicated with the others, we are willing to acknowledge his claims,) did no more to humble Job, and cause him to repent in dust and ashes, than the human eloquence of the others. God, who spake to the fathers in divers manners, now appeared to Job in a whirlwind, and spake out of it, in a manner that Job understood, convincing him that although he was clear of what his friends had accused him of, he was a weak, ignorant, polluted sinner, darkening counsel by words without knowledge. And Job confessed that he had uttered things which he knew not, and repented, in dust and ashes, for his vileness.

### Jobs deliverance

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee ;" the language here used would justify the belief that God revealed himself to the eye of Job, in a human form, as he did to Abraham, Jacob, and others ; in this view of the subject, what he heard in the whirlwind began, and what he saw with his eye, completed his humiliation. How pitiable the case of Job ! Stripped of all his property—deprived of his family—smitten with sore boles sitting on ashes—tantalized by his friends—reproved by Elihu—and now called upon by God himself, to answer to him for what he had said. Before honor is humility. As soon as Job was properly humbled, the Lord honored him. His friends were made to succumb, and bring their offering, and the prayer of Job for them was accepted, and their folly, in not speaking of God the things that were right, as Job had done, was for- given. Yet Job had not always spoken right : God accused him of darkening counsel by words without knowledge, and he confessed it ; but, on the whole, he had spoken better than his friends. **After his afflictions, the Lord greatly blessed his latter end ; he lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his posterity to the fourth generation.**

### Three friends found guilty

How long the debate lasted between Job and his three friends, together with the remarks of Elihu, and the solemn declaration of the Almighty out of the whirlwind, which shows that the hand of God was in it, notwithstanding Job was sometimes presumptuous, and his **three friends were guilty of folly**. Granting that Elihu was the writer of this book, (for it cannot be proved,) we may suppose that he kept a record of what each one said, together with a minute of his own speech, and after the death of Job, he finished the book. It is difficult to decide whether any of them heard what God said to Job, together with what Job replied, but Job himself. If not, the Lord must have revealed it to Elihu, at that time, or when he wrote the book.

The book contains forty-two chapters, including 17,985 words. No man's memory would be a safe depository for all this, one hundred and forty years, or one hour. The inspiration and superintendence of God must be recognized in the whole affair, whether written by Elihu or any other man. To this I add, there is one of the clearest proofs of the resurrection of the body given in this book, that is to be found in the Old Testament.