

Walk Through the Poetic Books

Part 1: Job

Source: Alfred Sisley: The Bridge at Villeneuve-la-Garenne (64.287) | Heilbrunn
Timeline of Art History | The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Author & Title

- ◆ We have no clear indication or tradition as to the author.
- ◆ The book is entitled after its main character, Job.
- ◆ The setting seems to be around the time of Abraham.
- ◆ It is perhaps the earliest written book in the Bible.

Survey

The book of Job begins in heaven with a conversation between God and Satan, then moves to earth for a detailed look at the life of an ancient patriarch named Job. Overnight, Job's blessings dissolve into heartaches as he suffers the loss of his health, wealth, family, and status. Left in turmoil over his sudden change of

fortune, Job seeks an answer to the question, “Why?” Four human counselors are unable to provide the insight Job desperately needs. Finally it remains for [God] to teach Job some valuable lessons on the sovereignty of God and the need for complete trust in the Lord who is constantly at work behind the scenes.

[*Talk Thru the Bible*, Copyright ©1983 by Thomas Nelson Publishers, p. 143]

Structure & Content

- The literary form of the majority of the book is dialogue.



Structure & Content

- The content can be divided into three sections:
 1. Chapters 1-2: Job's dilemma.
 2. Chapters 3-37: Job's debates.
 3. Chapters 38-42: Job's deliverance.

Themes

- 1) God's absolute sovereignty (omnipotence).



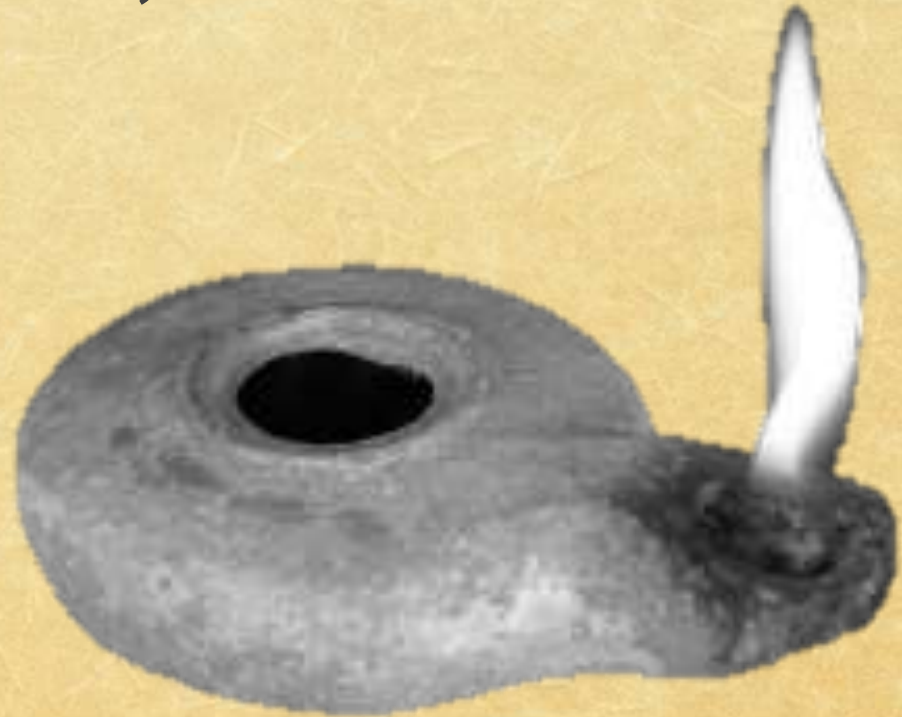
“Can you pull in the leviathan with a fishhook or tie down his tongue with a rope? Can you put a cord through his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook? ... If you lay a hand on him, you will remember the struggle and never do it again! Any hope of subduing him is false; the mere sight of him is overpowering. No one is fierce enough to rouse him.

*Who then is able to stand against me?
Who has a claim against me that I must
pay? Everything under heaven belongs
to me.”—Job 41:-2, 8-11 (NIV)*

“All right, you may test him,” the Lord said to Satan. “Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don’t harm him physically.”—Job 1:12 (NLT)

Themes

- 2) God's surpassing wisdom (omniscience).



*“Who is this that questions my
wisdom with such ignorant words?
Brace yourself like a man, because I have
some questions for you, and you must
answer them.*

“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line? What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone as the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”—Job 38:2-7 (NLT)

“I am nothing—how could I ever find the answers? I will cover my mouth with my hand. I have said too much already. I have nothing more to say.”—Job 40:4-5 (NLT)

Themes

- 3) God's personal involvement (imminence).



The Lord asked Satan, “Have you noticed my servant Job?—Job 1:8 (NLT)

What can we learn about God and ourselves from the book of Job?

- 1) God reigns over all creation, so I will fear/worship him.
- 2) God knows everything, so I don't need to figure it all out.
- 3) God loves me, so I can trust him.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers,
whenever you face trials of many kinds,
because you know that the testing of
your faith develops perseverance.

Perseverance must finish its work so
that you may be mature and complete,
not lacking anything. If any of you lacks
wisdom, he should ask God, who gives

generously to all without finding fault,
and it will be given to him. ... Blessed is
the man who perseveres under trial,
because when he has stood the test, he
will receive the crown of life that God
has promised to those who love him.

... As you know, we consider blessed
those who have persevered. You have
heard of

Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.—James 1:2-5, 12; 5:11 (NIV)

