

## Day One

**Job 1-2**  
**Form and Content**

**Observations/Questions/Surprises/Notables on Job 1-2**

**Technical Notes**

- The *prologue* of Job consists of these first two chapters. It is written in *narrative* (story) form, as is the *epilogue* in Job 42:7-17. These two sections are usually distinguished because the bulk of the book consists of *poetic* speeches.
- The word usually translated “young people” or “them” in 1:19 (the ones on whom the house fell) is the same Hebrew word that is translated “servants” in 1:15, 16, 17.
- *Barak* is the Hebrew word for “bless.” It occurs 8 times in Job, 6 of which occur in these first two chapters. Yet four of those times it is translated “curse”:

**curse:**

- 1:5 – Job would sacrifice for his sons, thinking they might have *curse*d God in their hearts
- 1:11 – Satan declares that Job will *curse* God to his face
- 2:5 – Satan declares Job will *curse* God to his face
- 2:9 – Wife tells Job “*Curse* God and die”

**bless:**

- 1:10 – Satan says that God has *blessed* the work of Job’s hand
- 1:21 – Job worships, “*Blessed* be the name of the LORD”
- 31:20 – Job states that the heart of the needy *blessed* him for providing warmth
- 42:12 – God *blessed* latter part of Job’s life more than the first.

In the first four instances listed above, the idea is that of a blessing that is overdone and so really a curse. (This reversed meaning also occurs in 1 Kings 21:10, 13 and Psalms 10:3.) But in each case, the word is the same; the context must determine its meaning.

Watch for ways in which blessings become curses throughout the Book of Job!

**Discerning Structure**

Like plays, Hebrew narratives can often be divided into scenes, or chunks of material that seem to belong together. A change in scene can be signaled by such devices as a change in the setting (for instance, going from earth to heaven), shifting the focus to a different character, or the passing of

time. Divide the prologue into its major scenes and write an outline. Do you see any patterns in the way this prologue is developed? (You might want to indent your outline so that parallel sections line up together.)

Structure is also important for understanding smaller sections. Consider Job 1:13-19. What parallels and patterns do you see? How do the listings of Job's possessions correspond to previous listings (i.e., Job 1:3, 1:10) and of what significance is that? Do the various parallels, especially in the speeches, seem natural (the way you would expect it to happen in real life) or unnatural?

How well does the form/structure of this story correspond to its contents? What is the significance of this story's structure?

**Area for Application**

What are the areas of chaos in your life (relational, occupational, spiritual, etc.)? Can you discern any patterns in the chaos? What is the significance of those patterns? Are they positive or destructive?

## Day Two

**Job 1:6-12, 2:1-7****In The Heavenly Court****Observations/Questions/Surprises/Notables on the Heavenly Court****Technical Notes and Questions**

- “Satan” literally means “one who accuses, adversary.” In the Hebrew, it is preceded by a definite article (“the”), which suggests that it signifies function and is not a proper name (“the satan” or “the accusing one” rather than “Satan”). Thus, it may or may not indicate the chief devil that we usually refer to as Satan.
- The satan responds to God’s initial query by saying that he has been “roaming the earth” and “walking about on it” (1:7, 2:2). The Hebrew word for “roaming” is elsewhere used to describe God’s eyes roving throughout the earth (Zech 4:10, 2 Chr 16:9). Similarly, the Hebrew word for “walking” is used of heavenly beings with the sense of patrolling the earth (Zech 1:10-11, 6:7).
- God’s second question is literally “Have you set your heart on my servant Job?” (1:8, 2:3) The different nuances of this expression “set your heart on” stem from its general meaning of “pay attention to.” Hence, according to its context, it may be translated “considered,” “determined on,” “desired,” etc. **Which nuance do you think is appropriate in this case? Why?**
- The satan’s suggestion to God is literally “Stretch forth Your hand and touch” Job/his possessions (1:11, 2:5). In response, God puts Job/his possessions in the satan’s “hand,” usually translated “power” (1:12, 2:6).
- *Hinnam* is a Hebrew word meaning “for nothing.” It can refer to either cause (“without reason”) or effect (“to no effect”). It is used twice in these scenes. In 1:9, the satan asks whether Job fears God *hinnam*. Then in 2:3, God states that the satan has incited him against Job *hinnam*. **How should *hinnam* be understood in each case? Why?**

**Issues of Interpretation**

As we saw yesterday, the prologue is a highly structured story. These two scenes are no exception. With so much in common, what are the differences in these two scenes? What is indicated by those differences? (there is space at the top of the next page)

What is your impression of God in these scenes? Does the portrayal fit with your previous conceptions about God? What about it is confusing or surprising?

What is your impression of the satan in these scenes? Is he a “good guy” just doing his duty or a “bad guy”?

What is the key issue in these scenes? That is, why does Job get attacked?

Who is responsible for the attacks on Job? Why?

What can you learn about the relationship between the satan and God from their interaction?

**Area for Application**

Do these scenes help you account for evil in the world or do they open more questions (or both)?  
How / Why?

## Day Three

**Job 1-2**  
**Job The Man**

**Observations/Questions/Surprises/Notables on Job’s character**

**Technical Notes**

- Job is from the land of Uz (1:1). Though we are not sure exactly where that is, most scholars believe it to be the land where Esau’s descendents would later settle, or Edom. However, the key thing to note about Job’s location is that he is most likely not an Israelite.
- The “ash heap” (2:8) where Job goes to sit in his pain would have been a garbage/refuse dump outside the city where social outcasts could gather/scrounge/etc.
- The Hebrew word for “evil” is used for both the moral/social realm (“evil”) and the physical realm (“trouble, distress”). Thus, in this prologue, the same word is used to describe Job as one who “turns away from evil” (1:1, 1:8, 2:3), to describe the “painful” sores with which Job is afflicted (2:7), and to describe the general “trouble” in which Job now finds himself (2:10).
- The word for Job’s sores is the same word used to describe the plague on the Egyptians (Ex 9:9-11) and is one of the curses that the Lord promises to bring upon those who are disobedient in the Promised Land (Deut 28:27, 35). The boils’ enduring appearance on Job thus marks him as someone cursed by the Lord.

**Character Sketch**

In Hebrew narrative, characterization occurs through three main ways:

- 1) **What the narrator says about a character** (and doesn’t say, and how he says it). The narrator is the highest authority. His comments will always be trustworthy, though they may require interpretation.
- 2) **What other characters say about a character**. In this regard, God is a special character. His judgment, like the narrator’s, is always trustworthy. Other characters, however, are potentially fallible or untrustworthy. Their evidence must be weighed.
- 3) **What the character him/herself says and does**.

Based upon those three elements, write a character sketch of Job, backing up your observations with references to the text. Who is he? What is he like? Below are some questions to help get you started:

- Is Job’s response to the first calamity heart-felt or superficial? Why?
- Why does God refer to Himself in the third person when describing Job (1:8)?
- Does Job change throughout the prologue or is he a static character?

**Areas for Application:**

Did Job respond in the “right” way (whatever that might be) to these calamities? If no, how should he have responded? If yes, what about his response makes it “right”? What can you learn from Job’s responses about responding to setbacks and catastrophes in your own life?

In what ways, if any, can you identify with Job? In what ways can you not identify with him?

**Day Four****Job 2:7-13****Job's Companions****Observations/Questions/Surprises/Notables on Job's Companions****Technical Notes**

- In Hebrew, the wife's question in 2:9 reads exactly the same as God's statement in 2:3, except for the pronouns: "He (you) still persists in his (your) integrity." (Questions are often unmarked in Hebrew, leaving context to determine whether a given statement should be understood as a question or not.)
- The word "integrity" (2:3, 9) is the noun form of the word "blameless" in 1:1, 8, and 2:3.

**Considering Job's Wife**

The Hebrew text gives us very little information about Job's wife (only 2:9-10). How do you perceive her as a character? Of what significance is it that she quotes God verbatim? Should she be understood as an unwitting helper of the satan or a fellow sufferer with Job (or both)? With what tone do think she makes her suggestion that Job curse God and die?

The Septuagint (LXX) is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (our Old Testament) that would have been read by most Jews in Jesus' day. The LXX significantly expands the attention given to Job's wife. Verse 9 reads:

And when much time had passed, his wife said to him, "How long will you hold out, saying, 'Behold, I wait yet a little while, expecting the hope of my deliverance?' For, behold, your memorial is abolished from the earth, even your sons and daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb which I bore in vain with sorrow. And you yourself sit down to spend the nights in the open air among the corruption of worms. And I am a wanderer and a servant from place to place and house to house, waiting for the setting of the sun, that I may rest from my labors and my pangs which now beset me. But say some word against the Lord and die."

How (if at all) does the Septuagint's addition change the way you view Job? His wife? Is this interpretation true to the Hebrew text's portrayal of these characters? Why or why not? Why do you think the author of the LXX would insert these extra lines?

Why do you think that the Hebrew text does not develop the wife's character much? What is her purpose in the text? Why does the Hebrew author include this brief episode in the story?

### **Considering Job's Friends**

What is your impression of the friends at this point? Why? How does their response to Job's suffering compare to the wife's? To Job's own response?

### **Considering the Wider Context**

Read Genesis 1-3. What similarities/parallels/reversals do you see with these first two chapters of Job?

### **Area for Application**

How do you respond to the suffering of those around you? Are you more like Job, his wife, or his friends?

<b>Day Five</b>
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**Job 1-2**  
**Creative Expression**

God is a Creating God, and we are made in His image. Consequently, finding creative ways to express His truth is a good way of wrestling with that truth. The struggle often leads us to a deeper understanding and thus helps us communicate with God.

Though we will be learning more about this as the class goes on, it will be good to try your own hand at this artistic expression early in the course so that you will be better able to appreciate the examples we discuss in class. Therefore, your assignment for today is to find some creative way of expressing what you have learned about Job and his character. It could be a drawing, a poem, a short story, a painting, a photograph, a magazine collage, paper maché, or anything else you can think of. You can depict Job in his own time or create a work that somehow discusses what it means to be Job in our society today. Alternatively, you could seek to relate Job's life to your own.

If you feel comfortable sharing your creative endeavor, please bring it to the next class!



<b>Day Six</b>
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**Job 3**  
**The Curse**

**Observations/Questions/Surprises/Notables on Job 3**

**Technical Notes**

- Leviathan (3:8) is one of the mythical monsters of chaos. For the full Biblical presentation of this character see Job 40:25, Psalms 74:14, 104:26, and Isaiah 27:1.

**Outline**

Write an outline of this chapter, tracing the flow of thought. A good way to start is by grouping thematic units and verses that seem parallel. Watch for rhetorical questions that get explained/expanded. Pay attention, too, to how Job shifts from the general condition of humanity to his own specific situation and vice versa.

**Considering the Wider Context**

Compare this chapter with Genesis 1.

Compare this chapter with Jer 20:14-18. What was Jeremiah's context (you may have to go back to the beginning of the chapter)? In what ways is his situation comparable to Job's? In what ways is it not?

**Area for Application**

How would you respond if you heard someone in church crying out like this? Would your response change if the person uttering this curse was the pastor or an elder? Why or why not?

<b>Day Seven</b>
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**Job 3**

**The Curse**

**Observations/Questions/Surprises/Notables on Job 3**

**Technical Notes**

- The word used to identify what the wicked cease from in v17 (often translated “raging” or “turmoil”) is the same word that Job uses to describe what comes upon him in v26. It means “agitation, excitement, quaking, raging.”
- Job’s reference to being hedged in by God (3:23) uses the same language as the satan’s comment in the prologue (1:10). **What Joban theme does this pick up on that we have already seen in the prologue?**

**Issues of Interpretation**

Why does Job curse his day of birth?

What is Job asking for in this curse?

How does the Job who speaks this curse correspond to the Job you saw portrayed in chapters 1-2?

What is the point of the reference to the kings, advisors, and princes (vv14-15)? That is, why does he choose kings et al. for his example, and of what do they serve as an example?

In 3:25, Job states that that which he fears/feared comes upon him. Do you think this is a reference to something Job feared before the satan's attack or since (the grammar is ambiguous)? What is it that he fears? How does your answer affect your understanding of Job's character and his relationship to God?

How would you answer Job's question in 3:20?

**Area for Application**

Even though he suffers greatly and claims to long for death, Job never considers options such as suicide or euthanasia (mercy killing). How do you respond toward those who are "seeking for death"? Is euthanasia a viable option for Christians? Why or why not?

**Images Presented in Class for Discussion**



Fig. 91. Sculpture of La Vierge and St. John, 1875. Photo: Wikimedia Commons/Debra Starnes, David

