

## The Book of Job Structural Outline

The book is divided into five parts.

### **Part One: The Prologue:**

*Chapters 1&2*

Chap. 1: vss. 1-5: Job is a righteous, pious, and wealthy man.

Chap 1: vss. 6-22: In the heavenly assembly, the LORD points out to the Satan (the cosmic opponent), Job's rectitude and piety. The Satan dismisses this as the result of Job's prosperity. Take that away, and Job will curse the LORD. The LORD accepts the challenge and puts Job's property and family into the hands of the Satan. The Satan strips Job of both property and children. Yet Job remains faithful to the LORD.

Chap. 2, vss. 1-10: At the next heavenly assembly, the LORD points out to the Satan Job's continued faithfulness to him. The Satan responds that if Job himself were afflicted, he would curse the LORD. The LORD accepts this second challenge and puts all but Job's life in the Satan's hands, Job is stricken with a foul skin disease. Still he refuses to take his wife's advice to "curse the LORD and die." (she is not very helpful).

Vss. 11-13: Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad, arrive.

### **Part Two: The Symposium:**

*Chapters 3-31*

Chap. 3: Job's complaint, "why was i born?"

Chaps. 4-5: Eliphaz' first speech: he defends the traditional view that the LORD is just.

Chaps. 6-7: Job replies, "Prove my guilt."

Chap. 8: Bildad's first speech: the LORD is just. Suffering is a just payment for sin. Those who forget the LORD are punished. Repent your sin, and the LORD will restore all.

Chaps. 9-10: Job replies, the LORD is not just. Life is short and painful.

Chap. 11: Zophar's first speech: Job must be guilty. He should repent.

Chaps. 12-14: Job replies, the wicked prosper. The three friends are liars. Job resolves to challenge the LORD.

Chap. 15: Eliphaz' second speech: can Job understand the LORD? All men are sinners.

Chaps. 16-17: Job replies, nonsense! The LORD is cruel and unjust. Job calls for an impartial witness to defend him.

Chap. 18: Bildad's second speech: Job is mad. The world cannot be changed. It is the wicked

who suffer.

Chap. 19: Job replies, my “friends” are as cruel as the LORD. Yet I will be vindicated, even in death.

Chap. 20: Zophar’s second speech: the prosperity of the wicked is only temporary. They will be punished.

Chap. 21: Job replies, not true! The wicked prosper. Sure, they will die, but so will everyone. The friends lie!

Chap 22: Eliphaz’ third speech: Job must be very wicked. He must repent.

Chap 23: Job replies: he challenges the LORD to enter into a legal contest with him. But the LORD always eludes him.

**Chaps. 24-27: *skip. The material is scrambled. It is not clear who is speaking.***

Chap 28: a poem about “wisdom” inserted here. A comment on the issues being debated.

Chaps. 29-31: Job’s final reply: he re-affirms his innocence, and denies committing a long list of sins.

### **Part Three: The Four Speeches by Elihu:**

Chaps. 32-37: the young man, Elihu, has been listening, hesitating to intervene in this debate between his elders.

But now, breaks in to challenge Job and defend the LORD. He argues that misfortune may be 1) a divine test, or 2) a divine warning. Man must repent. Then the LORD will redeem him. His works are far beyond us.

### **Part Four: The Theophany:**

Chaps. 38-39: the LORD speaks out of the storm. Who are you to challenge me? I created the heaven and earth, and all  
the animals.

Chap. 40, vss. 1-5: Job acknowledges his smallness.

Vss. 6-24: the LORD continues to describe his awesome powers. He created behemoth, (a mythical cosmic monster, or the earthly hippopotamus?).

Chap. 41: the LORD created Leviathan, (a mythical cosmic monster, or the earthly crocodile?).

Chap. 42: vss. 1-6 Job, overwhelmed, repents.

## **Part Five: The Epilogue**

chap. 42: vss. 7-17: the LORD rebukes, not Job, but his friends, for having lied. He commends Job for his honesty. The LORD restores all of Job's possessions, and more. Job lives 140 years, and dies "satisfied with life."

The End.