

Job:

Date:

- Scholars guess based on issues and context
 - Ezekiel refers to Job
 - Issues suggest crisis of Babylonian exile

Structure:

- 1-2 Prologue, 42:7-17 Epilogue, probably tacked on later.
 - Opening and closing use “Yahweh;” Job’s body uses “El” or Shaddai. (Generic; no personal name).
 - When God speaks out of Whirlwind, he uses Yahweh.
- 3-31: Trial of Job by friends
- 32-37: Elihu’s interpolated discourse
- 38-41 Yahweh’s 2 speeches: cosmic wonders
 - Cosmogony (38:4-21)
 - Meteorology or the play of natural forces created is Cosmogony (38:22-38)
 - Zoology (38:39-39:40)
 - Zoology with mystic heightening (40:15-41:26): Behemoth (hippo) and Leviathan (crocodile) represents Chaos, but also the existence in nature of unaccountable, impersonal violence

Poetry

- Parallelism with intensification
- Metaphor
- Three levels of poetry:
 - Okay poetry: Job’s three friends (analogy, not metaphor)
 - Good poetry: Job
 - Great, transcendent, amazing poetry: Yahweh
 - Prose (frame, added by another author)
 - Elihu’s words (added at some point; not good poetry)
- Poetic motifs: Oppositions
 - Darkness/Light
 - Unbirth/birth
 - Law/cosmos
- Poetic motifs: symmetrically opposed metaphors
 - Eyelids of dawn (3:9; 41:11)
 - Belly’s doors (3:10, 38:8)
 - Hedged him round (imprisoned) 3:23; 19:8; 38:8
 - Unborn, stillborn (3) vs. clouds as infants; birth (38)
- Chapter 19: poetic center of Job’s declaration of innocence

Job as character:

- Native of Uz, “perfect,” “long time ago.” Set in patriarchal age.
- Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar speak for orthodoxy
- Elihu, only Hebrew name, added later. Advises Job to confess sins

Thematic Issues:

- Reason for suffering. Author repudiates Deuteronomistic theories of history. Proverbs, Ezekiel: God favors the good. This theory says all suffering is a punishment that fits a crime; the task is to figure out who did what and punish them accordingly.
 - Instead, Job denies that all suffering is earned or deserved. His friends, frightened by the prospect of so much suffering, counsel him to learn how his actions have caused his pain. Job denies his suffering and demands to confront his accuser (**Chapter 19—read all**): For I know that my Redeemer ^{F83} lives, and that at the last he ^{F84} will stand upon the earth; ^{F85} 26 and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in ^{F86} my flesh I shall see God, ^{F87} 27 whom I shall see on my side, ^{F88} and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
- God’s ineffable nature. Like Ezekiel, Job’s God speaks out of the whirlwind and is unfathomable. Is God’s answer more torment or a consolation?

Word Choice

- Legalistic terms:
 - Case (deen) (13:3): judgment, judgment , cause, plea, condemnation, dispute, legal suit, strife, government
 - Justice (*mish-pawt'*): judgment, justice, ordinance
 - 1. judgment
 - 1. act of deciding a case
 - 2. place, court, seat of judgment
 - 3. process, procedure, litigation (before judges)
 - 4. case, cause (presented for judgment)
 - 5. sentence, decision (of judgment)
 - 6. execution (of judgment)
 - 7. time (of judgment)
 - 2. justice, right, rectitude (attributes of God or man)
- Mediator (33:23: *yaw-kahh'* : to prove, decide, judge, rebuke, reprove, correct, be right
 - a. (Hiphil)
 - 1. to decide, judge
 - 2. to adjudge, appoint
 - 3. to show to be right, prove
 - 4. to convince, convict
 - 5. to reprove, chide
 - 6. to correct, rebuke
 - Redeemer (19:27): *gaw-al'* : to redeem, act as kinsman-redeemer, avenge, revenge, ransom, do the part of a kinsman.
- Names in Job
 - Job "Hated"
 - Uz "Wooded"
 - Satan "adversary"
 - Eliphaz "my god is gold"
 - Bildad "confusing love"
 - Zophar "sparrow"
 - Elihu "He is my God"
 - 3 daughters: Jemima "Day by Day" or "Dove; Kezia "cinnamon"; Keren - happuch " "horn of eyeshadow"
 - Rahab = "breadth, "storm," "arrogance" (but only as names)
 - mythical sea monster
 - emblematic name of Egypt

Questions:

1. Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do the wicked prosper?
 - a. Friends: We get what we deserve; the unjust are punished, though they may not understand their crimes.
 - b. Satan: Does Job Fear God for Nothing? Why do we worship God?
 - c. Job: I do not merit suffering.
2. How can a God with absolute power be held accountable in any human system of justice?
3. Does Job have the right to face his accuser?
4. Does God single out the righteous for suffering? If so, why?
5. What is the right way to suffer adversity?
6. What is the right way to deal with the suffering of others?
7. Is art (in this case poetry) its own consolation for suffering? Does it help us make sense out of the impersonal and non-rational?

