

Notes & Outlines

**ESTHER
JOB**

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ESTHER

This is one of the two books of the Old Testament named for a woman. While Ruth is the story of a Gentile who married a Jew, Esther is the story of a Jewess who married a Gentile.

WRITER: Unknown. Could Mordecai have been the writer? (See Esther 9:29.)

KEY VERSE: 4:14

For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

A STRANGE STORY: God's name is not mentioned in this book; no divine title or pronoun refers to Him. The heathen king's name is mentioned 192 times. (It is true also that God's name does not occur in the Song of Solomon, but every masculine pronoun — with a possible exception of 8:6 — refers to Him.) Esther is the record of Israel in a self-chosen pathway. Opportunity had been given for the Jews to return under Cyrus, but only a very small remnant returned. Ezra and Nehemiah give the story of those who did return; Esther gives the story of those who did not return but who chose instead the prosperity and luxury of Persia. They are out of the will of God, but they are not beyond His care. Deuteronomy 31:18 explains the reason God's name does not appear. In the Book of Esther His face is hidden. There is no mention of prayer nor dependence upon God in this book. Esther is never quoted in the New Testament, nor is there even a casual reference to it. However, the Jews give it a peculiar emphasis. It is one of the five books called *Megilloth* (rolls) and is placed beside the Pentateuch in importance.

SUBJECT: Esther teaches the providence of God. "Providence" comes from the same stem as "provide," and it means simply that God will provide.

Theologically, providence is the direction God gives to everything: animate and inanimate, good and evil.

Practically, providence is the hand of God in the glove of history — and that glove will never move until He moves it. God is at the steering wheel of this universe. Providence means that God is behind the

scenes, shifting and directing them. Providence is the way God coaches the runner on second base. It is the way God leads those who will not be led. As recorded in the Book of Esther, the entire Jewish nation would have been slain had it not been for the providence of God. God stands in the shadows, keeping watch over His own.

ANTI-SEMITISM: This book teaches how God met another satanic attempt to destroy the nation Israel, and how vengeance was wrought upon the perpetrators of the dastardly deed. (See Genesis 12:3.)

OUTLINE:

- I.** The wife who refused to obey her husband, Chapter 1
- II.** The beauty contest to choose a real queen, Chapter 2
- III.** Haman and anti-Semitism, Chapter 3
- IV.** For such a time as this, Chapter 4
- V.** The scepter of grace and the nobility of Esther, Chapter 5
- VI.** When a king could not sleep at night, Chapter 6
- VII.** The man who came to dinner but died on the gallows, Chapter 7
- VIII.** The message of hope that went out from the king, Chapter 8
- IX.** The institution of the Feast of Purim, Chapters 9, 10

COMMENT:

I. The wife who refused to obey her husband, Chapter 1

v. 1 — Rather than a name, “Ahasuerus” is a title meaning “high father.” This Ahasuerus is probably the Xerxes mentioned in Ezra 4:7. The date is approximately 486 B.C.

vv. 2-6 — Before his disastrous campaign into Greece, Xerxes held a banquet with a great display of wealth and power to impress the nobles of his kingdom and to enlist their enthusiastic support.

vv. 7, 8 — There was no pressure on anyone to drink, but there was an abundance of alcoholic beverages available.

v. 9 — Queen Vashti made a separate banquet for the women.

vv. 10, 11 — The king, evidently under the influence of wine, summoned the queen to appear at his banquet to display her beauty. This was contrary to accepted custom and she refused to come.

v. 12 — Her refusal makes it evident that she was a person of nobility and strength of character.

vv. 13-15 — This precipitated a state crisis that could not be ignored. A crisis meeting of the cabinet was called to determine what measures were to be taken.

vv. 16-20 — Memucan, obviously a hen-pecked husband, suggested that extreme measures be adopted. The queen should be set aside permanently. The example would prevent other wives from assuming too much liberty.

vv. 21, 22 — Under the emotional reaction of the moment, the king accepted this suggestion and made a decree to set aside Queen Vashti. This would insure the right of husbands to rule in their own homes.

II. The beauty contest to choose a real queen, Chapter 2

v. 1 — After the disastrous campaign to Greece when Xerxes was soundly defeated, he returns in deep dejection to his palace. Added to his misery is the absence of his queen and the fact that the law of the Medes and Persians cannot be altered — even by the king himself. Vashti can never again be his queen.

vv. 2-4 — The servants of the king, seeing his deep depression, suggest a contest be conducted to choose another queen. The contest is advertised throughout the entire kingdom.

vv. 5, 6 — Here is where the story actually begins. Mordecai, of the tribe of Benjamin, is one of the Jews who had not returned to Jerusalem. He had settled in the capital of Persia with no thought of returning. His name means “little man.” Evidently he is a short person, which adds to the interest of the record.

v. 7 — He had adopted his uncle’s daughter, Esther, and had reared her as his own. She is a beautiful young woman.

v. 8 — Mordecai enters her in the beauty contest.

v. 9 — Esther immediately pleases Hegai, who has charge of the contest. The hand of God is beginning to move in providential dealings with a people who no longer look to Him.

v. 10 — Esther has not revealed her nationality.

v. 11 — The concern of Mordecai is evident, for he feels he can no longer turn to God for help.

v. 12 — Beauty treatments took an extra long time in that day — as well as today.

vv. 13-18 — Esther wins the contest. When the king sees her, the contest is over. He places the crown upon her head and makes her his queen.

vv. 19-23 — Immediately Mordecai is found “sitting in the gate,” which means he has been given a political job and is now a judge. He overhears a plot to kill the king and reveals it to Esther who, in turn, reports it to the king. The deed is recorded but no reward or recognition is given to Mordecai.

III. Haman and anti-Semitism, Chapter 3

v. 1 — Haman is promoted by the king to the position corresponding to prime minister. He is an Agagite (Saul should have obeyed God and destroyed the Agagites — see 1 Samuel 15:1-9).

v. 2 — Because of Haman’s position, the king commands all to bow and revere him. Mordecai refuses because of his training in the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 5:7-10). God’s people revere only God (Daniel 3:8-12; 6:4-15). Although he is walking in disobedience, Mordecai has not repudiated his God.

vv. 5, 6 — Haman reveals that he is a small man. He should have ignored Mordecai, but his hatred knows no bounds. Haman determines to destroy not Mordecai alone, but all the Jews.

vv. 8-11 — The king gives Haman permission to have the Jews killed on a certain day. The king is careless of human life and makes no inquiry as to details concerning the people Haman accuses.

vv. 12-18 — A decree is drawn up and sent throughout the kingdom permitting the people to slay the Jews on the 13th day of Adar (March). The people are shocked at such a brutal and senseless decree.

This is one of the many attempts of Satan to destroy the people of Israel and frustrate God’s purpose in sending Christ into the world. Anti-Semitic purges began with Pharaoh and continued down through the times of Herod, Hitler, the Arab world, and our present society.

IV. For such a time as this, Chapter 4

vv. 1, 2 — Mordecai mourns in sackcloth and ashes, but there is no

mention of prayer.

v. 3 — The Jews throughout the kingdom mourn, but still there is no mention of prayer.

v. 4 — Queen Esther is embarrassed by the conduct of Mordecai, and she sends him a new suit of clothes. There is an application here. The covering of religion will not remove the fact that man is a guilty sinner before God. Neither will religion alter the fact that the wages of sin is death. Mordecai refuses the new garments.

vv. 5-8 — Esther knows now that there is some serious crisis and she sends Hatach to learn the nature of it. Mordecai returns to her a copy of the terrible decree.

vv. 9-11 — Esther reports back to Mordecai that there is nothing she can do, as she does not have access to the king.

vv. 12-14 — Mordecai sends back an SOS. Her life is in danger because she is a Jewess, her relatives are in danger, and her nation is in danger. If she refuses to accept the challenge, deliverance will come from another place. Obviously this is a veiled reference to the providence of God. Mordecai believes that God will intervene. He urges Esther to act, as he now begins to see the hand of God in bringing her to the throne.

vv. 15-17 — Esther accepts this challenge. Notice that she makes no reference to prayer, only to fasting. The strange providences of God are becoming evident, and there is revealed a confidence in the unnamed One.

V. The scepter of grace and the nobility of Esther, Chapter 5

v. 1 — For anyone to appear before the king without permission means instant death — unless the king holds out the scepter to the intruder. Esther displays a brave nobility as she arbitrarily goes into his presence.

v. 2 — The king extends his scepter toward her, and she comes near and touches it.

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; he turneth it withersoever he will. (Proverbs 21:1)

v. 3 — The king senses that a real crisis has arisen which brings the

queen into his presence. He gives her assurance by promising to grant her request even to half of the kingdom. This is the same as giving her a signed check with his permission to fill in the amount.

God gives His children the same promise:

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

vv. 4, 5 — Esther is still reluctant to state her case and invites the king and Haman to a banquet (luncheon).

v. 6 — Again the king renews his assurance by offering her a blank check.

vv. 7, 8 — The queen promises to reveal her request at another banquet on the following day, if the king and Haman will accept her invitation.

vv. 9-14 — Haman goes from the banquet filled with joy and pride, though the sight of Mordecai dulls the edge of his joy. He returns to his home and begins to boast. But he reveals that the presence of Mordecai is the fly in the ointment. His wife Zeresh and his friends advise him to build a gallows 50 cubits high and get an order from the king to hang Mordecai on it. Haman agrees to do this.

There are several lessons in this chapter. God is holding out the scepter of grace to a lost world today. We all must stand in the presence of the King someday. A Greek proverb is illustrated in this chapter — “Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad.”

The extreme hatred of Haman is revealed in the height of the gallows — remember that Mordecai is a very short man.

VI. When a king could not sleep at night, Chapter 6

In this chapter we see the strange providences of God in operation.

v. 1 — That the king could not sleep seems a very small thing, but God uses small things. “God swings great doors on little hinges.”

Years before, in Egypt, God brought a woman’s heart and a baby’s cry together when Pharaoh’s daughter found the baby Moses in the Nile River. By this He changed the destiny of a nation.

Evidently, hearing the uninteresting records of the kingdom was conducive to sleep. They are the king’s sleeping pill.

v. 2 — The scribe “just happens” to read the record of Mordecai’s

deed in saving the king's life (2:21-23).

v. 3 — The king learns that Mordecai had not been recognized or rewarded.

vv. 4-6 — At that early hour, Haman comes to get the order from the king to execute Mordecai. Before he can state his business, the king puts a question to him, “What shall be done for the man whom the king delighteth to honor?” The unsuspecting Haman, thinking that the king is referring to him, makes an audacious suggestion.

vv. 7-9 — The proposal reveals the real desire of Haman — he wants the throne. This honor would prepare the people for their acceptance of him.

vv. 10, 11 — Haman is stunned and humiliated when he learns that the man to be honored is Mordecai!

vv. 12-14 — This time Haman returns home to cry instead of boast. His wife and friends warn him that he is in grave danger. (What a wife is Zeresh!) While Haman is still bemoaning the sad turn of events, the king's servants come to bring Haman to Esther's banquet.

VII. The man who came to dinner but died on the gallows,

Chapter 7

vv. 1, 2 — For the third time the king gives Esther a blank check to fill out. He loves her and wants to please her.

vv. 3, 4 — Esther now reveals the dastardly plot to destroy her and her people.

v. 5 — The king demands to know the name of the man.

v. 6 — Esther identifies Haman as the man. Haman is stunned; he did not know that Esther was a Jewess.

v. 7 — The king likewise is astounded and shocked at his misplaced confidence in Haman. He goes into his garden to think things over.

v. 8 — Haman pleads for his life as he falls across the couch of the queen. He is beside himself with fear. The king returns and sees Haman in this compromising position.

vv. 9, 10 — He orders that Haman be hanged on the very gallows he

had erected for Mordecai.

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from me, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 54:17)

I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. (Psalm 37:35, 36)

VIII. The message of hope that went out from the king, Chapter 8

Because the first decree could not be changed, another decree is issued that permits the Jews to defend themselves. The king's government that initially demanded their execution now defends them. This brings salvation and deliverance to a people who otherwise would have perished.

A decree has gone out from God to mankind: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Although this has not been altered or cancelled, man need not perish, for another decree has gone out from God:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

IX. The institution of the Feast of Purim, Chapters 9, 10

The day that would have meant the destruction of the people of Israel is the day of their great deliverance. Darkness is turned into light; night is turned into day. This day becomes another holy day for the nation and is called the Feast of Purim (9:20-32).

The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD. (Proverbs 16:33)

Many believers know only of a distant and strange providence. They do not learn to walk with God in close fellowship, obeying His Word. As someone has expressed it,

He knows and loves and cares,
Nothing this truth can dim:
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.

It is interesting to see that Herodotus, the Greek historian, states that the wife of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) was a cold, vindictive queen after the invasion against Greece. For an outsider, this would appear to be the fact.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Annotated Bible*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1917.
- Ironside, H. A. *Notes on the Book of Esther*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1921.
- Jensen, Irving L. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther: A Self-Study Guide*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1970.
- McGee, J. Vernon. *Ruth and Esther: Women of Faith*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988.
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981.
- Whitcomb, John C. *Esther: Triumph of God's Sovereignty*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1979.

POETICAL BOOKS

Job is the first of the poetical books, which also include Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations. The reference is to the *form* of the content and does not imply imaginative or capricious content. Neither does the term “poetical” mean that it is rhythmic. Hebrew poetry is achieved by repeating an idea, a technique called parallelism. The dialogue in the Book of Job is poetry because conversation was in poetry in that day. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer are examples in secular literature.

JOB

WRITER: Unknown. The following have been suggested: Moses, Ezra, Solomon, Job and Elihu. That Elihu is the writer seems most likely (32:16).

DATE: Unknown. Evidently it was written during the patriarchal period. Did Job know Jacob? It is possible. It was written before Exodus, it would seem, as there is no reference to the Mosaic Law nor to any of the events recorded in the Book of Exodus. Here are the arguments which seem to place Job with the patriarchs:

1. Length of Job’s life span (42:16).
2. Job acted as high priest in his family.
3. Eliphaz the Temanite was descended from Esau’s eldest son (Genesis 36:10, 11).

PURPOSE: Many problems are raised and settled in this book.

1. To determine why the righteous suffer. (This is not the primary teaching.)
2. To refute the slander of Satan.
3. To reveal Job to himself.
4. To teach patience. Was Job patient?
5. *Primary purpose:* To teach *repentance*.

God selected the best man who ever lived (Christ is the exception) and showed that he needed to repent. In contrast, we usually choose the worst man who repents as an illustration. Manasseh, a most ungodly king, repented; Saul of Tarsus repented; St. Francis of Assisi, a debauched nobleman, repented; and Jerry MacAuley, a drunken bum, repented. God chose the best man and showed that he repented — “I

have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5, 6).

ESTIMATION: Tennyson said of the Book of Job, “The greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature.” Carlyle said, “I call [Job] one of the grandest ever written with pen.” Luther said, “More magnificent and sublime than any other book of Scripture.” Moorehead said, “The book of Job is one of the noblest poems in existence.”

OUTLINE:

I. DRAMA, Chapters 1, 2

(Prose)

A. Scene I, Chapter 1:1-5

Land of Uz; Job’s prosperity and serenity

B. Scene II, Chapter 1:6-12

Heaven; Satan’s slander of God and Job

C. Scene III, Chapter 1:13-22

Land of Uz; Job’s loss of children and wealth

D. Scene IV, Chapter 2:1-6

Heaven; God and Satan

E. Scene V, Chapter 2:7-10

Land of Uz; Job’s loss of health and wife’s sympathy

II. DIALOGUE, Chapters 2:11 — 42:6

(Poetry)

A. Scene VI, Chapters 2:11 — 37:24

City Dump

1. Job’s loss of understanding of friends, 2:11-13

2. Job vs. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, 3:1 — 32:1

3. Job vs. Elihu, 32:2 — 37:24

B. Scene VII, Chapters 38:1 — 42:6

Jehovah vs. Job

III. EPILOGUE, Chapter 42:7-17

(Prose)

Scene VIII

Land of Uz; Job’s blessings doubled

COMMENT: The prose section of the Book of Job is a gigantic, sweeping drama that encompasses earth and heaven. This does not mean it is fiction. Job is treated as a historical character in the Scriptures (see Ezekiel 14:14, 20; James 5:11). Paul quotes from the

Book of Job (1 Corinthians 3:19; cp. Job 5:13). Many writers have used Job as the basis for their plots, including H. G. Wells and more recently Archibald MacLeish in his Broadway hit, *J.B.* Job's problem is a universal one. Thomas Carlyle called the Book of Job "all men's book."

The poetry section of the Book of Job is a contest in dialogue between Job and his three friends. Later in the book, Bildad challenges Job. A brilliant dialogue in that day was what a baseball game or any other athletic event is in our day.

I. Drama, Chapters 1, 2

(Prose)

A. Scene I, Chapter 1:1-5

Land of Uz; Job's prosperity and serenity

The land of Uz was somewhere in the Middle East, but beyond that there is nothing specific. Josephus gives us a glimmer of light on the location of Uz. According to Genesis 22:21 the firstborn of Nahor, Abraham's brother, was Uz. He is the founder of the ancient city of Damascus. Job lived somewhere in the Syrian desert, where later the Lord sent Paul for post-graduate studies (see Galatians 1:17).

v. 1 — "Perfect" in the sense that he had offered sacrifices for his sons (see v. 5). "Feared God" means that he has a high and holy concept of God and as a result he hates evil.

vv. 3, 4 — He is a wealthy man, and his ten children live in the ease and luxury of the rich.

v. 5 — Job's one concern is for his children.

B. Scene II, Chapter 1:6-12

Heaven; Satan's slander of God and Job

vv. 6, 7 — God's created intelligences report to God as a matter of regular routine. They are responsible creatures. The shocking fact is that Satan has access to heaven. Even *he* has to report. He reports that he had been up and down the earth, which is his domain (see 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 2:13-17; Matthew 4:8, 9). He has never been in hell (Revelation 20:10, see author's book, *Reveling through Revelation*, volume 2).

v. 8 — Satan obviously had been trying to get at Job, but he found there was a hedge about him. Satan cannot touch God's man without

God's permission.

vv. 9-11 — Slandering both God and Job, Satan infers that God is not worthy to be served and loved for Himself alone but that He has to pay Job to love Him. Satan suggests that Job is a time server.

v. 12 — God grants Satan permission to get at Job's possessions, including his children.

C. Scene III, Chapter 1:13-22

Land of Uz; Job's loss of children and wealth

Job is stripped of all his earthly possessions, including his ten children.

vv. 20-22 — Job's reaction to his tragic circumstances reveals that though his faith is shaken, it is not destroyed. Job is no time server.

D. Scene IV, Chapter 2:1-6

Heaven; God and Satan

Created intelligences make their regular report again. Satan has to admit that he has not destroyed the integrity of Job, and he asks for permission to touch his body. He is confident that Job will then curse God to His face. God gives Satan permission to touch his body, with the provision that he may not take his life.

E. Scene V, Chapter 2:7-10

Land of Uz; Job's loss of health and wife's sympathy

Satan smites Job with a frightful disease. Job's wife suggests that he curse God and commit suicide — which is the reason Satan did not take Job's wife! Job still maintains his integrity.

II. DIALOGUE, Chapters 2:11 — 42:6

(Poetry)

A. Scene VI, Chapters 2:11 — 37:24

City Dump

1. Job's loss of understanding of friends, 2:11-13

Three friends of Job come to visit and comfort him: Eliphaz, a Temanite. Teman was a grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:10, 11). Bildad, a Shuhite. Shuah was a son of Abraham (Genesis 25:2). Zophar, a Naamathite. Naamah was in northern Arabia.

For seven days they mourn with Job without saying a word. They are real friends, but they are in no position to comfort Job because:

- (1) They do not understand God.
- (2) They do not understand Job.
- (3) They do not understand themselves.

They merely shake their heads in a knowing manner during the seven days of mourning.

2. Job vs. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, 3:1 — 32:1

There are 3 rounds of speeches:

- (1) By Job, then Eliphaz, and Job answers him;
- (2) By Bildad, and Job answers him;
- (3) By Zophar, and Job answers him.

This is repeated three times with one exception — Zophar does not give a third speech. The dialogue is in the nature of a contest. Under the critical and accusing eyes of his friends, Job finally explodes with his tale of woe and a wish that he had never been born.

First Round

	Chapter
Job	3
Eliphaz, 1st Discourse	4, 5
Job’s Answer	6, 7
Bildad, 1st Discourse	8
Job’s Answer	9, 10
Zophar, 1st Discourse	11
Job’s Answer	12—14

Second Round

Eliphaz, 2nd Discourse	15
Job’s Answer	16, 17
Bildad, 2nd Discourse	18
Job’s Answer	19
Zophar, 2nd Discourse.....	20
Job’s Answer	21

Third Round

Eliphaz, 3rd Discourse	22
Job’s Answer	23, 24
Bildad, 3rd Discourse.....	25
Job’s Answer	26—31

First Round

Chapter 3 — Job wishes that he had never been born or that he had died at birth. Job's tranquility in his days of prosperity were disturbed by the uncertainty of life. He had dreaded the very thing that happened to him (v. 25).

Chapters 4, 5 — Eliphaz's first discourse. He is the voice of experience. He suspects that there is secret sin in Job's life (4:8). He recounts a terrifying and hair-raising vision (4:12-16). The self-evident truth he received from the vision does not seem worthwhile for all the terror he endured (4:17). He gives some gems of wisdom as all the others do (5:6, 7). He charges that Job is being corrected for some awful secret sin and he should not complain (5:17-22).

Chapters 6, 7 — Job's answer. His condition is much worse than his friends realize and he wishes God would destroy him, not correct him (6: 9). He expected pity and comfort from his friends (6:14). He looked for help when he saw them coming, but it was only a mirage on the desert (6:15). Eliphaz misses the entire problem (6:25). Job is willing to confess any sin he has committed. Why doesn't God pardon his sin (ch. 7) and restore him?

Chapter 8 — Bildad's first discourse. Bildad is the voice of the past. He rests his argument on tradition (v. 8). Man can know nothing of himself. He must depend on the past (vv. 9, 10). Notice that Paul did not have this philosophy; rather he pointed to Christ and the future.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:14)

Bildad is more candid and crude than Eliphaz. He considers Job a hypocrite (v. 13). He does not know the ways of God (v. 20), nor does he take into account the final outcome (v. 21).

Chapters 9, 10 — Job's answer to Bildad. Bildad has not met the problem of Job (9:2). Job makes no claim to perfection and knows that he cannot defend himself before God. He needs someone on his side to present his case (9:19, 20). Notice Job's heart-cry for Christ (9:32, 33). He recognizes his need for a mediator to stand between himself and God. (See 1 Samuel 2:25.)

God knows that Job is not perfect, but He also knows that Job is not wicked (10:6, 7). Again Job resorts to his wish that he had not been born or had died at birth (10:19).

Chapter 11 — Zophar’s first discourse. Zophar is the voice of legalism. He holds that God is bound by laws and never operates beyond the circumference of His own laws. He is probably the senior member of the group, and he speaks with a dogmatic finality that is even more candid and crude than that of Bildad.

He accuses Job of covering his sin with words (v. 2). He even accuses Job of lying (v. 3). He assumes the pious position of being on the inside with God while Job is on the outside, unable to know what He does (vv. 4-11). He urges Job to come clean, that he is hiding his sin (v. 14). He predicts the complete judgment of Job unless he confesses his secret sin (v. 20).

Chapters 12, 13 — Job’s answer. Job becomes bitter and sarcastic. He resents the superior claims of his friends and their accusations (12:1-3).

Job would bypass his friends and appeal to God directly (13:3). He now accuses them of lying about his case and states that they are offering him no help — they are “physicians of no value” (13:4). The faith of Job stands inviolate in spite of the onslaught of his friends (13:15).

Chapter 14 — A great elegy on death. Trouble is the common denominator of mankind (v. 1). Job knows that death is inevitable and that he must depart from this world (v. 10). However, Job has a hope beyond death and the grave (vv. 14, 15).

Second Round

Chapter 15 — Eliphaz’s second discourse. Eliphaz accuses Job of being his own accuser, for his words are foolish (v. 6). He defends himself and two other friends by reminding Job of their advantage of maturity over him. He states a great truth, but it is no more applicable to Job than to any other human being.

Chapters 16, 17 — Job’s answer. Job labels his friends “miserable comforters” and accuses them of uttering self-evident truths that are not applicable to him. If their situations were reversed, Job could argue as they have (16:4). Instead of helping Job, they fill him with wrinkles (16:8). He goes too far in defending himself (16:17). Job will stand by his record (16:19). He recognizes the problem of pleading his case before God (16:21). His physical condition is tragic.

Chapter 18 — Bildad’s second discourse. Bildad suggests that Job stop speaking and start listening (v. 2). His second argument follows

the same pattern as his first — since the past teaches that God judges sin and since Job is being judged, he has committed some gross and secret sin. He digs up a few hoary epigrams from the past as proof.

Chapter 19 — Job's answer. Job recognizes that his friends are becoming strangers to him and that they are growing apart (v. 3). Job is willing for his words to be made into a permanent record and he is prepared to stand by them (vv. 23, 24).

Job expresses his great faith. He is maintaining his integrity. He believes the Redeemer is coming and that he himself is numbered with the redeemed.

Chapter 20 — Zophar's second discourse. He introduces nothing new. He rests upon his seniority and resorts to the same legalism. He still holds to the theory that Job is a very wicked person because of the law that the wicked must be punished (vv. 3-5).

Chapter 21 — Job's answer. Job is growing weary of their false charges. He appeals to a higher court (vv. 1-4). He agrees that the wicked will be punished but insists that this does not apply to his case.

Third Round

Chapter 22 — Eliphaz's third discourse. He accuses Job of being self-righteous (v. 3). His final word to Job is a great gospel invitation, but it does not fit Job's case (v. 21). He admonishes Job to return to God (vv. 22-30).

Chapters 23, 24 — Job's answer. Job claims that his condition is worse than his friends think it to be (23:2). He would like to present his case before God (23:3-9). Job begins to sense that he is in the sieve of God's testing and that God will bring him through his trials (23:10). Job still maintains his integrity (23:12).

Chapter 25 — Bildad's third discourse. His answer is brief. He becomes rather thoughtful and begins to wonder why Job has not broken if he is guilty.

Chapters 26 — 31 — Job's answer. This is Job's longest speech. His friends have not helped him, but he expresses his faith in God, the Creator.

Chapter 27 — Job does not break under the attack of his miserable comforters.

Chapter 28 — This is a beautiful poem about God as Creator.

Chapter 29 — The secret sin of Job is now revealed. He is suffering from a bad case of perpendicular “I-itis.” He is filled with pride. Even a good man needs to repent. The first person pronoun, in one of its forms, occurs 52 times in this chapter. (Mark them in your Bible and be amazed.) What Job says is probably true, but he is self-righteous.

Chapter 30 — He compares his past with his present condition. His voice is no longer a song of praise but a sigh of pain (v. 31).

Chapter 31 — He is not guilty of the common sensual sins.

3. Job vs. Elihu, 32:2 — 37:24

Chapter 32 — Elihu’s discourse. He is a Buzite — Buz was evidently an Arab tribe (Genesis 22:21). Elihu has been one of the auditors to this contest. He has kept silent because of his youth, though he wanted to speak. When the three friends have nothing more to say and have lost the contest, Elihu is angry because:

- (1) He feels that Job justified himself and condemned God (v. 2).
- (2) He feels that the three friends of Job have failed to answer him adequately.

When Elihu finally speaks, he speaks longer than any of the three friends or Job (chapters 32 — 37).

Chapter 33 — Elihu maintains that:

- (1) God is right in all that He does;
- (2) God created man (v. 4);
- (3) God is responsible to no one (v. 13);
- (4) God speaks to man by dreams and visions [before He gave a written revelation] (vv. 14, 15);
- (5) God instructs men through discipline (vv. 29, 30). Notice that he suggests the reason for the Incarnation (vv. 6, 7).

Chapter 34 — Elihu declares that God never acts wickedly nor commits wrong acts (v. 12).

Chapter 35 — Elihu reproves Job for inferring that he is more righteous than God (v. 2). God is teaching Job a lesson, and both Job and his friends missed this truth (vv. 10-12).

Chapter 36 — God is the great Teacher (v. 22). (It was said of Jesus, “Never man spoke like this man” [John 7:46].)

Chapter 37 — Elihu infers that God is too far removed for man to communicate with Him (vv. 22, 23). However, it is not the greatness and majesty of God that has separated man from Him; it is man’s sin that has caused the disruption (see Isaiah 59:1, 2).

B. Scene VII, Chapters 38:1 — 42:6

Jehovah vs. Job

Chapter 38 — Answer of the Almighty. God breaks through and speaks to Job. During the entire dialogue a storm has been gathering on the horizon. At this point, it breaks with fury. The crowd scatters and scurries for cover, leaving Job alone with God (v. 1). Both Job and Elihu had obscured truth with their theories and ideas (v. 2). God’s appeal to Job is on the basis of His role as Creator. Remember that this was before there was any written revelation (v. 4). Compare Romans 1:19, 20. This is a good introduction for every book on geology and origins.

This response (v. 7) predates the creation of man. Actually, man is a “Johnny-come-lately” in God’s universe. What did the writer of Job or Job himself know about the beauty of a snowflake (vv. 22, 23)? Hail is for judgment — see Revelation 8:7.

Chapter 39 — God’s wisdom, person, and power are revealed in creation.

Chapter 40 — God now demands Job to answer Him (vv. 1, 2). Job begins to see himself in the light of God’s presence — he is vile. Job becomes suddenly silent (vv. 3-5). The storm breaks in all of its fury and God speaks out of the whirlwind. He continues His appeal through creation (v. 6).

Chapter 41 — God continues to quiz Job relative to His acts of creation.

Chapter 42 — Job answers God. He recognizes the sovereignty of God (v. 2); he confesses his sin (v. 3); he repents (vv. 4-6). God accomplishes His purpose in the life of Job. Job evidently realizes that the reason God has permitted him to suffer is to bring him to repentance. He sees himself in the light of the presence of God (see 1 John 1:6, 7).

III. EPILOGUE, Chapter 42:7-17

(Prose)

Scene VIII

Land of Uz; Job’s blessings doubled

This section is the final scene in the drama. It is poetic justice.

God rebukes the three friends of Job. Job becomes their priest to offer a sacrifice for them (vv. 7-9). God gives Job twice as much of everything as he had at the beginning. Did God also double the number of his children? When his cattle were destroyed, he lost them forever. When his sons and daughters died, he did not lose them:

He has 10 children in Paradise.

+ He has 10 children on earth.

God doubled the number of his children.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Blair, J. Allen. *Job: Living Patiently*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
- Darby, J. N. *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.
- Ellison, H. L. *A Study of Job: From Tragedy to Triumph*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.
- Epp, Theodore H. *Job — A Man Tried as Gold*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible Broadcast, n.d.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Annotated Bible*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1917.
- Garland, D. David. *Job — A Study Guide Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.
- Gray, James M. *Synthetic Bible Studies*. Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906.
- Jensen, Irving L. *Job — A Self-Study Guide*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, n.d.
- Mackintosh, C. H. *Miscellaneous Writings*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
- Ridout, Samuel. *The Book of Job*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1919. (Very fine.)
- Sauer, Erich. *The Dawn of World Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951. (An excellent Old Testament survey.)
- Scroggie, W. Graham. *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970. (An excellent survey and outline of the Old Testament.)
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Handbook*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966. (A concise commentary on the entire Bible.)
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981. (Volume 1 covers Genesis through Song of Solomon with a fine summary of each paragraph.)
- Zuck, Roy B. *Job*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1978. (A fine summary in the *Everyman's Bible Commentary* series.)

SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER

(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
2. Most important verse —
3. Most prominent word —
4. Teaching about Christ —
5. Command to obey —
6. Promise to claim —
7. New truth learned —

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