

JOB

Chapter 1

Job's Character and Wealth

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. 2 There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. 3 He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. 4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, “It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually.

1:1 *a man*. Hbr word order (“a man there was”) indicates the beginning of a report. Cf 1Sm 25:2; 2Sm 12:1; Esther 2:5. This man, as a member of the human race, would demonstrate that all children of Adam had to look beyond themselves for a Savior from Satan and from their own sinful nature. (TLSB)

land of Uz. A large territory east of the Jordan (see v. 3), which included Edom in the south (see Ge 36:28; La 4:21) and the Aramean lands in the north (see Ge 10:23; 22:21). (CSB)

whose name was Job – The book of Job begins with a statement that is straight forward and factual. It tells us about a man who really existed. (PBC)

Mentioned in Ezk 14:14, 20, Job is seen as an ancient hero of faith along with Noah and Daniel (most likely the biblical Daniel, not Danel the Ugaritic hero). If the name Job is derived from Hbr, it means “one exposed to hostility”; from Arabic, possibly “one who returns or repents.” Unlike other biblical patriarchs, Job is introduced without genealogy or reference to his tribe or clan and without historical context. Job is a real person, whose life teaches all humanity about their plight. (TLSB)

blameless and upright. Spiritually and morally upright. This does not mean that Job was sinless. He later defends his moral integrity but also admits he is a sinner (see 6:24; 7:21). (CSB)

Hbr *tam*, “complete,” “sound.” The term often designates a sacrificial animal as spotless, without blemish. When used of a human, it means personal integrity, not sinless perfection (Jsh 24:14; Jgs 9:16, 19). The blameless person walks closely with God (Gn 17:1) and delights in obeying God’s Law (Ps 119:1). This does not mean that Job was sinless, for later he admits he is a sinner (6:24; 7:21; 42:6). Even Job’s first recorded act—offering sacrifices for sin (1:5)—indicates his understanding that he is a sinner. *upright*. Frequent term in Ps and Pr; means “straightness,” “faithful adherence to God’s statutes.” “Blameless” and “upright” are juxtaposed in Ps 25:21 and parallel in Ps 37:37. Together, the words indicate the peak of moral perfection, an honest, compassionate manner in relating to others. Job demonstrated this esp in the way he treated his servants with fairness and justice (31:13–23). (TLSB)

The word “blameless” can more literally be translated “whole” or “complete.” Job was a mature believer; his heart was right with God. Like Noah, who is similarly described in Genesis 6:9, Job was righteous through faith in God. (PBC)

feared God. Throughout biblical Wisdom Literature, fear of God is the foundation for true wisdom (28:28; Pr 1:7; 9:10). (TLSB)

turned away from evil. Those who fear God avoid the very appearance of evil (Pr 16:6; Jb 31:1–12), and they do not trust in any other god (31:24–28). (TLSB)

1:2 seven sons and three daughters. Numbers three, seven, and ten may indicate completeness, perfection. Job’s life was filled not only with wealth (livestock, servants) but also with a rich lineage (sons and daughters). (TLSB)

The Bible regards children as a great blessing. Several commentators have mentioned that the numbers seven (sons), three (daughters, and ten (children) suggest a complete number, making an ideal family. (PBC)

1:3 seven thousand sheep. Job’s enormous wealth was in livestock, not land (see Ge 12:16; 13:2; 26:14). (CSB)

In those days people reckoned their wealth in real estate and livestock. Instead of having a bank account in the modern sense they had a “bank account on the hoof.” (PBC)

3,000 camels. Suggests participation in caravan trade. (TLSB)

500 yoke of oxen. Indicates that Job was not a nomad but a farmer with extensive farmlands (v 14). (TLSB)

donkeys. The Hebrew for this word is feminine in form. Donkeys that produced offspring were very valuable. (CSB)

had very many servants – This suggests that Job was not a nomad who moved from place to place but a farmer with much land and a large number of cattle. (PBC)

people of the East. The Hebrew for this phrase is translated “eastern peoples” in Ge 29:1; Jdg 6:3. (CSB)

1:4 his sons used to and hold a feast in the house of each other – Most likely this feast occurred on the son’s birthday, since the same Hbr word is also used in 3:1. The happy and healthy family circle of Job’s children was strengthened with the observance of annual feasts. These festive gatherings of the family set the stage for the later disaster (vv 18–19). (TLSB)

In those days as well as today it was unusual to find a large family in which brothers and sisters got along so well and enjoyed one another’s company so much. (PBC)

1:5 feast had run their course. On special occasions, feasts might last a week (see Ge 29:27; Jdg 14:12). (CSB)

offer burnt offerings . Before the ceremonial laws of Moses were introduced, the father of the household acted as priest (see Ge 15:9–10). (CSB)

Usually made for unintentional sins (Lv 4:1–5:6); they atoned for human sin in general. *cursed*. Hbr *barak*. Normally means “to bless”; here the context indicates the opposite. The sin of cursing is pivotal to the Book of Job. E.g., Job is concerned with his children cursing God; Satan will argue that Job would curse God, esp if Job were to suffer loss. Even Job’s wife will urge him to curse God and die (2:9). Cypr: “In the spiritual and heavenly life, the larger the number of children you have, the greater ought to be the outlay of your labors.... Since there cannot daily fail to be sins committed in the sight of God, there [lacked] not daily sacrifices wherewith the sins might be cleansed away.... If, then, you truly love your children, if you show to them the full and paternal sweetness of love, you ought to be the more charitable, that by your righteous works you may commend your children to God” (ANF 5:481). (TLSB)

While they got along well, they too were sinners, and Job knew it. With true fatherly concern he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of his children. The relationship between parents and children changes when the children reach adulthood. Parents ought to avoid meddling and interfering with the plans and activities of their grown children. But they should never forget that as parents they have a true concern for the welfare of their children, keep in touch with them, and continue to pray for them. (PBC)

1:1–5 Job is unique in being as faultless as one can be (1:8; 2:3). He has a wonderful—even “perfect”—family and life. Yet Job’s devotion to God is not based on self-righteousness. He recognizes the sinful, corrupt nature at work within his family and seeks God’s forgiveness (v 5). Even when all seems right in our families, the Lord calls us to daily repentance, because true peace and devotion flow from His mercy. • Lord, give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses through the perfect offering of Your beloved Son. Amen. (TLSB)

Satan Allowed to Test Job

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. 7 The LORD said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.” 8 And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” 9 Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “Does Job fear God for no reason? 10 Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.” 12 And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

1:6 *a day*. Suggests God had appointed a time for this gathering. (TLSB)

sons of God came to present themselves. They came as members of the heavenly council who stand in the presence of God (see 1Ki 22:19; Ps 89:5–7; Jer 23:18, 22). (CSB)

Also in 2:1; 38:7 (cf Ps 89:6–7; possible parallel in Gn 6:2, 4). They are God’s created attendants called “angels” (Gn 32:1; Ps 103:20); also described as God’s agents or supervisors of God’s realm (Dn 4:13, 17, 23), occasionally active in human dealings (Zec 1:10–17; 6:4–8). Also called

“gods” (Ps 97:7) or spirits (lit, “winds”; Zec 6:5). When gathered together, they constitute “the assembly of the holy ones” (Ps 89:5) or “the council of the holy ones” (Ps 89:7). (TLSB)

before the LORD. Hbr expression for God’s nearer presence. (TLSB)

Satan. Lit. “the accuser.” In Job the Hebrew for this word is always preceded by the definite article. In the Hebrew of 1Ch 21:1 the article is not used, because by then “Satan” had become a proper name. (CSB)

Although Satan was cast out of heaven when he rebelled, he had a freedom to roam. The final exclusion is discussed in Revelation 12:9 and is an explanation of his intense hostility against God’s people in the last days. (PBC)

A title, not yet a proper name. “The accuser,” with the definite article (cf Zec 3:1–2). OT uses the term to denote various human antagonists or adversaries (1Sm 29:4; 2Sm 19:22; 1Ki 5:4; 11:14; Ps 109:6) or to designate the archenemy of humanity, an enemy who did not keep his position among the heavenly hosts (Jude 6). The definite article stigmatizes “the Satan” as the greatest enemy of humanity. (TLSB)

came among them. Though some see Satan as the prosecutor in the heavenly council, ready to accuse and indict his victim (cf Rv 12:10), others interpret the phrase to refer to an intruder who has no right to be present at this council. (Satan alone is asked his business.) Satan’s insolence shows a mind twisted away from God, not a loyal servant. The Lord is finally the one who brings the case against Job (chs 38–41). (TLSB)

1:7 *The LORD.* The Israelite covenant name for God. (CSB)

From where have you come? The Lord knows the answer but invites Satan to state his business. Greg: “What then is it to say to Satan, ‘Where do you come from?’ but to condemn his ways, as though unknown. The light of truth then knows nought of the darkness, which it reproves” (ALF 18:71). (TLSB)

to and fro. Roaming around looking for trouble or an opportunity to do harm; prowling “around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1Pt 5:8). Chrys: “And if he [Satan] should not be able by wealth to cast us out of our portion there [heaven], he comes another way, the way of poverty; as he did with respect to Job. That is, when he saw that wealth did him no harm, he weaves his toils by poverty, expecting on that side to get the better of him” (NPNF 1 10:84). (TLSB)

1:8 *Have you considered ... Job?* The Lord, not Satan, initiates the dialogue that leads to the testing of Job. He holds up Job as one against whom “the accuser” can lodge no accusation. (CSB)

The Lord brings Job to Satan’s attention. (TLSB)

my servant. A designation for one who stands in a special relationship with God and is loyal in service (e.g., Moses, Nu 12:7; David, 2Sa 7:5; see Isa 42:1; 52:13; 53:11). (CSB)

Term of honor. (TLSB)

none like him. The Lord made this comparison to test Satan. We should not judge ourselves by the deeds of others but in view of God’s commands. (TLSB)

blameless and upright man. The Lord uses the evidence given in vv 1, 5 to support His praise of Job. (TLSB)

1:9 “The accuser” boldly accuses the man God commends: He says Job’s righteousness, in which God delights, is self-serving—the heart of Satan’s attack on God and his faithful servant in the book of Job. (CSB)

for no reason. Hbr *hinnam*. Reveals Satan’s cynicism, insinuating that all good deeds spring from selfish motives. It questions, “Why should a person fear, love, and trust in God?” This is the central question of Jb, which may be answered in two ways: (1) a person serves God to gain God’s blessings and to avoid punishment, and (2) a person serves God because He is the merciful Redeemer and only hope of humankind. Aug: “This was true light, this the light of the living, that *gratis* [without reward] Job should worship God. God saw in the heart of His servant his gratuitous worship. For that heart was pleasing in the sight of the Lord” (*NPNF* 1 8:224). Aug: “If when He gives earthly goods, you do rejoice, how much more ought you to rejoice when He gives you Himself, who made heaven and earth? So then God must be loved for His own sake” (*NPNF* 1 6:398). (TLSB)

1:10 *hedge*. Symbolizes protection (see Isa 5:5; contrast Job 3:23). (CSB)

Thorny, protective fence (Hos 2:6) against threats to Job’s well-being. Luther notes that God gave us His Commandments “to build a hedge round about [us]” (LC I 205). In 3:23, Job complains that God has “hedged” him in with troubles. (TLSB)

1:11 *to Your face*. In open defiance of God. (TLSB)

This statement is given in the form of an oath and can be expressed: “I swear that Job will curse you to your face.” (PBC)

1:12 *in your hand*. Yahweh grants Satan full power over Job’s possessions, but not over his body. Satan will act as God’s servant, as an instrument for testing Job. Luth: “God sends no sickness into the world but through the devil. All sadness and sickness are of the devil, not of God. For God permits the devil to harm us because He receives little regard from us (Acts 10:38; Luke 13:11). Whatever, therefore, pertains to death is the handiwork of the devil; and, conversely whatever pertains to life is the blessed work (*beneficium*) of God.... The devil must be our Lord God’s executioner” (*WLS* § 1183). (TLSB)

Satan, the accuser, is given power to afflict (v. 12a) but is kept on a leash (v. 12b). In all his evil among men (vv. 15, 17) or in nature (vv. 16, 19), Satan is under God’s power (compare 1Ch 21:1 with 2Sa 24:1; see 1Sa 16:14; 2Sa 24:16; 1Co 5:5; 2Co 12:7; Heb 2:14). The contest, however, is not a sham. Will Job curse God to his face? If Job does not, the accuser will be proven false and God’s delight in Job vindicated. (CSB)

This verse is important for a proper understanding of the book. If we fail to keep in mind that God permitted Satan to test Job and that God commended Job whereas Satan condemned him, we miss the main point of the book. Although God repeatedly permitted Job to be severely afflicted during the course of his great trials so that timed he bitterly complained, and although God later

rebuked and humbled him, he still regarded Job as his child. In this contest with Satan God prevailed. (PBC)

1:6–12 Is the Lord sacrificing Job to His own pride? No! The Lord also puts Satan to the test in order to prove something marvelous for you: Satan cannot snatch you out of the Lord’s hand (Jn 10:28–29). • Though suffering and doubt grip me, O Lord, You cling to me and will never forsake me. Amen. (TLSB)

Satan Takes Job's Property and Children

13 Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, **14** and there came a messenger to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, **15** and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” **16** While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” **17** While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” **18** While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, **19** and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” **20** Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. **21** And he said, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” **22** In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

1:13 *were eating and drinking* – there is no indication that they were overindulging. (PBC)

in their oldest brother’s house. Stage is set using information from v 4. The order of destruction is the opposite of the blessings given (a chiasmic arrangement):

Order of Blessing (vv 2–3)

Sons and daughters

Flocks and camels

Herds and donkeys

Order of Loss (vv 13–19)

Herds and donkeys

Flocks and camels

Sons and daughters (TLSB)

1:14 *messenger.* In 4:18; 33:23, this term means an “angel”; here, a servant of Job reports the first disaster ending his peaceful estate. (TLSB)

oxen were plowing. Job was a farmer, not just a herder (v 3). (TLSB)

1:15 *Sabeans.* † Probably south Arabians from Sheba (the modern Yemen), whose descendants became wealthy traders in spices, gold and precious stones (see the account of the queen of Sheba in 1Ki 10:1–13; see also Ps 72:10, 15; Isa 60:6; Jer 6:20; Eze 27:22; Joel 3:8). Job 6:19 calls the

Sabeans “traveling merchants” and associates them with Tema (about 350 miles southeast of Jerusalem). (CSB)

Semitic people probably from southern Arabia (modern Yemen), whose descendants became wealthy traders in spices, gold, and precious stones (see queen of Sheba, 1Ki 10:1–13; cf Ps 72:10, 15; Is 60:6; Jer 6:20; Ezk 27:22; Jl 3:8). Jb 6:19 calls the Sabeans traveling merchants and associates them with Tema (c 350 mi SE of Jerusalem). (TLSB)

1:16 *fire of God*. Lightning (see Nu 11:1; 1Ki 18:38; 2Ki 1:12). (CSB)

Word usually used for lightning (20:26; Ex 9:23; 1Ki 18:38; 2Ki 1:10–14), but volcanic fallout in Gn 19:24. (TLSB)

1:17 *Chaldeans*. A people who were Bedouin until c. 1000 B.C., when they settled in southern Mesopotamia and later became the nucleus of Nebuchadnezzar’s empire. (CSB)

Seminomadic marauders, forerunners of the famous Neo-Babylonian Empire, of whom Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century BC was most notable. (TLSB)

formed three groups. Their attack is well organized.

1:18–19 Four disasters symbolize totality of destruction. (TLSB)

1:19 *great wind*. Tornado. (CSB)

Desert wind, sometimes known as a “sirocco”; a wind with sudden and violent gusts (Jer 13:24). (TLSB)

I alone have escaped – In rapid succession disasters overtook Job. These calamities, which came without any warning, like a bolt of lightning out of the sky, shocked Job and left him stunned. They must also have posed a great problem for Job, for he knew that God is in control of the universe. He must have asked himself why God, who had been so good to him, now permitted such calamities to overtake him. (PBC)

1:20 *Job arose*. He is silent until his children are killed. (CSB)

tore his robe and shaved his head. In mourning. (CSB)

Customary gesture of grief (Gn 37:34; Jsh 7:6; 2Sm 1:11; 3:31; Est 4:1). An outer robe was worn by nobility and men of standing (1Sm 18:4; 24:4, 11; Ezk 26:16). (TLSB)

shaved his head. Also a standard gesture of grief (Is 22:12; Jer 7:29; 16:6; 47:5; 48:37; Ezk 7:18; Am 8:10); such a rite was forbidden in the Law of Moses (Lv 19:27–28; Dt 14:1). Chrys: “If he rent his clothes and shaved his head, marvel not. For he was a father and a loving father: and it was [fitting] that both the compassion of his nature should be shown, and also the self-command of his spirit” (NPNF 1 12:166). Job became a model of sincere grief and piety in times of tragedy. (TLSB)

We need not wonder how most people would react if they should find themselves in a situation like Job’s. Wouldn’t they vent their anger and cursed the bandits who stole their animals and killed their servants? Wouldn’t they complain bitterly and even curse God for having sent fire and

storm to destroy their property and kill their children? Wouldn't they be tempted to do something drastic to others and themselves and say, "I've had enough! I just can't go on!" Although he was churning inside and almost shattered by the terrible news, he didn't do any physical harm to his body not did he attempt suicide as many would when they found themselves in such a situation. (PBC)

fell on the ground and worshiped – In his deep sorrow he yielded to God's will and showed gratitude instead of resentment. (PBC)

Job drops to the ground, not to curse God, but to worship Him (Gn 23:7, 12; Ex 18:7; 1Ki 2:19). (TLSB)

1:21 *naked*. Having nothing (Ec 5:14; 1Tm 6:7). (TLSB)

The LORD gave. Yahweh is the source of everything. Cf 1Sm 3:18 for similar formula. (TLSB)

The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Job's faith leads him to see the sovereign God's hand at work, and that gives him repose even in the face of calamity. (CSB)

These words are sometimes used as a funeral text at the death of people who have been suddenly snatched from this life. There is great comfort for the survivors. Job gives us an OT preview of that Person who suffered even more, and not for his own sin – our Savior Jesus Christ. What an example Job is to all of us. (PBC)

Cf Ps 113:2 for similar blessing. Satan is foiled, for Job does not curse the Lord, but blesses Him. (TLSB)

1:22 *wrong*. Much debated Hbr term; refers elsewhere to insipid, worthless food (cf 6:7; Jer 23:13). (TLSB)

1:13–22 Job's actions display the depths of his grief. But rather than curse God, Job blesses and worships Him. He displays no regret, as though he suspects his loss is the result of sin by someone in his family. He sees God's hand at work in his suffering. Though Job loses virtually all his possessions, he does not lose trust in the Lord. • "And take they our life, Goods, fame, child, and wife, Though these all be gone, Our vict'ry has been won; The Kingdom ours remaineth." Amen. (LSB 656:1). (TLSB)