

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR OUR STUDY:

The Poetry books, which comprise this study, are not the only place in Scripture that we find Poetry or Wisdom Literature. It is simply that these books are composed primarily of this type of material.

The poetry of the Hebrews and the poetry that we are familiar with, are vastly different. Our poetry is based primarily on: phrases that rhyme and/or have a certain rhythm. Hebrew poetry is based on parallel thoughts. Three basic types of Hebrew Parallels are listed, explained and an example given below:

1. SYNONOMOUS PARALLELISMS---

The second & sometimes third phrase will repeat the thought of the first phrase.

ex. WASH AWAY all my INIQUITY

and CLEANSE me from my SIN. Psalm 51:2

2. CONTRASTING PARALLELISM---

The second phrase contains the opposite idea of the first.

ex. YOU SAVE the HUMBLE,

but BRING LOW those whose eyes are HAUGHTY.
Psalm 18:27

3. BUILDING PARALLELISMS-----

The first phrase contains a thought, and then the the remaining phrases build on that thought.

ex. I WAS YOUNG AND NOW I AM OLD, (1st phrase)
yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken
or their children begging bread.

They are always generous and lend freely;
their children shall be blessed. (everything builds
from what the writer has seen in his life)

Psalm 37:25,26

The WISDOM LITERATURE, was written for the purpose of instruction & was comprised of lessons that had been learned through the life of the writer.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BOOKS:

JOB:

The problem of the righteous sufferer is presented in Job. The hero of the book was both righteous and prosperous when God permitted Satan to take away his property and subsequently, his health. Friends of Job said that he was being punished for sin. Job insisted that this was not so, but after the Lord appeared to him (38-41) he realized that he should not have questioned God's wisdom in afflicting him. Job was again blessed with possessions and family.

PSALMS:

The Psalms vary in theme: instruction (1,19,39); trust (3,27,31,46,56,62,86); praise (8,29,93,100); distress and sorrow (r,13,55,64,88); thanksgiving (30,65,103,107,116); goals (42,63,80,84,137); repentance (6,32,38,51,143); history (78,105,106); prophecy (2,16,22,24,40,45,68,69,72,97,110,118)

PROVERBS:

Contains statements to guide life in our world. Also teach the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom; trustworthiness of God's Word and the wonders of His handiwork.

ECCLESIASTES:

This stresses the vanity of earthly existence apart from God. The author considers human wisdom, pleasures, wealth-- but finds no satisfaction. He concludes that man is responsible to "fear God and keep his commandments."

SONG OF SOLOMON:

An account and description of the mutual love of the bride and bridegroom. An example of what married love can be. (Some try to suggest that it symbolizes the love of God for Israel or the love of Christ for the Church).

COMMENTARY

BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK:

The author and the time of the writing of this book is unknown. The book does give light to the fact that it occurred during the time of the Patriarchs (during the time of the book of Genesis) and is thought to have occurred southeast of Canaan or Mesopotamia. It is accepted to be the oldest of any of the Old Testament books.

Listed below is an outline of the book:

1. Prologue: Chapters 1, 2
2. 3 Friends Solutions Ch. 3-31
 - a. 1st Cycle 3-14
 - b. 2nd Cycle 15-21
 - c. 3rd Cycle 22-31
3. Elihu's Solution 32-37
4. The Lord's Solution 38-42
5. Epilogue: Job Restored 42

BOOK OF JOB

Chapter 1:

We see from the introduction that Job was a wealthy man, according to the standards of his day. During the time of the Patriarchs (describes history of man preceding Moses and the Law), it was customary for the father to offer sacrifices unto God, as the priesthood of the Levites had not been started.

Satan appears with the angels before God (this is prior to the time that he was thrown out, following Christ's resurrection and ascension [Revelation 12:1-9]) and accuses Job of serving God for what he can get out of it, and not because of a desire to be holy in God's sight. Because of God's confidence in Job, He allows Satan to test Job, but commands for Job himself to be spared. In one day, Job loses all that he has but remains faithful to God.

Chapter 2:

Satan again comes before God, convinced that if Job loses his health that he will then curse God and turn from Him. God allows Satan to afflict Job, but instructs him to spare his life. Job is struck with running sores, but still remains faithful, despite the wishes of his wife. Job's 3 friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, sit with him for 7 days in silence, awestruck by all that has happened.

Chapter 3:

Job's suffering makes him wish that he had never been born. He feels that death would afford him peace and relief from suffering.

Chapter 4 and 5

Eliphaz now speaks his mind concerning the whole matter. Job had helped others in trouble in the past and he should now be able to accept the trouble that has fallen upon him. Eliphaz feels that Job is guilty of sin and is being punished by God, for God only destroys the guilty (4:7). All have sinned and even Job is guilty (4:17) and trouble has come upon him, just as it comes upon everyone (5:7). The best thing to do, Eliphaz suggests, is to turn to God (5:8), accept the punishment and wait for it to be over (5:17ff).

What Eliphaz says, is true, however, it is not the reason that Job is suffering.

Chapter 6 and 7

Job replies that he no longer has the strength to endure and simply wishes to die. He compares the lack of help and hope he is receiving from his friends to the merchants travelling the wilderness and leave the established trail in search of water, only to find none and die. He restates his conviction of innocence before his friends and explains that he does not deserve this suffering that he is facing.

Job turns to God (7:11-21) and looks for help. He doesn't understand why this is happening to him, why God won't stop the agony, and if sin is the problem, why God won't forgive.

Chapter 8:

Bildad begins in now, with his speech. He feels that Job is making rash and unfounded statements. Eliphaz states that God is just and He does reward the good and punish the wicked. He also implies that he feels that Job is guilty of sin and is offering no help, hope, or consolation.

Chapter 9 and 10

Job replies to the speech of Bildad. He realizes that God is just. [in verse 13, Rahab was considered a monster of chaos and its cohorts are afraid of being punished by God] Job doesn't understand why he is being treated the way he is, for he is innocent.

Job begins to consider that God might be unjust after all. He shows this by his statements that being good or bad(9:22) doesn't make any difference for both will be condemned. He falsely charges that God has turned destroyer and the only hope of relief that he has is if God will leave him alone (10:2,8,20-22).

Chapter 11

Zophar now speak up for the first time. He tells Job that he(Job) is not getting what he deserves at all. He feels that Job deserves much worse and that Job's only hope is to put away his sin and return to God and then he will be restored.

NOTES

STUDY GUIDE

Book of Job

Chapters 1-11 (include Chapter and verse in your answers)

1. In what land did Job live?
2. List Job's substance.
3. What would Job do following a period of feasting?
4. How were Job's possessions destroyed?
5. What was Job's response?
6. Who presented themselves before God?
7. What, of Job, was Satan told to spare?
8. With what was Job struck?
9. What did Job's wife tell him to say?
10. Who were Job's 3 friends?
11. What did they do upon seeing him, and what did they do for 7 days?
12. What did Job wish had happened to him at birth?
13. Whom did Job say, light and life had been given to?
14. What did Eliphaz say Job had done?
15. What happens to those who plow evil?
16. What is man born to, as surely as sparks fly upward? (according to Eliphaz)
17. Who does Eliphaz tell Job to appeal to?
18. Why should none not despise the discipline of the Almighty? (according to Eliphaz)

STUDY GUIDE

Book of Job
Chapters 1-11 continued

19. What did Job think, would surely outweigh the sand of the seas?
 20. What was the request of Job, that he wished God would grant?
 21. What did Job think a despairing man should have from his friends?
 22. What had Job's friends proved to be?
 23. What did Job feel that his eyes would never see again?
 24. What did Job, falsely feel, God had not pardoned and forgiven?
 25. What does Bildad say is the destiny of all who forget God?
 26. Who does God not reject?
 27. What did Job, falsely feel, God would not give him, even if he summoned God and God responded?
 28. What was Job sure he would still dread if he "forgot his complaint, changed his expression and smiled"?
 29. What did Job say God had: given, showed and watched over?
 30. What was Zophar convinced that God had forgotten?
 31. What did Zophar tell Job to do, so he could lift up his face without shame, and stand firm without fear?
- BONUS:
1. Do you feel that Satan can test people today, like he tested Job? Explain.
 2. What seems to be the error of Job's 3 friends? Do we fall into the same trap today? Explain.
 3. How do you feel about Job's responses? HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE THAT? What do you think God, thinks about it?