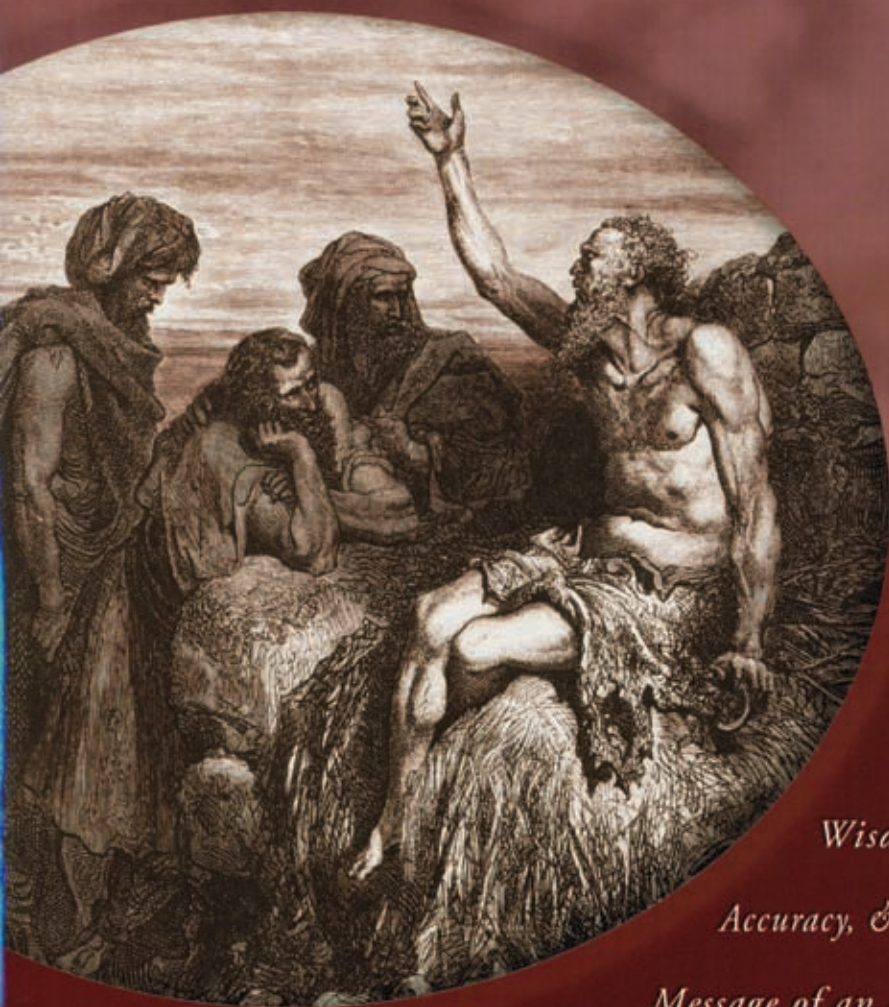


*The Remarkable*  
**RECORD** *of*  
**JOB**



*The Ancient  
Wisdom, Scientific  
Accuracy, & Life-Changing  
Message of an Amazing Book*

**HENRY M. MORRIS**

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## **The Most Fascinating Book in the Bible**

**A** masterpiece of literature, the Book of Job has intrigued readers for many generations. Though the book is ancient, its insights are remarkably modern, and its message is needed more today than ever before. Its long discourses, though sometimes difficult to follow, and seemingly redundant, sparkle with beautiful poetry and vibrate with deep emotion, thus contributing to the fascination that grips the thoughtful reader. Its insights penetrate human nature, offer foresights into modern science, and probe the very heart of God.

All of this makes the Book of Job what this writer, at least, believes is the most fascinating book in the Bible. The climax of its message, though unexpected, is intensely practical, with special relevance to the needs of God's people in these days of widespread humanism and evolutionary scientism.

Many commentaries, both liberal and conservative, have been written on the Book of Job, but few writers allow the book to speak for itself. Consequently, many expositors read interpretations *into* it rather than derive interpretations *from* it. Job's God-centered message has often been bypassed by writers seeking answers to man-centered problems. It is important to keep in view the heavenly perspective with which it begins and ends. Otherwise, we may become entangled in the introspective humanistic philosophies that God himself eventually repudiates.

### The Oldest Book

The Book of Job may also be the oldest book in the Bible, with the probable exception of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. There can, at least, be no question about its setting in the patriarchal period, certainly before Moses and possibly even before Abraham.

The events described in Job obviously took place before the establishment of Israel as God's covenant nation. There is no hint in the book of the nation of Israel—no mention of Moses, or Abraham, or any of the judges, kings, or prophets of Israel. Yet the Book of Job has always been accepted by the children of Israel as one of the canonical books of Scripture.

Even more significant is the fact that there is no mention of the Ten Commandments or any of the Mosaic laws. Many of the discourses in the book center on questions of right and wrong, sin and judgment, reward and punishment, but they never are placed in the context of God's Mount Sinai revelations.

Divine laws were given to men and women long before Moses. Abraham was guided by such laws: "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Gen. 26:5).

Exactly how these primeval laws were given, and in what form, we do not know, for they have not been preserved.

They have been superseded, first by the Mosaic laws, then also by the law of Christ. They were known by Abraham, however, and no doubt by his ancestors. They were also known by Job, for he testified: "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). Job's friends also were aware of them. Their chief spokesman, Eliphaz, urged Job as follows: "Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart" (Job 22:22).

The laws of Moses laid great stress on the sacrificial system and set aside the tribe of Levi to officiate at the sacrifices for the sins of the people. Before this system was established, however, the patriarchal head of each family offered the sacrifices. Note, for example, the practice of Noah and Abraham (Gen. 8:20; 22:13). This was also the practice of Job (Job 1:5) and even of his three friends (Job 42:7-9).

Perhaps the most significant evidence of all, that the story of Job predated the Mosaic laws, is that the almost universal drift of the early nations into pantheistic idolatry after the dispersion at Babel had not yet infected the tribes mentioned in Job. Job, the Uzite, Eliphaz, the Temanite, Bildad, the Shuhite, Zophar, the Naamathite, and Elihu, the Buzite, all believed in the true God of creation. Their concepts of God's ways with man proved inadequate, but none of the men were inclined toward other gods. There is no hint of pantheism, polytheism, idolatry, or evolutionism anywhere in the book, and such a situation is inconceivable anywhere in any nation much after the time of Abraham.

Furthermore, quite a number of references in Job refer to the early events recorded in Genesis—for example, the creation, the fall, the flood, and the dispersion. A number of ancient tribes and places mentioned in Job such as the Sabaeans, the Chaldeans, and Ophir tie into the Table of Nations (Gen. 10) or other early sections of Genesis, but none that characterize later periods.

Job lived 140 years after the events described in the book (Job 42:16). By figuring in the approximate number of years he lived prior to those events (the exact number is unknown, but at least enough to have ten grown children), we can place him in the time of the early patriarchs, perhaps around 2000 B.C.

### **Job and the Land of Uz**

The geographical setting of the book is the land of Uz, but the exact location is uncertain. The Bible mentions two men named Uz. The first was the son of Aram (founder of the Aramaeans), the son of Shem, the son of Noah. The other was a grandson of Seir, the Horite (or Hurrian) who first settled the area later known as Mount Seir, which eventually fell into the hands of Esau and became part of the land of the Edomites (see Gen. 36:8, 20, 21, 28). The second Uz may have been named in memory of the first, who was perhaps his ancestor.

The land of Uz is associated with the land of Edom in Lamentations 4:21: "Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz." This ascription implies that the land received the name Uz before the Edomites entered it.

In any case, Uz was in or near the region later known as Edom, extending both southwest and southeast of the Dead Sea. Though largely a desert now, in the time of Abraham, and later of Esau, it was apparently well-populated, fertile, and attractive. Job, evidently one of its leading citizens, was highly respected by the princes and nobles of the land (Job 29:7-10), esteemed and loved by everyone except the wicked, who incurred his judgment. Job was "the greatest of all the men of the east" (Job 1:3), and, according to his own testimony, he "dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners" (Job 29:25).