

Job 1:1, 2:1-10ⁱⁱ

There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the LORD, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.” The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil. He still persists in his integrity, although you incited me against him, to destroy him for no reason.” Then Satan answered the LORD, “Skin for skin! All that people have they will give to save their lives. But stretch out your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.” The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, he is in your power; only spare his life.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and inflicted loathsome sores on Job from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Job took a potsherd with which to scrape himself, and sat among the ashes. Then his wife said to him, “Do you still persist in your integrity? Curse God, and die.” But he said to her, “You speak as any foolish woman would speak. Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

ⁱⁱ About Job 1:1, 2:1-10

In the ancient biblical world, everyone assumed that the natural order of creation and the moral order were guided by the same divine law—good actions are rewarded, evil actions are punished. The Book of Job challenges this connection as it probes the age-old mystery of why good people suffer (apparently being punished) when they ought to be rewarded for their good.

The book was composed by taking a familiar folk legend (which may have been set down in writing as early as the time of David and Solomon around 1000 BCE) and expanding it by inserting long portions of poetic dialogue.

Today’s reading outlines the basic story found in the prose sections that begin and end the book (1:1-2:13, 42:7-17) of the righteous sufferer, the proverbial ‘patient Job’ (Ezekiel 14:14, 20; James 5:11).

The poetic sections that have been inserted into the prose story—the dialogues of Job and his

three friends, who come to comfort him in his suffering by explaining about God's ways of justice, and the final response of the Lord to Job—are post-exilic and date from between 600-300 BCE.