

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 25, Wisdom Literature (Job) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs
Wisdom Literature (Job)

1. Abstract of Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 25, Wisdom Literature (Job), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

The provided text is a transcript of a lecture on the Old Testament book of Job. The lecture begins with administrative announcements regarding a paper due for the course. It then transitions to an exploration of Job, posing questions about its purpose, the concept of theodicy, and the character of Job and his friends. The lecture analyzes key passages, explores interpretations of God's responses, and touches upon historical context and potential authorship. Key themes include suffering, divine sovereignty, the nature of evil, the importance of relationship with God, and the role of mediation and intercession. Finally, the discussion looks at the symbolism of Leviathan and its connection to Satan, and notes the importance of the narrative framework that appears to be missing from some translations.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 25 – Double
click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → OT Introduction → OT Lit).**



**Phillips_OTLit_Sessi
on25.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 25, Wisdom Literature (Job)

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Elaine Phillips' Lecture 25 on the Book of Job.

Briefing Document: Dr. Elaine Phillips' Lecture 25 on Job

I. Overview

This lecture provides an introduction to the Book of Job, focusing on its purpose, themes, and key questions it raises. Dr. Phillips emphasizes the book's complexity and encourages critical thinking rather than simply lecturing. She delves into the problem of theodicy, explores Job's character and relationship with God, and examines the roles of Job's friends and the figure of Leviathan.

II. Key Themes and Ideas

- **Purpose of Job:** The lecture explores several potential purposes of the Book of Job:
 - Not simply a lesson on "how not to be" self-pitying.
 - A demonstration of faithfulness to God regardless of circumstances.
 - An exploration of long-term suffering and different perspectives on it.
 - A possible theodicy (justifying God's goodness and omnipotence in the face of evil), but Dr. Phillips introduces a counter-argument from Derek Kidner.
- **Theodicy & Justifying God:**
 - Dr. Phillips defines theodicy as "a defense of God's goodness and his omnipotence in the face of the existence of evil."
 - However, she introduces Derek Kidner's perspective: "the book is not a theodicy for humans cannot arrogate to themselves the right to justify God without deifying themselves." Kidner suggests the book is more about Job's "spiritual pilgrimage" and finding God through surrender rather than justification.
 - Kidner also suggests Job's suffering is an "early sketch of the greatest sufferer," foreshadowing Christ. "God himself has joined us in our hell of loneliness. Here is the final answer to Job and to all the Jobs of humanity."

- **God's Sovereignty and Evil:**

- The lecture addresses the difficult question of God's role in evil, distinguishing between "allowing" and "bringing" evil.
- Dr. Phillips affirms God's sovereignty: "I think it would be a problem if we had anything that was outside the sovereignty of God...Because God is sovereign, there's no question about that. He is sovereignly good."
- She references Isaiah 45:7, which speaks of God creating both light and evil.
- Kidner is quoted again: "Where we might wish to argue that omnipotence ought to have stamped out evil at its first appearance, God's chosen way was not to crush it out of hand but to wrestle with it—and to do so in weakness rather than in strength."

- **Characters in Job:**

- **Job:** Described as "blameless, upright, one who fears God and shuns evil," but not sinless. He's concerned for his children's spiritual well-being and acts as a mediator for them. He struggles with his suffering and seeks a relationship with God.
- **The Adversary (Satan):** Has access to God's throne room and questions Job's motives. God initiates the test by drawing the adversary's attention to Job. The adversary disappears in the latter portion of the book.
- **God:** Initiates the test of Job and gives the adversary permission to act. His goodness is questioned by the suffering. Dr. Phillips explores how God ultimately responds to Job.
- **Job's Friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar):** They start with good intentions but misapply principles of justice and become harsh. Their "theology" is not incorrect, but they misapply it to Job's situation. They "pontificate," claiming to speak for God. They do not ever pray for Job. God rebukes them for not speaking to him as Job did.
- **Job's Relationship with God:**
- Job has a profound relationship with God and is not simply motivated by self-protection (avoiding punishment).
- Dr. Phillips highlights Job's strong outbursts against God in chapter 16, but notes that he also acknowledges God's sovereignty elsewhere, such as chapters 9 and

12. "Job has what I would like to call a maximalist view of sovereignty...It's acknowledging that those ugly things, those painful things, those things are destructive in my life are also coming from God. There must be a purpose."

- Job desires an arbitrator or mediator, as seen in chapter 9.
- **God's Response to Job:**
- God responds to Job out of the storm, taking him on a tour of the created order (chapters 38-41), emphasizing His control and power.
- In chapter 42, God gives Job back double of all he had lost.
- Dr. Phillips suggests a unique interpretation of God's rebuke to Job's friends in chapter 42, verses 7 and 8. She argues that the Hebrew should be translated as "You've not spoken *to* me, as my servant Job has" rather than "You've not spoken *of* me what is right." This highlights Job's role as an intercessor and the friends' failure to communicate with God on Job's behalf.
- She argues that God's restoration of Job indicates the test is over, not that it is a "payback" for being righteous.
- **Leviathan:**
- Introduced in Job's initial statement (chapter 3) and appears again in chapter 41. While NIV footnotes suggest it's a crocodile, Dr. Phillips argues it represents something "cosmically evil," referencing Isaiah 27:1, where Leviathan is described as a "coiling serpent." She suggests that the appearance of Leviathan at the end of the book is a sign that God is in control of the cosmically evil figure, just as he was in control of the adversary from the beginning of the book.
- **Elihu:**
- Elihu's language is different.
- Elihu's purpose is to set the stage for God's appearance. "Listen to the roar...thunder, the lightning announces the coming storm. Listen to the roar...God's voice thunders."

III. Key Questions Raised:

- What is the purpose of the Book of Job?
- Is Job a theodicy?

- How does God deal with evil?
- What do we learn about God, the adversary, and Job from the first two chapters?
- Does Job's righteousness mean he is sinless?
- What is so inappropriate about the friends' responses?
- How does Job respond to his friends?
- What do we learn from God's responses?
- What does God say in chapter 42?

IV. Important Quotes:

- "the book is not a theodicy for humans cannot arrogate to themselves the right to justify God without deifying themselves." - Derek Kidner
- "God himself has joined us in our hell of loneliness. Here is the final answer to Job and to all the Jobs of humanity." - Derek Kidner
- "I think it would be a problem if we had anything that was outside the sovereignty of God...Because God is sovereign, there's no question about that. He is sovereignly good." - Dr. Phillips
- "Job has what I would like to call a maximalist view of sovereignty...It's acknowledging that those ugly things, those painful things, those things are destructive in my life are also coming from God. There must be a purpose." - Dr. Phillips

This briefing document provides a comprehensive overview of the key points discussed in the lecture. Further study of the Book of Job and the referenced scholars is encouraged for a deeper understanding.

4. Study Guide: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 25, Wisdom Literature (Job)

Job: Wrestling with Suffering and Sovereignty

Study Guide Contents

- Quiz (Short Answer)
- Answer Key (Quiz)
- Essay Questions
- Glossary of Key Terms

Quiz: Book of Job

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What are the three types of literature represented by Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes, respectively?
2. What is the significance of Job's friends sitting with him in silence for seven days?
3. What four characteristics describe Job in the narrative framework of the book?
4. What is "theodicy," and how does it relate to the Book of Job?
5. What is Satan's initial accusation against Job in the first two chapters?
6. What does Job do for his children that demonstrates his concern for their spiritual well-being?
7. Identify Job's three friends who engage in dialogue with him. What is the primary flaw in their arguments?
8. According to the lecture, what is a more accurate translation for what God says about Job speaking rightly compared to his friends? Why is this translation significant?
9. What does Job repeatedly long for throughout his dialogues with his friends, and where are three places in the text that Job recognizes his need for a mediator?
10. What role does Elihu play in the narrative, and how does he contribute to the appearance of God in the storm?

Answer Key: Quiz

1. Proverbs is didactic (teaching), Job and Ecclesiastes are speculative and philosophical, and Song of Songs is lyrical poetry. This categorization helps understand the distinct approaches to wisdom and life's complexities.
2. This act demonstrates profound empathy and respect for Job's suffering. It allows Job to initiate the conversation and express his grief before receiving any unsolicited advice.
3. Job is described as blameless, upright, one who fears God, and one who shuns evil. These characteristics establish him as a righteous and godly person at the outset of the story.
4. Theodicy is the defense of God's goodness and omnipotence in the face of the existence of evil. Job explores this concept by questioning why a just God would allow suffering to befall a righteous person.
5. Satan claims that Job only fears God because God has blessed him with prosperity and protection, suggesting Job's motives are self-serving. He argues Job's faith would crumble if those blessings were removed.
6. Job makes sacrifices and prays for them, indicating his role as a mediator.
7. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are Job's friends. Their primary flaw lies in misapplying their understanding of divine justice, assuming Job's suffering is direct evidence of his sin.
8. The more accurate translation might be "You have not spoken *to* me as my servant Job has". This suggests that Job is being recognized for communicating directly with God.
9. Job longs for a mediator or arbitrator between himself and God. He expresses this longing in 9:33, 16:19, and 19:25.
10. Elihu sets the stage for God's appearance by describing the power and majesty of a thunderstorm. This builds anticipation and prepares the reader for God's dramatic entrance in chapter 38.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the different perspectives presented in the Book of Job regarding the nature of suffering and how they challenge or reinforce traditional views of divine justice.
2. Analyze the character of Job, focusing on his evolving understanding of God and himself throughout the narrative. How does Job's relationship with God change from the beginning to the end of the book?
3. Compare and contrast the roles of Job's friends and Elihu in the dialogues. How do their perspectives contribute to the central themes of the book, and why are they ultimately rebuked?
4. Explore the significance of God's speeches in chapters 38-41. How do these speeches address Job's questions and contribute to a deeper understanding of divine sovereignty and human limitations?
5. Interpret the symbolism of Leviathan in the Book of Job. What does this creature represent, and how does its portrayal contribute to the overall message of the book?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Adversary (Ha-Satan):** The opponent or accuser who appears in the heavenly court in the opening chapters of Job, challenging God's assessment of Job's righteousness.
- **Didactic Literature:** Literature that is designed to teach a moral lesson.
- **Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar:** Job's three friends who attempt to console him but ultimately offer flawed explanations for his suffering.
- **Elihu:** A younger character who enters the dialogue later in the book, offering a different perspective on Job's suffering and preparing the way for God's appearance.
- **Intercessor:** One who mediates or pleads on behalf of another.
- **Leviathan:** A mythical sea creature described in detail in Job 41, often interpreted as a symbol of chaos or untamed power, ultimately under God's control.
- **Lyrical Poetry:** A style of poetry characterized by heightened emotions.
- **Patriarchal Period:** The era in biblical history associated with figures like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, characterized by long lifespans and nomadic lifestyles.
- **Pontificate:** To express opinions in a dogmatic or authoritative way, often without sufficient knowledge or understanding.
- **Redeemer:** One who delivers or rescues another from a difficult situation, often through payment of a ransom.
- **Shalom:** A Hebrew word often translated as "peace," but encompassing wholeness, completeness, and well-being.
- **Speculative Literature:** Literature that emphasizes imagination and wonder.
- **Theodicy:** A defense of God's goodness and omnipotence in the face of the existence of evil.
- **Uz/Utz:** The land from which Job originates, possibly located in the vicinity of Edom.

5. FAQs on Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 25, Wisdom Literature (Job), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on the Book of Job

- **What are the primary purposes or themes explored in the Book of Job?**
- The Book of Job grapples with profound philosophical and theological questions, particularly the problem of suffering. It explores themes of faith, justice, and the nature of God's sovereignty in the face of inexplicable human suffering. It also examines the limitations of human wisdom in understanding God's ways, suggesting that true understanding comes not from attempting to justify God but from surrendering to God and acknowledging his ultimate authority and goodness. The book highlights the importance of a genuine relationship with God, characterized by honesty and persistence, even when experiencing intense pain and doubt.
- **What is the "theodicy," and how does it relate to the Book of Job? Does the book succeed as a theodicy?**
- A theodicy is an attempt to defend God's goodness and omnipotence in light of the existence of evil and suffering. Some believe that the Book of Job serves as a theodicy, aiming to explain why a good and powerful God allows suffering. However, the text suggests it is NOT a theodicy. It is argued that humans cannot rightly justify God without elevating themselves above God. The Book of Job may instead be a story about Job's spiritual journey where he is freed from himself and his imagined right to be saved at the moment of his surrender to God. The final answer to Job, and all of humanity, is that God has joined us in our loneliness.
- **Who are Job's friends, and what is the nature of their advice and theology?**
- Job's friends are Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. They initially come to comfort Job in his suffering, but their discourse quickly turns into a series of arguments about the nature of justice and the reasons for Job's affliction. Their theology is rooted in the belief that suffering is a direct consequence of sin and that Job must have committed some grave offense to deserve his fate. While their theology contains elements of truth about divine justice, they misapply it to Job's situation and presume to speak definitively for God, essentially *pontificating* about matters they don't fully understand.

- **In what ways does Job challenge or question God throughout the book, and how are these challenges ultimately resolved?**
- Job does not passively accept his suffering; he vehemently protests his innocence and challenges God to justify his actions. Job accuses God of injustice, expresses his feelings of abandonment, and longs for a mediator who can plead his case. While Job initially questions God's fairness, he maintains his faith in God's ultimate sovereignty. God responds to Job not with explanations but with a display of his immense power and wisdom through a tour of the created order, which shows the limits of Job's, and human, understanding. Job eventually repents in "dust and ashes", acknowledging his limitations and God's greatness.
- **What is the significance of Satan (the Adversary) in the opening chapters of Job, and how does this character factor into the overall narrative and themes?**
- In the opening chapters, Satan, or "the Adversary," appears before God and suggests that Job's piety is motivated by self-interest, claiming that Job only fears God because he is blessed. This sets up the test of Job's faith, as God allows Satan to inflict suffering upon Job to prove whether his devotion is genuine. While Satan initiates the suffering, it's crucial to remember that he acts with God's permission, highlighting God's sovereignty. Satan disappears from the narrative after the first two chapters. The ending implies that God defeats the cosmic evil represented by Satan, diminishing the need to mention Satan by name.
- **What does the book suggest about the relationship between suffering and righteousness, and what does it imply about the nature of divine justice?**
- The Book of Job challenges the simplistic notion that suffering is always a direct punishment for sin. Job is portrayed as a righteous man who endures undeserved suffering, suggesting that there are mysteries to divine justice that humans cannot fully comprehend. While the book acknowledges the reality of divine judgment, it also emphasizes that suffering can serve other purposes, such as testing faith, revealing deeper truths, and prompting a deeper relationship with God.

- **What are the implications of God's responses to Job in chapters 38-41, and what do these speeches reveal about God's character and perspective?**
- God's responses in chapters 38-41 are not explanations for Job's suffering but rather a demonstration of God's power, wisdom, and intricate control over creation. These speeches emphasize the vastness of God's perspective and the limitations of human understanding. The extended description never mentions humans, focusing on God's design and control of the wider created order. God's detailed questions emphasize God's sovereignty and remind Job of his finite knowledge. God's speeches reveal a God who is both awe-inspiring and intimately involved in the complexities of the world.
- **How does Job function as a mediator, and what implications does this have for understanding the book's themes?**

Job functions as a mediator in several ways. First, he acts as an intercessor for his children, offering sacrifices and prayers on their behalf to ensure their purification. This role demonstrates Job's understanding of mediation. Job longs for a mediator between himself and God. In the end, it is Job, not his friends, whom God favors. God rebukes the friends for not speaking to God. He then commands Job to pray for the friends, indicating that Job, despite his suffering, acts as a mediator between them and God.