

An Analysis of Alleged Scientific Statements in the Book of Job

A Brief Scan

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Introduction

The Book opens with a narration of a righteous man called Job that lived in the east (i.e. land of Uz). We are not told many details but a number of things become evident such as sacrifices, his wealth, Children, integrity and the sudden loss of about everything he had. Several people have wondered whether Job actually existed and if he did, when and where? What genre can one place Job in, Poetic, prose or what? The book commences on an impressive note and ends on a very happy note akin to a fairy tale. It is important to study Job, especially in the Hebrew rendering as well as the many allusions to nature and therefore science that the book occasionally refers to. In our consideration in this paper, we do not set out to prove that Job is scientific but rather to make some observations, briefly explore perceived scientific assertions, draw lessons and as well demonstrate that the book can be trusted as inspired.

Interesting features of the book

The book of Job has many theological themes it touches on. Various theological threads flow through it. Without going into details, we mention some of them. Firstly, the book is about a man called Job that lived in the East (Job 1:1). He is said to be extremely wealthy but then suddenly trouble ensues, literary affected the man reducing him to poverty while inundated by excruciatingly painful sores. Secondly, the book mentions the existence of Satan that moves around the earth to cause harm and confusion, even death. Peter in his epistle seems to suggest the idea that the devil is like a roaring Lion roaming around looking for someone to devour (Job 1:6,7; 1 Pet 5:8). Thirdly, Satan is said to come into the presence of God with or among the sons of God (Job 2:1). It is unclear what these sons could be, whether Angelic or not, evil or not but Satan comes among them. Fourth, Satan challenges God and claims that righteous Job is not in fact righteous only that God has built a hedge of protection around him (Job 2:4-5). Fifth, Job has a wife that does not seem to share sympathy or empathy with him. She suggests a certain reaction that would lead to his sinning and dying. Job

rejects her counsel (Job 2:9-10). Seventh, Job has friends who come around him and camp seven days without saying anything. Thereafter, they begin to discourse with him, accusing and suggesting things some of which Job rejects. They think he is stubborn more so that he claims to be innocent righteous and without sin (Job 2:11-; 31). A fourth person, the young man Elihu speaks afterwards and rebukes the three friends before rebuking Job, the process, for accusing the almighty one (Job 32; 33). Elihu justifies the ways of God (Job 34). Eighth, God speaks on occasion and challenges Job on a number of things. In the process, God makes land mark statements, some of which border on science that people have had problems and challenges with. For instance, the book mentions giant creatures, some probably not found in the context (which ever that could be), the creation of the world, the foundations of the earth, the hydrological cycle, the cosmos among others. This paper touches on (but not in detail) aspects that allude to science though it must be firmly noted that the Bible is not a book of science in the strictest sense of the word but alludes to science, from an anthropocentric angle. For instance, there is talk about the Earth being suspended in space (Job 26:7)¹, the Ostrich being stupid, the foundations of the earth among others (Job 39: 13-18). The Bible makes land mark statements² which it never makes effort to prove but in time, science has progressively been verifying these assertions found in nature. Ninth, Job complains and accuses God of afflicting him despite his innocence (e.g. Job 19:7-12). Towards the end of the book, Job repents and is in good standing (Job 42). He later recovers from his putrid sores, has a restoration of children and wealth. Tenth, the book ends more or less like a good story would end, though rather abruptly. It is akin to a *'they lived happily ever after'* kind of scenario. Eleventh, the book teaches many lessons both theological and other wise. For one thing, we learn that suffering is not because of sinning, or even for the wicked only. God is in control and decides what lot one gets in life, though He may allow some wicked things to happen even to God's people. In all these afflictions, God is working out something. Another lesson one gleans from this book is the fact that people that surround us could affect our world view and even our self-image. Job was surrounded by his wife and friends who did not share in his view. Amidst all this gloomy picture and accusing fingers back and forth, Elihu, the young man, not only respects the Elders but brings the light of the Gospel to that context, thousands of years before Jesus ever walked the Earth. The other lesson we draw from the book is that Job is aware of the resurrection and how that God raises the dead in His time (Job 19:25-27). At times Job speaks as though he may contradict himself but no, he is talking in a given context to respond to an issue at hand. Yet another lesson we learn from this book is that we must trust God at all times, in good or bad times. This is a hard lesson that we all need to take to heart as well as learn. Job trusted God though he afflicted him (Job 23:12-17; 13:15).

¹ Another striking scientific statement in Isaiah though alludes to the Circle of the Earth (Is 40:22). Others have suggested that Job 26:10 equally refers to the idea of the Spherical nature of the earth, though this claim is doubtful here. It may be but unclear.

² Or declarations

It needs to be said that the book equally teaches some moral and religious lessons. Job faithfully interceded for his children, offered sacrifices as well as made a covenant with his eyes to avoid lust (Job 1:5; 31:1). These are disciplines many of us fail to uphold and yet this man did them, of course in simple trust to God. In life, sometimes we can pass through dry patches where frowning providence seems to be the order of the day. Our lives at times curve in but we need to have our eye on the saviour no matter how hard or rough. Job lost literary everything (i.e. including seven sons, three daughters), technically including a wife and friends. He was reduced to a serious pauper afflicted with putrefying sores which dogs licked. His festering wounds and sitting on the ash heap reduced once a mighty man of the East to a heap of near rubbish with flies buzzing around. Only his life was spared and yet he trusted God. Very few of us can have that grace. Job should teach us.

Eye catching Scientific statements in the book

The book alludes to a number of things in nature that arrest the Scientist's mind. Though these are littered all around the book, especially when the Ancient of Days is speaking, we pick only a few for our purposes. Among these include the following;

1. The Giant Sea monsters like the Leviathan, could this be the dinosaurs that existed and ate vegetation (Job 41: 1ff)?
2. The origin of the Universe, the Earth (Job 38-42:9).
3. Ecology: God created man to work the earth and take care of it. We take the liberty to say a little more here by way of comment that fallen man has abandoned this and now abuses nature contrary to what God commanded. Christians should have a proper view of nature unlike Evolutionists that make an idol out of the created order. Balance is needed to manage the earth, especially in these degenerate times. The book talks about how God created and sustains the world from the way he created it (Job 38 ff). *Yahweh* fashioned all things well in delicate balance.
4. God controlling nature: *Yahweh* not only brought forth all things but causes and maintains all things from the greatest to the minutest. The Puritans used to fondly refer to this government as *Providential* care, supply all creaturely needs. Having completed creating in six literal days, God entered a mode of preservation and sustenance. Deism has no place in the book of Job nor are things in random motion! The hand of God is in everything! Job knew this too well.
5. The hydrological cycle (Job 36-37): God has orchestrated things so well that even the rain cycle is under his providential care and control. Science

explains what happens (i.e. the how) but not why. Only God can do such. I recently was catching up on the twin Voyager spacecrafts now over 14 billion miles away into deep space. I could not help wonder just how vast the universe must be and yet God made it all and sustains it to this day! Contrary to what many have thought in the past that space is empty and dull, it is full of activity every day! The pale blue dot picture taken by Voyager 2 in 1979 or there about still baffles me about God's greatness! No wonder the Psalmist in Psalm 8 & 19 marvels at the greatness and vastness of what God hath done! If He has fashioned complex things thus, what more the hydrological cycle!???

6. Material: among many other things, the book refers to material things which Satan uses to blind people. For instance, he claims that Job's fidelity to God could be attributed to his creature comforts, wealth or Health. These, truly blind many of us in more ways than one. Job is aware about the material world and its luring effect.
7. Fire destroys things (Job 1:16): The book refers to fire whose source is unclear but Walter Lang suggests it could be volcanic fire, lightening or such as destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. "It appears to be fire of supernatural source, which science may reject. This fire or energy could point to electricity that was to be used far into the distant future, including Nuclear..." so Lang posits. We would agree to his sentiments but add that fire has been around for ages and used for different things, including destroying or building something. In Ancient times such as Jobs, far removed from our context, it's amazing that fire was around, though with different potencies or different control levels. Even that, God is in control of.
8. Astrology and Astronomy (Job 38:3-32): The Book refers to the stars and how things are ordered. Although not meant to be a science fact lesson, the statements touch on science with remarkable accuracy, although with generic statements. Wallace (2018) is of the opinion that God addresses these matters to challenge Job about Gods abilities and greatness. Others think that the book rather addresses astrology rather than Astronomy. Whatever the case, God addresses the terrestrial bodies including the stars! Werner Gitt (2006) has done an excellent work on *stars and their purpose* which we do well to browse through.
9. The Oryx/unicorn (Job 39:9): The book refers to an animal called by the name just cited. It's true identity is not definitively known but some think it is a wild ox found in the Middle East, probably the Ancient Near East region including the Levant or Mesopotamia and beyond (Numbers 24:8; Deut 14:5; Isaiah 51:20). Walter Lang, whom we consulted does not seem to have an exact idea but thinks it could have existed in the region mentioned above since Job dwelt somewhere in the Ancient Near East or

some such locality. Still others think that this could possibly refer to precious stones (or even treasure) found in Job's locality (Job 28:16). In our mind, we think it refers to the Unicorn earlier mentioned. For now, it remains unclear what this exactly is but suffice to say that Job mentions what he saw in his day. This alone suggests that Job actually existed and lived in a context, interacting with his surrounding environment.

10. The ostrich, Eagle and other birds (e.g. Job 38:13-18): In the course of the narration, the Bible makes comments on these truly unique animals. Job makes some apt comments on each. He makes accurate descriptions from what was observed with the human eye in his day.

Apparent Inaccuracies in the Book and attendant Attacks

Some have attacked the book's references to nature including the animals such as the Leviathan, Ostrich and other parts of God's creation. They argue that some claims are untrue or at least never existed. Others have attacked some descriptions of certain animals or features that would never have existed in Job's day, world and time. Thus, these apparent inaccuracies are not real because time has proved things otherwise. The accusers are mute!

Startling Facts About the Book of Job

The book is striking in that it mentions aspects that ordinarily would not have been known. The mention of the Earth's foundations in the deep, paths in the sea (i.e. the ocean currents etc.) and all these statements are only now being discovered by true authentic science when in fact Job stated these thousands of years back. The theological and narrative story is equally striking, making good reading as well as throwing out rare gems of truth from God's word. Job is not a fairy tale or imaginary story but historically actual which God purposed that we should read and treasure in succeeding generations. The talk of Dinosaurs and other animals regardless of their size is striking to say the least. No wonder Solomon is said to have drawn some lessons from this book and so should we. Further, this book is said to have been authored way even before Genesis! That has been mind boggling for many of us!

What Others Have Said About this Book

Many have commented on the book and concluded various things. The book is startling at many points with its many declarations. Clearly, it is probably older than many other books and appears to have taken place somewhere in the Ancient Near East, where Job is reputed to be a very wealthy man. Walter Lang

(n.d) has written a whole commentary on the book highlighting some key aspects with a special eye towards science and evolution. In that book, Lang contends that Job is accurate in his observations and statements viewed from an anthropomorphic perspective³. He also successfully points out that Job's friends were wrong while he was right on many issues though Elihu is the one that shows what the gospel is. Lang further claims and asserts that at least three authors are said to have authored the book although primarily attributed to Job. This is a huge claim but according to him, these authors are Solomon (1-2; 42:7-17), Elihu (32-42:6) and Job himself (3-31). We cannot verify this but certainly a great starting point for enquiry.

Lessons from this Consideration

Several lessons are gleaned from this enquiry and summarised in point form. Only key areas worth bearing in mind are here highlighted, as one traverses the interesting points of scripture. Below are some salient points lifted from the various sources we explored:

- It is important to have mastery of the Hebrew text (and proficiency in the language) so that the various nuances, renderings and deeper suggestions can be better appreciated.
- Walter Lang does a great work in exposing the evils of evolution as he comments on the text of the book. Evolutionary thinking has ravaged many unsuspecting minds. The other day, my little 7-year old son was telling me about some evolutionary ideas he had picked up from the TV. I was stunned and motivated to commence teaching him Biblical Truth lest he imbibes wrong stuff. But did I need to wait until he vomited wrong stuff? I think not, I should have been proactively ahead of my game.
- According to Walter Lang, the book of Job has at least three authors namely; Job, Elihu and Solomon. No further proof or evidence is given except to argue from the writing style, reasoning, depth of insight among others.
- Some thoughts are believed to have been gleaned from Job by later writers like Solomon and Deuteronomy among others, so Lang, (n.d) argues.
- The book of Job highlights the suffering of the righteous as well as the apparent prosperity of the wicked. Viewed from the natural eye, Job was

³ Lang claims that Job's general scientific statements have repeatedly been found to be true, thousands of years after the statements were first made. For instance, he claims that the assertion about the Earth's 'foundations' upon which the continents rest have repeatedly been found true as the earth's core is said to be solid.

unfairly suffering but viewed from God's side, the reverse is true. The question one is tempted to ask is: does what happens in the spiritual realms or world spill over to the natural daily life? That's a big question because it has potential to drive us into animistic directions.

- Friends and those surrounding us can make wrong conclusions which may or may not help us in our quest to know God. We thus need to maintain a very close walk with God as Job did although he nearly lost it. Additionally, we need to have the grace to repent if we stumble at any point during our pilgrimage.
- Evidently, Job was frustrated and accuses God (of injustice) as laughing at the suffering of righteous people (Job 9:23; 12:4). When trudging through the fiery furnace of affliction, we sometimes are wont to feel that way. There is need to read providence aright.
- Job later repents and is said to be righteous. His friends had stated that he was arrogant and not willing to own up. Perceptions are difficult to manage or totally control.
- Job's friends (i.e. Zophar, Eliphaz and Bildad) seem to have a world view that people suffer because of the secret sins and evil that they commit. This is referred to as the 'eternal way' by Lang and others. In an animistic context, this belief can be very rife. We need to ensure we clothe ourselves with the right Biblical world view of things.
- Although Lang claims that Solomon gleaned some wisdom pearls from Job, he finds it difficult to comprehend because Solomon is reputed to have been the wisest man in the whole world at his time (1 Kings 4:31). For how could the wise man glean to the past? That said, even the wise need to grow in wisdom despite their super intelligence.
- The book of Job is believed to be a mixture of Genres-Prose and poetry all in one. This entails that its interpretation should be very carefully handled.
- It is ironic that the book of Job depicts Satan as *entering* the throne room of God to challenge him. Can Satan, the evil one appear before the Holy and righteous God? Often times, we picture these as avowed sworn enemies! Well, here is a scenario before us!
- The book seems to suggest that Satan can do evil things only once permitted but why would God permit evil? This is a difficult one to answer but definitely, there is a purpose why this could be so.
- Job insists that he is blameless and righteous when his accusers assert that he has sinned. Yet in the same breath, he acknowledges that in and

of himself, he is not perfect. Christians need to daily repent as well as confess while interceding for others as Job did for his children.

- God is the one that Justifies people, including Job, who talks about a redeemer. This is instructive, long before Christ shows up in the New Testament.
- The Gospel cannot be known until revealed by God. Remember John 6? Unless the father draws one, they cannot come to Him. None the less, we need to preach the gospel to the lost in keeping with Romans 10. Alternatively, when in discourse with the lost, like Elihu, we need to make the gospel plain in the course of our discussions. That is a skill Christians need to learn, and learn well!
- There is wisdom in remaining silent like Elihu who waited for the seniors to speak before he was allowed. Often we wish to speak and be heard but may land into problems. Our world seems to be losing this great etiquette, respecting the elderly. We seem to hurl away any rules when possible asserting ourselves and rights! Christians need to be different. Granted, our cultural contexts may differ but certainly there must be a difference between a saint and the rest of humanity. Elihu speaks loudly to our younger folk.
- There are six answers found in the book of Job worth noting namely, i. Satan insisting on Job's conditional fidelity to God, ii. Job's secret sin, iii. God's apparent injustice to Job, iv. Job and Elihu leading friends to the Gospel, v. Elihu's comments, corrections and pointing to the real gospel and vi. God's answer in two whirlwinds respectively. Job knew the Gospel but not in detail. Elihu seems to be better versed than him at this point and thus points to it-the eternal gospel. We need to know the gospel very well in order to effectively communicate it to the lost.
- Job mentions several scientifically connected aspects that include the Ostrich, the foundations of the earth, the springs of the sea (i.e. freshwater springs in the sea) among others. This is remarkable, given his remote existence in the ancient past!
- Authentic Science and scripture ought not to be separated. Science speaks into what God has already declared in His word.
- Evolution is not supported by evidence. It is like a jigsaw puzzle people are trying to fit together. It remains a theory at best.
- Unless God is included, science becomes a mere pagan religion. Evolution is some form of captivity, even caged today's *Science*.

- Sadly, Creationists are denied funding for research. If one needs funding, they must pull the Evolutionist line. Swamidass has confirmed this claim, its hard out there for authentic Creationists. The best compromise is to water down one's convictions by trashing the scriptural account for theistic evolution or some such as he has sadly done. There is need for authentic Christians to invest in Creationist research.
- From Lang's writings, it appears he believes the Leviathans or dinosaurs actually historically existed and ate vegetation. It appears that after the fall, meat eating became the norm for them too.
- A casual reading of Job seems to suggest that Job contradicts himself in Chapter 24 and 27. This is not so because Job is addressing two different situations and thus correct in his assertions.
- It is important to mention that affliction in some one's life is not always a punishment for sin as Job's friends alleged.
- Job states that God created and sustains the entire world. God at times makes similar assertions within the book. In addition, God asks scientific questions to Job within the text. Job was ecologically conscious as Walter Lang rightly claims.
- Startlingly, Lang claims that Job probably had more faith than David! That's his personal opinion but worth thinking about!!!
- A declaration that Job makes is that at death, all are equal irrespective of their status in life. This is an interesting claim because destinies differ contingent on how one lived on the Earth, whether for God or not. Perhaps he is looking at it from the anthropomorphic angle, much like what Ecclesiastes portrays.
- At times people abuse natural laws or even their positions. We need to be weary and careful.
- As earlier asserted, it is probable that the book of Job was available to King David long before Solomon had access to it, so claims Walter Lang. Solomon is said to have quoted from or used materials from the book of Job. The book of Psalms equally seems to allude to the book of Job.
- There is some discussion and debate as to whether Job lived later or earlier than the writing of Genesis (or where Job fits into the Genesis account). Lang seems to suggest that Moses wrote Genesis but Job had probably already lived in the East (he may not be recorded in Genesis but actually lived at some point). In that sense, the book of Job could be older though actually Genesis narrates events before or during the time Job

lived in the East at some point within the Genesis time line. Lang places time to 250 years after the Genesis flood.

- Job made a covenant with his eyes so as not to be seduced (31:9). Proverbs seems to suggest similar sentiments e.g. Proverbs 7:7
- A number of Bible writers seem to have quoted or alluded to the book of Job. Among these would be: Isaiah, Moses, Psalms, Proverbs (Solomon), Amos,
- Lang and others do not see any evolution in the book of Job. Evolution is unbiblical. God created a perfect world not one that evolved (Gen 1:31).
- Lang believes Adam and Eve were cursed along with the rest of nature. Is this what scripture teaches? Certainly the ground and nature were cursed! I doubt man was directly, in that sense.
- Lang refers to the Tablet theory in relation to God, Adam, Shem, Ham, Japheth and perhaps others. These tablets are believed to have been used by Job, Elihu and friends to write the book they did. We do not have firm evidence for this claim either.
- The Book of Job makes no reference to Jerusalem, suggesting that the book was written before the Egyptian encounter. He is also likely to have lived outside Palestine (Zoeckler) or the Canaanite Levant.
- The book of Job poses some challenges including the various genres, Job claiming to be without sin, Job's apparent contradictions, how does Job refer to his children when they are dead (19:17;1:19), the use of the Name of God-*Jehovah*, the sacrifices, the Leviathan (how do beasts fit in the narrative?) etc. Several issues come to the fore needing further exploration.
- The book of Job mentions the 'sons of God' (1:6). We do not know exactly who these are whether Angels or the saints. The Bible does not elaborate.
- Materialism is often used by Satan to blind people. In as much as wealth is good, it should never blind the saint. Materialism is in sync with evolution that replaces God with matter and earthly goods. We need to beware at all time! That is not to say materials or the flesh are evil in themselves, no! It is the attitude we portray towards these good things we legitimately are to enjoy on this terrestrial ball!

- The Sabeans⁴ and Chaldeans (1:13-19) are said to have attacked and grabbed Donkeys while killing the attendants. They used some form of strategy.
- Job seems to have given up at some point and probably would have preferred to die, even cursing the day he was born! He at another place, states that Death is better than life. We could fall into such troubled times as well but keeping focus on God changes things. Suicidal tendencies are not far from our minds during the furnace period hence the need to guard the mind. Tough times for Job caused him to blurt out, at times making mistakes.
- Some authorities have suggested that Job's disease as cancerous boils (Dr George Howe). These were excruciatingly painful as demeaning to the extent that people kept away. God at times tests his people. In recent years and days, a number of saints have exited this life through the excruciatingly painful cancer route. We never know what He has in store. Ours is to trust Him still!
- Job's wife, akin to Lot's, was clearly ungodly. This can be a pain in some one's life.
- Lang suggests that Angels were created on the second day of Creation since they did not pre-exist creation as we know it. This seems a reasonable suggestion though difficult to prove (Psalm 104:4). Lang further claims that Lucifer could have fallen between Genesis 2 & 3. Dickason (1975) has some interesting things to say about Angels. His book; *Angels: Elect & Evil* is a well worth good read.
- The word '*Satan*' means adversary. He is also *Diabolos* or the Devil or the accuser of the Brethren, father of lies. The good angels can safely be called the 'sons of God'
- Without God, morality is elusive. Anything goes as no standards exist. Job was all alone but the God consciousness kept him praying and sacrificing to *Yahweh*.
- Purgatory and annihilation are not Biblical contrary to what some people believe. Eternal judgement is real.

The Importance and value of this Book of Job evaluation

⁴ Could these be ancestors of the modern day Arabs? It is unclear.

This study is a serious good introduction to the book of Job. The primary reference materials by Walter Lang, Werner Gitt and others are excellent starting points especially if the sources demonstrate a mastery not only of the book but the Hebrew renderings behind it. The book, often neglected by many of us, only referred to in times of affliction, is a very deep mine that could effectively be used to ward off and uproot evolution. In that book, the almighty makes landmark statements that baffle even present scientists now and into the future. A deep reflective review of the book proves extremely fruitful and helpful for the growing saint. I found it a great mine to use in my apologetics work and I have no doubt would be handy to you too! Further, It is recommended that additional material such as Journals or emerging works, browsing through science journals or tracking the recently launched James Webb Telescope, reputed to peer as far back into time as possible is a rich exercise. While evolutionists shout out Billions of years, we know that God inserted a sense of age into nature. It should instead make us marvel all the more how God works in creation!

Conclusion

In the book of Job, the Bible once again, proves to be remarkably accurate in sync with authentic Science. Job highlights many facts from nature, though in a general science which science has lived to 'catch up' on. The Christian does well to acquaint themselves with the book and apply the truths there from in their daily lives.

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