

# JOB

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Job	A man of Uz, perfect and upright, who feared God	1: 1
Satan	The Adversary, a skeptical son of God	1: 6
YHWH Elohim	The LORD God, who accepts Satan's challenge	1: 7
Job's Wife	Who speaks, once only, as one of the foolish women	2: 9
His Friends	Who come "to mourn with him and to <i>comfort</i> <sup>1</sup> him"	2:11
Eliphaz	The Temanite	4: 1
Bildad	The Shuhite	8: 1
Zophar	The Naamathite	11: 1
[Elihu	The Buzite: a late, young, ultra-pious arrival on the scene	32: 2]

## THE PLOT

<b>Chs.</b>	<b>ACT/SCN</b>	<b>SPEECH</b>	
1- 2	PROLOG	Satan came also among them.	1: 6
		Doth Job fear God for nought?	1: 9
		His friends saw that his grief was very great.	2:13
3-14	ACT I	Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden?	3:23
3- 7	SC I	Let the day perish in which I was born.	3: 3
4- 5	Eliphaz	Is not this thy fear, thy confidence? Happy is the man whom God correcteth.	4: 6 5:17
6- 7	Job	Cause me to understand that in which I have erred. What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? <sup>2</sup>	6:24 7:17
8-10	SC ii	If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me.	9:20
8	Bildad	Doth God pervert judgment?	8: 3
9-10	Job	But how should man be just before God? Wilt thou bring me into dust again?	9: 2 10: 9
11-14	SC iii	Will ye speak wickedly for God?	13: 7
11	Zophar	God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity.	11: 6
12-14	Job	I am as one mocked by his neighbor. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down . . .	12: 4 13:15 14: 7
15-21	ACT II	What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?	21:15

1. **nacham.** *To sigh; be sorry.* In a favorable sense: *pity, console.* Unfavorably: *avenge.*

Reflexive: *console or comfort oneself; repent (?)*

2. Cf. Psalm 8:4: What is man, that thou art mindful of him?

22-29	ACT III	As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment.	27: 2
29	SC iii: Job	After my words they spoke not again.	29:22
30-37	ACT IV	Oh, that the Almighty would answer me!	31:35
30-31	SC i: Job	Now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.	30: 9
		Doth not he see my ways?	31: 4
[32-37	SC ii: Elihu <sup>1</sup>	Job hath spoken without knowledge.	34:35]
38-42:6	ACT V	The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind.	38: 1
38-40:5	SC i	I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.	38: 3
38-40:2	Yahweh	Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?	38: 4
		Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom?	39:26
		Shall he that contendeth instruct the Almighty?	40: 2
40:3-5	Job	I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.	40: 4
40:6-42:6	SC ii	Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous?	40: 8
40:6-41:34	YHWH	Hast thou an arm like God?	40: 9
		Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook?	41: 1
42:1-6	Job	Then Job answered the LORD, and said:	42: 1
		I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,	
		But now mine eye seeth thee.	42: 5-
		<b>Therefore I take back<sup>2</sup> [what I said],</b>	
		<b>comforted<sup>3</sup> that I am dust.</b>	6
42:7-17	EPILOG	The LORD blessed the latter end of Job	42:12
		My servant, Job, shall pray for you	42: 2

1. Many scholars believe that the discourse of Elihu is a late editorial addition.

2. **ma'ac.** *To spurn, disappear; melt away; loathe, despise, reject.* (usually transitive)

3. **nacham** again! *To console or comfort oneself. Not repent!* The translation of this verse (6) is by Stephen Mitchell. All other English translations that I have seen render *nacham* as 'repent'; both the NRSV and NIV translate: "Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes." In my view, these "comforting" translators "have not spoken of [God] what is right"; rather, they "speak wickedly for God" (42:8; 13:7). Mitchell argues that they "do this on the shakiest of philological grounds; understandably, because they are thinking with orthodox [Judeo-]Christian ideas and *expecting* to find penitence and self-abasement as the appropriate response to the righteous, ill-tempered god they expect to find. . . . But self-abasement is just inverted egoism. Anyone who acts with genuine humility will be as far from humiliation as from arrogance. *Wherefore I abhor myself* indeed! How could this poet, after a venture of unprecedented daring, end with a hero merely beaten into submission? . . . Job's response will not accommodate such whimpering. He has received his answer, and can only remain awe-stricken in the face of overwhelming beauty and dread. . . . [Job has experienced] down to the marrow of his bones, the glory and the terror of the universe, all creation and all destruction, embraced in the blissful play of the Supreme Lord. . . . Job's final words issue from surrender; not from submission, which even at its purest, in the "Naked I came . . ." of the prologue [1:21], is a gesture in a power transaction, between slave and master or defeated and conqueror, and is always a mode of spiritual depression. Surrender, on the contrary, means the wholehearted giving-up of oneself. It is both the ultimate generosity and the ultimate poverty, because in it the giver becomes the gift. When Job says, "I had heard of you with my ears; / but now my eyes have seen you," he is no longer a servant, who fears god and avoids evil. He has faced evil, has looked straight into its face and through it, into a vast wonder and love. . . . Job's comfort at the end is in his mortality. The physical body is acknowledged as dust, the personal drama as delusion. . . . He feels he has woken up from a dream. That sense, of actually seeing the beloved reality he has only heard of before, is what makes his emotion at the end so convincing. He has let go of everything, and surrendered into the light" (xxv-xxviii).