

For those who like the musical ideals of the Psalter, the Editor's work on "The Psalms in Music" is recommended as a very basic thing. A tape is available in connexion with the ministry of the Theological Institute of June, 1988 and the notes that accompany this may show up in the annual sale of the Taylor Press. As Mr. Putnam has indicated, there is more work on the Psalter than practically any other part of Scripture. Many titles are given for individual psalms as well. Keller's A SHEPHERD LOOKS AT THE TWENTY THIRD PSALM is hard to beat, I think, in terms of an interesting and practical treatment of that work.

2. A Survey Study of the Book of Job ("God's Patience")

a. An overview:

Job, like the books from Joshua through II Kings, is an anonymous composition. Although one Jewish tradition assigns it to Moses, the earliest date accepted by scholars today is generally in the time of Solomon (the tenth century BC). Many writers, however, date it much later (see our notes on the archaeology later in this section).

A problem in dating either the events or compilation of Job is the book's lack of any historical background. The author may have intentionally avoided cultural allusions hoping the book's themes would be more widely accepted. Or, this lack of historical or cultural background may reflect the patriarchal age. Arguments used to support this position include Job's great age (42:16), his position as the priest of his family (as was Abraham), the lack of any mention or allusion of such important aspects of Israelite religion as the exodus from Egypt, the law and covenant at Sinai, and the tabernacle or temple. Presently, however, we cannot be certain of the date of composition, the author, or the location of the book's events.

It has been suggested that various sections of Job were inserted into the rest of the book at a later time (especially the speeches of Elihu and the poem on wisdom, Job 28). It has also been suggested that the end of the debate between Job and the friends has been hopelessly confused, thereby causing Bildad's third speech to be shortened and Zophar's to be lost (or misassigned to Job). There is, however, little or no consensus concerning either the scope of these passages or the reasons for such changes having arisen. It seems these suggestions are based mainly on the "need" for balance felt by modern scholars--that there be three rounds of four speakers each.

Another proposal which has been suggested is that the original book of Job contained only the prose sections (1:1-2:13; 42:7-17) and that the poetic dialogue contained in the rest of the book was a later addition. The major problem with this approach is that the dialogue is unintelligible without the prologue and epilogue, and they are certainly incomplete without the book's great central section. In light of the many linguistic and interpretive difficulties of Job, these attempts are understandable, but they do not seem to be the best explanation of the facts. Job was written as a unity by a Hebrew author at some point before the exile, probably during the time of Solomon, although as noted, we cannot be sure.

Job contains mostly poetry: only 1:1-2:13; 32:1-6; 42:7-17 and scattered introductory phrases (such as, "Job continued his discourse...", 27:1) are in prose.