



William Blake, Job's Evil Dream (Job 7:14), 1825

Session 7: April 1: Job; Daniel

Assignment:

Kugel, p. 636-643 (Job and Post-exilic Wisdom)

Notes on Job (below)

Job 1-2; 42:7-17 (prose envelope)

Job 3-11 (first round)

Job 31 (assertion of innocence)

Job 38-42:6 (speech from the whirlwind)

Daniel 3 (the fiery furnace)

Daniel 6:11-29 (the lion's den)

Ehrman, ch. 7, p. 103-123 (sects; resistance; apocalypticism)

Isaiah ch 24-27 ("Isaiah apocalypse")

Daniel 7 (One like a human being)

Daniel 12 (explicit description of resurrection)

4 Ezra 13 [[link](#)]

The War Scroll [[link](#)]

Optional Reading:

Kugel, p. 645-661 (Daniel the Interpreter) *This chapter summarizes a lot of important history but contains only a brief consideration of Daniel.*

Notes on Job

Before you tackle the text itself, you need to know a few things not found in Kugel:

1. Job is the work of two authors. The prose “envelope” tells the story of a righteous man who suffers, but never complains. The poetic center (the dialogues) tells of a Job who complains loudly that he is innocent, and that the wisdom notion that if you’re suffering then you must have done something wrong is not in his case true.
2. The canonical text of Job has been seriously mangled in transmission. Note that 4:12-21 are the words of Job and should come after 3:26. The final round of the three dialogues is missing speeches. The contribution of Elihu is a later interpolation. When the prose envelope resumes, God is angry about something the three friends have said but that incident has been omitted.
3. Because the text has been so corrupted, and because it contains so many loan words from languages other than Hebrew, Job is impossible to translate intelligently. Note the large number of footnotes reading “Meaning of Heb is uncertain.” Job is also very difficult to annotate.
4. We will focus on the question: What ultimate message is the author of the poetic center trying to convey? Which leads to the subsidiary questions: What is Job asking of God? What is God’s reply?
5. The poetic center consists of three rounds of dialogue between Job and his friends, the speeches of Elihu, the speech of God from the whirlwind, and Job’s reaction. Because this text is extremely difficult, I’ve assigned only the initial round of dialogue and omitted the final two and Elihu. You’ll understand the basic stance of Job’s friends from what you’ll read. You’ll further understand that prior to God’s speech Job is begging to be put on trial, to be shown what it was that he did to deserve to suffer as he has.
6. You will notice that at the end of the prose envelope story, Job has again seven sons and three (very beautiful!) daughters. But, of course, they are not his original children. You have to conclude that, in Uz in those days, children were fungible.

ha-satan in Job

I have repeatedly asserted that the ha-satan character in Job, often described by his divine function as “the Accuser”, is not the personification of evil known in later times as Satan or the Devil. Based on the text of Job 1-2, how would you argue that my assertion is correct.?

Jewish Apocalypticism (Ehrman, *The Bible*, p. 208)

Although there were many individual expressions of Jewish apocalypticism, we can distill four fundamental elements from them.

First, the cosmos contains not just one force which was responsible for both the good and bad things that happened to Israel, as previously believed, but it also contained a second independent and antagonistic force of evil, personified as Satan or the Devil. Just as YHWH had his angels, the Devil had his demons, and they competed to control the events of history. Sin and death are evidence of the triumph of the forces of evil over the forces of good. Because of the persecutions and martyrdoms of many completely observant Jews in the early second century, apocalypticists concluded that for some unexplained reason, YHWH had yielded his control of history to the forces of evil. Nonetheless, they firmly believed that YHWH was the stronger force and would prevail in the end.

Second, there is little that one can do to avoid the suffering that righteous Jews are experiencing. In fact, things will get worse until the day of judgment.

Third, a vindication is coming. At that time every evil thing will be destroyed in YHWH’s triumph and righteous people, both living and dead, will receive the reward that was denied to them until now. And the wicked will finally receive their punishment.

Finally, that vindication will occur soon.

“Isaiah Apocalypse” (or Isaiah’s Eschatological Prophecy)

These four chapters of First Isaiah are clearly a later (probably post-exilic) interpolation and not likely to be connected with the eighth-century prophet. For our purposes, the issues are: 1) whether they are an apocalypse as defined by Ehrman, 2) if not, whether they are an eschatological prophecy about the end-times, and 3) whether the prophecy includes an explicit prediction of resurrection.

Jewish eschatology consists of a set of ideas concerned with the “end of days” including the ingathering of the diaspora, the conversion of the nations, and the coming of the Messiah (a human leader from the line of David) leading to an age of justice and peace.

Prior to the exile, eschatological prophecies described a coming event when YHWH would smite the wicked idolaters amid great physical upheaval. For example, Zephaniah declared (Zeph 1:17-18): “Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the Lord. In the fire of his jealous wrath, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full, yea, sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.”

By the time of late-exilic Second Isaiah (c. 550), the prophecy became that Judah would be restored to a “new creation” by the “suffering servant” (who personifies Israel) who establishes peace and brings salvation to the world. As in Malachi, the end of days would contain the punishment of those who had not been righteous: “All the arrogant and all the doers of evil shall be straw, and the day that is coming—said the LORD of Hosts—shall burn them to ashes.”

Finally, from the late Persian period on, the idea of a coming Messiah to rule over Israel began to gain more traction.

As for the issue of resurrection in Isaiah 26, compare “The dead do not live; shades do not rise—because you have punished and destroyed them and wiped out all memory of them” (26:14) with “Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy. For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth will give birth to those long dead.” (26:19) Is this analogous to Ezekiel’s dry bones coming to life (a metaphor for the renewal of Israel) or should it be taken more literally (that a bodily resurrection of the righteous will occur)? If the latter, why does it not describe the circumstances of the risen?