

Structure of the Book of Job

The Book of Job: Translation, Introduction, and Notes
by Raymond P. Scheindlin.

Broad structure.

- I. Prose narrative (chaps. 1–2). The story of Job’s misfortunes.
- II. Dialogue in poetry (3:1 – 42:6).
 - A. Dialogue of Job and the three friends (chaps. 3 – 31).
 - B. Speeches of Elihu (chaps. 32 – 37).
 1. Elihu’s intervention is preceded by a short narrative (32:1 – 32:5).
 2. Introductory formulae divide his speech into sections: (a) 32:6 – 33:33, (b) chap. 34, (c) chap. 35, (d) chaps. 36 – 37.
 - C. Dialogue of Yahweh and Job (38:1 – 42:6).
 1. Two speeches by Yahweh (38:2 – 40:2; 40:7 – 41:26).
 2. Two speeches by Job (40:4 – 40:5; 42:2 – 42:6).
- III. Prose narrative (42:7 – 42:17). The story of Job’s restoration.

The dialogue of Job and the three friends in Part II.A goes through three cycles, the first two of which follow a consistent pattern and the third of which has a slightly different structure.

First Cycle (chaps. 3 – 11)

- Job (chap. 3)
 - Eliphaz (chaps. 4 – 5)
- Job (chaps. 6 – 7)
 - Bildad (chap. 8)
- Job (chaps. 9 – 10)
 - Zophar (chap. 11)

Second Cycle (chaps. 12 – 20)

- Job (chaps. 12 – 14)
 - Eliphaz (chap. 15)
- Job (chaps. 16 – 17)
 - Bildad (chap. 18)
- Job (chap. 19)
 - Zophar (chap. 20)

Third Cycle (chaps. 21 – 31)

- Job (chap. 21)
 - Eliphaz (chap. 22)
- Job (chaps. 23 – 24)
 - Bildad (chap. 25)
- Job (chaps. 26 – 27)
 - A Hymn to Wisdom (chap. 28)
- Job (chaps. 29 – 31)