

**Shayla:** When was the book of Job written?

**Meforshim:**

Most scholars seem to think that the events took place around the time of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), approximately 2,200 to 1,800 BC. There are two Uz's who were significant enough to be named in the biblical chronologies. I believe that in a genealogy that often skips multiple generations in order to point out those that are important to the biblical account and/or Hashem's purposes, no name is insignificant. Obviously, the Spirit thought they were important enough to list. If the Spirit thought it important enough to record for all of human history, then it would behoove us to think about these people!

If Aram's son Uz is the one for whom the land in which the story took place is named, then it could not occur before Uz was born.

- [Genesis 10:23 HCSB](#) Aram's sons: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

Even if there were no generations skipped in Genesis 10's genealogy, Uz would have been Noah's great grandson in a day when life spans were considerably longer so we're talking many, many years after Noah.

The second Uz is mentioned in:

- [Genesis 22:21 HCSB](#) Uz his firstborn, his brother Buz, Kemuel the father of Aram,

I believe that it was, in fact, named for him because it would explain the clear allusions to elders and judges in the book of Job. Though the formal structure of the Halakhic legal system is not specifically mentioned, the fundamental principles and culture are clearly present.

Also, Job's high social standing seems to be tied to his wealth, primarily of livestock,<sup>1</sup> which is again a characteristic of the patriarchal period.

Furthermore, the clans, rather than the nation of Israel, seem to be central to the character's mindsets and the names are also typical of the patriarchal period.

This Uz was Abraham's nephew, his brother Nahor's firstborn by Milcah<sup>2</sup> which would mean that the time frame would be around 2,000 to 1,800 BC.

There are two places (besides Job 1:1) that mention the "land of Uz".

- [Jeremiah 25:20 HCSB](#) and all the mixed peoples; all the kings of the land of Uz; all the kings of the land of the Philistines--Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod;
- [Lamentations 4:21 HCSB](#) So rejoice and be glad, Daughter Edom, you resident of the land of Uz! Yet the cup will pass to you as well; you will get drunk and expose yourself.

Because they mention the land of Uz like Job does and because they were post-Exilic in their time-frame, some would argue that the story of Job took place in post-Exilic times.

However, I find that argument to be as fatuous as saying because a book written in 2010 mentions the land of Egypt, Egypt's pharaohs must have lived in modern times! We must take note of the fact that Israel is not mentioned as a nation at all anywhere in the book.

There are no clear references to the Sinaitic law or of Levites (each of which would have been dramatically pertinent to the issues at hand). Job is described as being the spiritual leader and priest of his household, something that was relegated to the Levites in the post-Exodus period. Further, Job's death is described as following:

- [Job 42:16-17 HCSB](#) Job lived 140 years after this and saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. (17) Then Job died, old and full of days.

The age he reached and the "old and full of days" phrase are both typical patriarchal descriptions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Job 1:3; 42:12

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 22:20

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 25:7-8; 35:28-29

However, deciding on when the story took place is a different matter from deciding when it was recorded. The Talmud says, "*Moses wrote his own book and Job*"<sup>4</sup> but we must take into consideration that Baba Bathra is a divergent Jewish opinion. Silver is mentioned as currency<sup>5</sup> but the term used (qesitah) is only used before the monarchy began in Israel.<sup>6</sup> Though (to my mind at least) the story's setting is clearly early, the date of its authorship has never been categorically settled by anyone to my knowledge. Between the Talmudic mention, its very early setting, and the pre-monarchial clue, I have to say that I would lean toward Moses having written the book at the time he wrote the Torah.

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<sup>4</sup> Baba Bathra 14b

<sup>5</sup> Job 28:15

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 33:19; Joshua 24:32