



# Illustrations of The Book of Job: Illustrations by William Blake

William Blake

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Illustrations of the Book of Job

Invented and Engraved by William Blake

William Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job primarily refers to a series of twenty-two engraved prints (published 1826) by Blake illustrating the biblical Book of Job. It also refers to two earlier sets of watercolours by Blake on the same subject (1806 and 1821). The engraved Illustrations are considered to be Blake's greatest masterpieces in the medium of engraving, and were also a rare commercial and critical success for Blake.

As early as 1785 Blake had sketched several ink studies of an illustration to Job. In 1793 Blake engraved a composition based upon these drawings, which he offered for sale in the Prospectus to the Public for twelve shillings. This, alongside an engraving of Ezekiel, are the only extant examples of an intended series of biblical illustrations that were never completed. Blake reworked the Job plate sometime after 1804, but the resulting print was not included in the Illustrations.

Blake's next illustration was the tempera painting Job and his Daughters (1800), commissioned by Thomas Butts. This has similarities to plate 20 of the engraved illustrations, but it is unclear whether the print was directly based upon it.



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