

Job

Job 1:1-42:17

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2019-06-09

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I. Introduction - why study Job?

I knew a pastor who was a modern day Job, but without Job's complaining. He had financial losses, got diabetes, debilitating arthritis, fibromyalgia, chronic insomnia, fatigue, migraine headaches, and other health issues so severe that eventually he had to have a medical early retirement from the ministry. His wife had severe health issues as well. And when things like this happen, it is easy to wonder if you are being disciplined. He had friends who sincerely believed that if he would only follow their advice, everything would get better. This was a man who highly valued the book of Job. It ministered to his spirit as nothing else could. It helped to explain what was going on. And the Lord did bring him through that.

One of you recently told me that Job has been one of your favorite books - for a different reason. It made you realize that God understands the confusion that can come from disagreements.

God knows what he is doing when he puts so many types of books into the Bible. So there are at least two reasons why Job is important to read.

I'll give you a confession. Growing up I really didn't like this book. The three counselors made me irritated and even some of Job's arguments bothered me. I found the arguments to be repetitious and I often secretly wondered why God would include 35 chapters of pointless arguments in the Bible. My problem was that I didn't see the purpose for this book. I liked the first two chapters and the last chapter, but that was about it. I have since learned to love Job and to realize that God has given us the gift of this book for many many reasons.

The three friends' bad use of good theology was an eye opener for what I was doing wrong with my good theology. Like Job's friends, I had been using theology as a club, rather than as an instrument of healing and help. I used theology to win arguments rather than to win people. I was in some ways like Job's three friends. I just didn't recognize it.

And that relates to yet another reason to read this book - it gives fantastic insights for counseling - both what to say and what not to say. Several counseling articles and books have mined Job for information on what

makes for good counseling. Job himself was an amazing counselor in Job 28-29. Elihu is an amazing counselor. God's counsel helps us to be more God-focused in our counseling.

But there are other reasons to read this book. Some people read the book simply out of admiration for its literary features. A friend of mine fell in love with this book when studying its Hebrew at the University of British Columbia. While it has some of the toughest Hebrew in the entire Bible, it apparently has some of the most sublime Hebrew poetry in existence. I wouldn't know, since I don't know my Hebrew well enough to see those kinds of subtle nuances. But those who read Hebrew fluently say that the poetry of the three counselors is good, Job's is much better, and the poetry of God in chapters 38-41 is so amazing that these critics stand in awe and admiration of its literary qualities. Robert Alter says that it is "arguably the greatest achievement of all biblical poetry."¹ But there are literary scholars (both Christian and non-Christian) who have admired Job as being one of the greatest masterpieces of all poetry - which is saying a lot. So that would be yet another reason to read this book - appreciation of literature.

Others read Job because they can identify with Job's grief and they are grateful that God identifies enough with their pain that He would devote an entire book to it. He understands. He sympathizes with what you are going through. Afflictions are not always a call to repentance or self-examination. In fact, I sent you a summary of over 20 reasons the Scripture gives as to why God allows suffering and why we can rest assured that even our sufferings are for our good and for His glory. So it is a book that helps us to approach our sufferings without despair - with hope and faith.

And then lastly, some see this book as a Theodicy, which means a defense of God against accusations that He is unjust, unholy, or unloving. A Theodicy would be a form of apologetics. The problem is that it doesn't give an answer that philosophers would be satisfied with. You could blame the pain on Satan like one book did, but that doesn't help because Job still says that God was sovereign over Satan and could have prevented it; and He chose not to. So the question still comes, "Why?" "Why does God not prevent suffering if He is able to and if He loves us?" And there is no doubt that God loved Job. By the end of the book Job realizes that God not only had a right to bring suffering into his life, but that God was good and wise in doing so. It was part of Job's being ushered into a deeper appreciation of his identification with Christ. All of us are called to pick up our cross and follow

1 Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1985), p. 76.

Jesus. He does not promise a pain free life. In fact, it is God's mercy that enables people to experience any pleasure. Dr. Gerstner wrote a book called *The Problem of Pleasure*. It's his disagreement with C. S. Lewis' book, *The Problem of Pain*. He said that there is no problem of pain. The real problem is pleasure. His thesis was, "How can a holy God who hates sin and who is a just Judge ever give even one moment of pleasure to humans?" It's a different take on Theodicy, and probably a bit closer to the thesis of this book. This book calls us to submit to His sovereign right to do as He wills and to trust that He is good when He brings pain even if we don't understand the reasons why. As Job worded it, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Even though Job questioned God, he fiercely held onto God. That needs to be our attitude. So sometimes pain increases the level of our faith.

II. Key theme: why do the righteous suffer?

Let's look at some of the keys of the book. The key theme of this book is the burning question, "Why do the righteous suffer?" The three counselors wrongly assumed a kind of Karma theology that believes we always get what we deserve. If you are prosperous, you must have done something right. If you are suffering, you must have done something wrong. This book blows up that concept of Karma as a theological heresy. When Maria in the *Sound of Music* film sings, "Somewhere in my youth or childhood, I must have done something good," she is singing heresy. This book opposes that heresy.

III. The key word: tried

The key word is "tried." Satan tries us. God tries us. The three counselors falsely tried Job. Job falsely tried God. Evaluating life through the lens of trials can be a hugely sanctifying process that gives us realism, sympathy, empathy, increases love, purifies us, humbles us, makes us appreciative of God's gifts and His mercies that we might otherwise take for granted. So trials would be the key word.

IV. The key verse: Job 1:21

The key verse (at least in my estimation) is Job 1:21, where Job said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

The previous verse should probably be included, because it shows a balance of both grief and worship. He shaved his head as a sign of deep mourning, so he does not deny his suffering like a Stoic, but he coupled that mourning

with worship and trust in God. And the next verse says, “In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.” God is not opposed to crying out our frustrations, questions, agony, and bewilderment at what He has done. Indeed, He helps us to cry out to Him by including many Psalms of lament and complaint in the Psalter. God is OK with that. Those Psalms help us to resolve our weeping with worship and help us to find joy in God, and that’s why I encourage people to only complain about their pain through the medium of the Psalms. The Psalms give us a balance such as Job had here, and help us to avoid the over-the-top statements that Job began to make later in the book. That is not healthy. But God sympathizes with us enough to let us know that He is OK with our laments. He even praises many of Job’s words later in the book.

V. The key chapter: Job 28-29

Many people say that chapter 28, which presents Job at his best, is the key chapter. It is a masterful description of theology - and especially one central theme - God’s sovereignty. But I have to throw in chapter 29 because it is the description of Job as a model man in his days before this calamity.

VI. The purpose: to reveal that suffering is not a proof of God’s rejection

The purpose of the book is to reveal that suffering is not a proof of God’s rejection and to teach us to respond to suffering by submission to His sovereignty.

VII. The Christ of Job

A. *The burnt offerings (Job 1:5; 42:8)*

Let’s look at the Christ of Job. The Gospel of Jesus is revealed in this book through the burnt offerings that Job offers up for his family in Job 1:5 and the burnt offerings that Job offers up for his three friends who had turned against him in chapter 42:8. Those burnt offerings were known by Old Testament saints to point forward to a coming Messiah who would suffer in their place, give His life for their life, and bring them salvation.

B. *Job’s need of a Mediator (9:2,33; 33:23)*

In chapter 9:2 Job affirms that because of inherent sin, no one can be just in God’s sight on his own. This is why Job cries out for a Mediator in chapter 9:33. He knows he needs one. In chapter 33:23, Elihu, who is the prophetic

messenger of God, shows how no human can adequately function as a mediator. God must provide such.

C. Job’s certain knowledge that God is a Kinsman Redeemer who will resurrect Him (19:25-27)

But Christ is most richly displayed in Job 19:25-27. This is an incredible testimony from the lips of Job, who puts His trust in a future Messiah whom He acknowledges to be both God and a Kinsman Redeemer (the Hebrew word *gaal*). That word indicates that this future redeemer will be both God and Man, will conquer death, will raise Job to new life, and Job expresses his unreserved trust in this future Messiah, Jesus. Because I have preached in depth on those verses in the past, I will just read them for now. But what a glorious affirmation of faith this is. Job 19:25-27.

25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; 26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, 27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

VIII. The structure of the book

I have given you a chart that dissects the book into its component parts. You can use it sort of like a road map to make a bit more sense out of the book. And I will refer you to that chart from time to time as we go through the text. Most of the book is poetry, but the prose sections are very important as each prose section gives us God’s perspective on what is happening.

Graphical Outline of Job
By Phillip Kayser

| Chapter | 1-2 | 3 | 4-14 | 15-21 | 22-26 | 27-31 | 32-37 | 38-41 | 42:1-6 | 42:7-17 | |
|-------------|---|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| Style | Prose | Poetry | | | | | P | Poetry | Prose | | |
| Subject | Historical | Theological Wrestling with the Problem of Pain | | | | | Correction via Revelation | | Confession | Historical | |
| Persons | Job, Yehowah, Satan | Job | Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar | Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar | Job, Eliphaz, Bildad | Job | The Prophet Elihu | Yehowah | Job | Yehowah, Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar | |
| Division | Prologue Rich blessings of God removed | Lament | 1 st Debate Cycle | 2 nd Debate Cycle | 3 rd Debate Cycle | Job’s wisdom & Lament | Prophetic introduction to God’s viewpoint | God brings correction to Job | Job’s confession | Epilogue Intercession & rich blessings of God added | |
| Focus | Earth & Heaven | Eyes on self | Eyes on the human situation | | | Eyes on self & God | Eyes on God | Eyes on God | Eyes on God | Heaven & Earth | |
| Key Phrases | “Have you considered My servant Job?” (1:8) | “Job... cursed the day of his birth” (3:1) | “Then _____ answered and said.” | | | “Oh that I were as in months past” (29:2) | “God does great things which we cannot comprehend.” (37:5) | “Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.” (41:11) | “Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” (42:6) | “Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning” (42:12) | |

IX. Overview of the book

Let's dive into verse 1 of chapter 1. "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job." This lets us know that Job is not fiction; it is history. It's not a fairy tale. It is not made up. It all happened.

Commentaries have come up with all kinds of conjectures of who this man was and where this land was. But if we allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, it is almost certain that Uz was in the region of Edom. We see this from Lamentations 4:21 and a number of other Scriptures. If you want to dig into this in more detail, James Jordan wrote two essays that identified Uz and Job.² And there are commentaries that have done the same. Let me just give two proofs.

First, this is oldest viewpoint out there. In the third century BC, the Jews who translated the Old Testament into Greek added a footnote to Job that explained that Uz was on the borders of Idumea and Arabia (near where Moses lived for forty years), and this Job is the Jobab mentioned in Genesis 36:33.³ That means that almost 300 years before the time of Christ, Hebrew scholars believed Uz was in Edom and that Job was an Edomite king. This is what I believe, and what many respected scholars believe.

And their view makes sense since Scripture not only associates Job with the Edomites, but also the counselors. Eliphaz the Temanite is mentioned in Genesis 36:15 as being a chief of Edom, and since he was a Temanite, and since Jeremiah 49:7-8 associates Teman as being part of Edom, Eliphaz was clearly a lower magistrate within the kingdom of Edom. Bildad the Shuahite is a descendant of Shuah, the son of Abraham by Keturah. And that explains why he has the true faith. Abraham sent him eastward (Gen. 25:2), and Dhorme shows that it was in the same vicinity as Edom later possessed. So those two people-groups merged into one nation. Interestingly, the brother of Shuah was Midian, the father of the people who took Moses in - also from the same region. If you've ever wondered why there was true faith beyond

2 Essay 1 is at <http://www.biblicalthorizons.com/biblical-horizons/130/> Essay 2 is at <http://www.biblicalthorizons.com/biblical-horizons/no-131-was-job-an-edomite-king-part-2/>

3 The whole text is as follows: "And it is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up. This man is described in the Syriac book as living in the land of Ausis, on the borders of Idumea and Arabia: and his name before was Jobab; and having taken an Arabian wife, he begot a son whose name was Ennon. And he himself was the son of his father Zare, one of the sons of Esau, and of his mother Bosorrha, so that he was the fifth from Abraam. And these were the kings who reigned in Edom, which country he also ruled over: first, Balac, the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dennaba: but after Balac, Jobab, who is called Job, and after him Asom, who was governor out of the country of Thaeman: and after him Adad, the son of Barad, who destroyed Madiam in the plain of Moab; and the name of his city was Gethaim. And his friends who came to him were Eliphaz, of the children of Esau, king of the Thaemanites, Baldad son of the Sauchaeans, Sophar king of the Minaeans."

the people of Israel, these are the kinds of hints that explain why. All we know about Zophar is that he lived in the same general areas as the other two. Elihu is said to be a Buzite, and Buz was clearly identified by Scripture as being in Edom (Jer. 25:23 with 49:7-8).

The conclusion that we can derive from these and numerous other Scriptural facts is that Job would have been a ruler of Edom somewhere around the time that Moses lived in the same general area, with his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. This also makes sense of the Hebrew tradition that Moses wrote the book of Job. He may have been intimately familiar with this story. His father-in-law May have had access to the court documents. I won't be dogmatic on the authorship of Job, with some saying it is Solomon, others Hezekiah, and others one of the other prophets. Those are all guesses. But I see no reason whatsoever to question the ancient Jewish view that it was Moses who wrote Job. And I have decent arguments against every other theory.

I won't get into all the specifics (and believe me, there are a lot of specifics pointing to Edom), but by comparing Scripture to Scripture we realize that Job was the King of Edom, and the three counselors were lesser magistrates under Job who were seeking to get Job to confess to flagrant sin so that Eliphaz (who was obviously the leader of the three) could take Job's place. If you see this as an attempted coup with many witnesses, and if you see the lengthy debates as an intense legal effort to oust Job and Job's intense refutation of their attacks as being a legal defense, everything comes into brilliant focus and the purpose of including 35 chapters of back and forth dialogue becomes very clear. The whole book is full of references to court language. This is not a trivial private debate. The consequences of the sins that the counselors are accusing him of are huge (loss of kingship or perhaps execution), and the need for a vigorous defense on Job's part is huge. Job's job is at stake and perhaps even his life. Job is not just fighting for his integrity; he is fighting a serious legal challenge for his position. More on that later.

Back to verse 1: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil." It's not just Israelites who had the true faith in the days of Moses. Moses' own father-in-law was a priest to Yehowah in Midian and was obviously a true believer. That means there were many true believers outside of Israel. And it makes sense: If Shem (the son of Noah) was still alive when Abraham rescued Lot (which he was), then there were true believers descended from Shem, Ham, and Japeth in many parts of the

world. Though God had a special purpose for Israel, this book shows us that God's true faith encompassed Gentiles.

But verse 1 says of Job that he was a man who "was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil." This should be something that all of us aspire to. It is not saying that Job was without any heart-sin or that he was absolutely perfect. Later in the book we will see that he does have sins of the heart, and Job acknowledges that absolutely no one is sinless. But he was blameless when it came to his conduct. There was absolutely nothing he could be impeached over.

Keep in mind that exactly the same words are used as one of the prerequisites to being an elder or deacon. Titus 1:6 says, "a bishop must be blameless." It doesn't mean sinless; it means blameless. 1 Timothy 3:2 says of deacon candidates, "But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless." To be blameless and upright points to a high degree of sanctification that keeps a person from outwardly observable sins that the world can accuse you of.

Of course, that is the whole point of the legal challenges in chapters 4-35. His friends claim that these calamities could not have possibly happened unless Job was guilty of adultery, murder, oppression, or some other heinous evil. Initially they appear to be comforters, trying to get him to 'fess up so that God will relent. But it becomes painfully obvious as the book progresses that they plan to unseat him if he does 'fess up. And we will get to that in a bit.

But the text goes on to say that he was the wealthiest and most powerful man of the countries east of Canaan. Wealth and holiness can obviously coincide, and Abraham would be another example of that. God had blessed this man enormously. There is nothing wrong with wealth. He was blessed with wealth in the beginning of the book and he is blessed with wealth once again at the end of the book. When we are godly stewards, God can trust us with enormous wealth. But wealth would be a curse if we did not have steward hearts.

Job 1:4-5 says that he had regular family devotions and regularly prayed for his seven sons and three daughters. He applied the Gospel (symbolized by the burnt offerings) on a daily basis to his children - as we all should. Chapter 29 will actually give a lot more detail of what a wonderful family man Job was. And he was a man devoted to mercy ministries. You can see in verses 4-5 that he even prays against any secret sins of the heart in his children. This man is interested in deep-seated holiness, not just an outward

conformity.

But suddenly in verse 6 we have a switch of vantage point, and are taken to the heavenly court. And the whole book is filled with court language. There is a godly court in heaven and an ungodly court scene on earth. Verse 6:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

The sons of God is a reference to unfallen holy angels. They present themselves for a meeting before the throne of God. Strangely, Satan is allowed to be there. The word "Satan" means "accuser" and can refer to an accusing prosecutor in a court or simply an adversary. But since this is a court room, most commentaries see him as bringing legal accusations against Job. The book of Revelation explains that in the Old Covenant, Satan was not cast out of heaven. Heaven was marred with the presence of the accuser of the brethren. And that is precisely what he intends to do this time - to accuse one of the brethren - just as he stood at the right hand of Joshua the high priest to accuse him in Zechariah 3. He goes after leaders. The text continues:

And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."

Peter alludes to this behavior of Satan and describes it as Satan walking about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But God is fond of his servant Job. He has protected Job from Satan up to this point. Job is one of the trophies of His grace. He is proud of His son. Here is a man whom Satan has been utterly unable to make fall. He says to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

Keep this in mind when you are tempted to criticize Job later. God says that there was no one else like him. And at the end of this book God tells the three friends, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has." You may be a bit confused at this point as to how Job spoke well of God, given Job's complaints, but God says Job spoke well of Him. And listen to God's evaluation of Job in Ezekiel 14:14. He lists Job as one of the three men closest to His heart in all of human history. He says to apostate Israel, "Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness," says the Lord GOD." So he was indeed a righteous man. Satan responds,

Job 1:9 ... "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But now, stretch out

Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!” 12 And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

And every painful thing that happens in the next 34 chapters happens as a direct result of Satan going out and trying to get Job to curse God. We will see evidences that Job spoke through his wife and spoke through the three counselors, even though those counselors were believers. And we will get to that in a bit.

Many people focus on the following chapters and wonder how a righteous man can suffer every curse of Deuteronomy 28-29 and not have the blessings of the same chapters. But that is to miss the point that God had previously built a hedge around Job and his household that kept Satan from being able to get at him. The vast bulk of Job’s life was not suffering. The vast bulk of Job’s life was the blessings of Deuteronomy 28. He had a lovely and very close-knit family, was incredibly wealthy, had the joy of the Lord, experienced more of the comforts of life than most people, had success in his career, and was super-blessed in other areas. This deprivation was a short-term testing that is not at all inconsistent with God’s general patterns of Deuteronomy 28 blessings and curses. So don’t think that the lesson God wants for you from the book of Job is that you are going to suffer your whole life. Most of Job’s life teaches that God loves to build hedges of safety around those who love Him and pursue Him with their whole hearts. Does He test us occasionally? Yes. But the testings are just that - testings. They are not the pattern of life. And when we get those testings, it is perfectly appropriate to pray against demonic attack. Job likely should have done that.

On the other hand, we should not be surprised by occasional trials. Jesus did after all say that no one can be His disciple unless they are willing to pick up their cross and follow Him. And this book is a call to be willing to suffer for Christ’s sake and to glorify God by faith as you do so. But overall, there is no contradiction between Deuteronomy 28 and Job’s life. He was blessed.

But that now changes. I’ll quickly read the rest of chapters 1-2 to set the context:

Job 1:13 Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house; 14 and a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 when the Sabeans raided them and took them away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

Job 1:16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone

have escaped to tell you!”

Job 1:17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

Job 1:18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, 19 and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! There is one calamity after another. Satan has been extremely busy, and in one day has taken away almost everything that Job had been blessed with. That shows the incredible power of Satan and his demons. Verse 20.

Job 1:20 Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

Job 1:22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

Well, Satan doesn’t give up. Look at chapter 2.

Job 2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?”

Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.”

Job 2:3 Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.”

Job 2:4 So Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!”

Job 2:6 And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.”

Notice that Satan is on a chain. He can only go so far as God permits him to go. Don’t ever think that life is out of control. Even Satan cannot thwart God’s sovereignty. Yes, Satan is the giver of pain, but even that is under God’s sovereign hand. Verse 7.

Job 2:7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Notice that Satan does indeed have the power to inflict disease. Ultimately God is sovereign over even that, but Satan is often the instrument of disease. This is why it is important to not only confess your sins before you get prayed for (that is removing potential legal ground from demons), but to pray against Satan and any possible demonic attack when you are sick. And pray for healing. In any case, Satan struck him with painful boils all over his body. Verse 8:

8 And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes.

Job 2:9 Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!”

Commentators point out that the words of his wife are almost word-for-word what Satan wanted Job to do. The verbiage is too precise to be coincidental. And commentators suggest that Satan was using Job’s wife as a mouthpiece to tempt Job. I believe that is true. If Satan could speak through Peter to tempt Jesus not to go to the cross, he can use us if we are not careful.

And don’t be too hard on Job’s wife. She too has lost absolutely everything. She too has been brought to the edge of despair. But she gives in to despair much sooner than Job did. Job gave in about seven days later. In any case, Satan’s desperate desires to get Job to curse come from her mouth. So she becomes yet another trial of Satan. Picking up at verse 10:

Job 2:10 But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Job 2:11 Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him. 12 And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. 13 So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.

There are three words in the Hebrew that can be taken in a positive or a negative way. All three are translated in the positive here in the NKJV, but there are commentaries who point out that the Hebrew is ambiguous on purpose. Let me give you the ambiguities - and those ambiguities won’t be resolved until you get later into the book.

The first word (ya-ad - יאד) that is translated as “had made an appointment” can refer to an innocent meeting or it can refer to a conspiracy. One commentator said,

This word “make an appointment together” can mean “betroth” or “agree together” or “gather together” ... It can also refer to conspiracies. After Israel had refused to enter the Promised Land, Yahweh called this disobedience treason and a mutiny, and referred to how Israel had gathered together against him (Num. 14:35). Likewise, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram organize a conspiracy against Moses, and he says that they have “gathered together” against the Lord (Num. 16:11). In Nehemiah, Sanballat and Geshem send word to Nehemiah to meet together with them, but they along with a hired hit man were plotting evil against him (Neh. 6:2, 10). The word is at the very least ambiguous, but given what comes later, there is no doubt that we ought to view this “appointment” as something very similar to a conspiracy. Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad are a new Korah,

Dathan, and Abiram. By the end of the story, Yahweh's own word condemns the three friends. They did not speak right concerning God, and their offense is not out of ignorance or by accident. The Lord will require a costly sacrifice and prayers on their behalf before they are forgiven and spared the punishment they deserve (42:7–8).

The next ambiguous word (nude - נָדַד) is literally to shake or wag the head. What's ambiguous about that? Well, you can shake the head out of sympathy or you can shake or wag your head out of disapproval and accusation. They will initially pretend to shake the head in comfort, but will end up shaking the head in accusation. They are convinced that God has punished him for a heinous sin, and for the good of the kingdom he needs to step down. It doesn't mean that they don't sympathize with him in some ways. They probably do. But they have gathered to take action for the good of the kingdom. They no doubt believe that this is a lawful interposition.

The third word (nacham נָחַם) can mean to comfort, to repent (Numb. 23:19) or can have a more sinister meaning of to plot revenge (Ezek. 5:13) or get rid of something (Is. 1:24). For example, in Genesis 27:42 Rebekah warned Jacob, "Esau comforts himself concerning you by intending to kill you." Ezekiel 5:13 says, "I will be avenged..." That is the same word. Job uses the same word in chapter 42:6 when he says, "Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." So they could be comforting him, getting him to repent, or plotting against him. The Hebrew word is ambiguous. Only context can tell.

Concerning these three ambiguous terms, Toby Sumpter, in his new commentary, shows how they give an illusion of mourning, throwing dust on their heads, and of comforting Job, because to do anything less might appear to the witnesses who have been summoned as a revolutionary act. He has after all been a well-loved leader. So their tactics are more subtle. While trying to console Job, they hope to extract a confession of sin from Job that might allow them to legitimately execute him or impeach him. Job certainly later accuses them of trying to do exactly that. He even accuses them of trying to kill him.

And by the way, this wasn't simply an outdoor conversation of five people. It might have started that way, but as the days progress, others are involved and it becomes more and more obvious that an attempt to get Job to step down from office is underway. Chapter 10:17 speaks of witnesses. In Job 30:1 Job speaks of others in the room or in the area who mock at him, and verse 9 speaks of those who are taunting him. In verse 10 he says that most of them now "abhor me, they keep far from me," but in the next verse he mentions at least some who "do not hesitate to spit in my face" (v. 10). If

people are now bold enough to spit in Job's face, commentators point out that the tide has turned against Job and people are joining in the accusations - namely, that the disasters that have befallen the nation are his fault. In verse 12 he says, "At my right hand the rabble arises; they push away my feet." They are getting unruly and abusive. By chapter 30, the crowd is beginning to be convinced that Job is as guilty as the friends have said he is. They are turning on him.

Twice the book speaks of his feet being in stocks, or as some translate it, in shackles (Job 13:27; 22:11). Whether this happens later in order to keep Job from leaving, or whether it is purely metaphorical, we don't know. The first time is in chapter 13. People have puzzled over what that means exactly, but as Hartley points out, "it is clear that Job is complaining about his lack of freedom to move about in order to prepare his defense."⁴ Or as Hooks words it, "This conjures up the image of a prisoner closely watched and strictly confined."⁵ Granted, most have taken this as purely metaphorical. But commentators like Rene Girard disagree and they point out that Job was in extreme danger. With the king defenseless and the Sabean and Chaldean hordes creating havoc within the nation, rulers and citizens alike are fearful that the kingdom is coming apart at the seams, and they want someone to do something about it. Here's a quote from another recent commentary who takes the same approach:

Job says that they are being motivated by fear (6:21). What are they afraid of? Consider again the context. If Job is a Solomon, the head of the greatest kingdom of the east in his day, then the series of calamities that have struck Job have struck at the political, economic, and social order of their world. It is easy to imagine numerous fears rising like columns of smoke over the devastated house of Job. Are there other political or military enemies that will seize this opportunity to strike the region in its weakness? We do not even need to imagine this. The Sabeans and the Chaldeans have just lead raids on the flocks of Job, leaving many men dead (1:15, 17). The crash of Job's house was likely to cause significant repercussions in the rest of his kingdom and the surrounding regions. The friends may have feared this, and it may be that the repercussions were already being felt. René Girard suggests that the entire community was in the process of turning into something like an angry lynch mob. Were there riots and protests in the streets? In one of his later speeches, Job says that he has become detested by everyone in his kingdom (19:13–19). Presumably, the friends are afraid for the kingdom. If they are lesser magistrates from the surrounding regions, and they see the king suddenly leveled by the hand of God, maybe they have gathered together to contain the political fallout. "How can we spin this in the press to put the people at ease?" Whether they want the kingdom for themselves, or whether they are merely like Pilate and afraid of the crowds, willing to

4 John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 229.

5 Stephen M. Hooks, *Job*, *The College Press NIV Commentary* (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub., 2006), 193.

do whatever is expedient...⁶

So initially it looks like they are here to comfort. But with all the witnesses they have brought, and with the relentless accusations of oppression, stealing from widows, murder, adultery, and other crimes, it becomes evident that they never had an intention of comforting Job. Right from the get-go they were trying to get him to confess to something that will enable Eliphaz (the leader of the trio) to take over the reigns of government. They may have been perfectly sincere in this effort, believing their own arguments that it is impossible for an innocent man to suffer as Job has suffered, so he is obviously guilty of huge sin. But whether sincere or not, Sumpter argues that this is an impeachment. He says,

Job warns the friends that he is like Abel. If they strike him down, his blood will cry out. Of course, they would not just knock him off in a back alley. They would bring witnesses, pass a sentence, and have a public execution. It would all be very judicial and official, with paperwork and signed affidavits. Job warns them that even that pseudo-justice can be undone. This is the other side of wisdom; wisdom must be able to see through the veneers of pseudo-justice...⁷

And even the poetic nature of chapters 3-35 may indicate that all of them are writing these things down in the formal language of an ancient court. Once one speech has been formally written out, Job has time to formally write out his defense. And then back and forth they go. I think the formal poetry may have been the actual way that the four presented their arguments in this court. They wrote them down as formal evidence.

There are a number of reasons why many commentators believe that Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are also mouthpieces for Satan. I'll just give you a couple of their reasons.

First, Eliphaz admits that he got his ideas from a very scary and dark “spirit” that was so sinister, it made his hair stand on end. Take a look for example at the very first speech of Eliphaz in chapter 4. In verses 12-16 he has an experience with a spirit that gives him his message to give to Job. Since God later said that it was a bad message, we can assume that this message came from a demonic spirit - perhaps from Satan himself. Verse 12:

12 “Now a word was secretly brought to me, And my ear received a whisper of it. 13 In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, When deep sleep falls on men, 14 Fear came upon me, and trembling, Which made all my bones shake. 15 Then a spirit passed before my face; The hair on my body stood up. 16 It stood still, But I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; There was silence; Then I heard a voice saying: And then comes a message that has enough truth in it to be convincing, yet enough error to help Eliphaz to use it to oppose Job falsely. This amounts to

6 Sumpter, Toby J.. Job Through New Eyes: A Son for Glory . Athanasius Press. Kindle Edition.

7 Sumpter, Toby J.. Job Through New Eyes: A Son for Glory . Athanasius Press. Kindle Edition.

a false prophecy. All through history demons have used prophetic visions to confuse people. And Satan has the Bible memorized. He knows how to quote it and how to mix truth with error in order to deceive. Roy Zuck comments,

For three reasons it is doubtful that the words were a revelation from God: (a) “a word” (v. 12), not “a word of the LORD,” came to Eliphaz; (b) the word came “secretly” (i.e., in an elusive manner, v. 12); and (c) the message seemed to picture God as unconcerned about man (vv. 17–21).⁸

And I would add that it is “a spirit,” not “the Spirit.” And it was a dark and sinister spirit.

Moving on, where Eliphaz appeals to prophecy and personal experience, Bildad appeals to tradition and the wisdom of the ancients. Zophar argues from logic, conscience, and private judgment. But all agree that this affliction came because of some serious sin in Job’s life. How serious?

I can’t cover every sin that they accuse Job and his household of, but it starts off generic and as they get more and more frustrated with his failure to confess to something, they start throwing out very specific accusations. We will start with the generic accusations. In chapter 8:4 Bildad insists that Job’s children had to have died because of some transgression of the law. In 11:11 Zophar accuses Job of lying and in verse 14 of hiding wickedness inside his tent. Maybe that’s why nobody knows about it - you hid your sins inside your tent. In chapter 18 Bildad goes on and on about God’s vengeance on Job’s wickedness, but he doesn’t specify what sins. But by the third round of speeches, the accusations fly left and right, and they accuse him of things that we know from chapter 29 were the exact opposite of his lifestyle before the world. So just because you are blameless does not mean people won’t try to falsely blame you. Eliphaz says in chapter 22:5 and following,

5 Is not your wickedness great, And your iniquity without end? 6 For you have taken pledges from your brother for no reason, And stripped the naked of their clothing. 7 You have not given the weary water to drink, And you have withheld bread from the hungry. 8 But the mighty man possessed the land, And the honorable man dwelt in it. 9 You have sent widows away empty, And the strength of the fatherless was crushed. 10 Therefore snares are all around you, And sudden fear troubles you, 11 Or darkness so that you cannot see; And an abundance of water covers you.

Verse 15:

15 Will you keep to the old way Which wicked men have trod, 16 Who were cut down before their time, Whose foundations were swept away by a flood? 17 They said to God, “Depart from us! What can the Almighty do to them?”

It is astonishing that Eliphaz could with a straight face accuse Job of these

⁸ Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 726.

things when witnesses galore could have testified to the opposite. But these speeches have forced Job to focus more and more upon the good that God had done to him. The more he has to defend himself, the more he realizes that God really had been good to him. If you look at the chart, the second to last row shows the focus of each section. In chapters 1-2 there is a focus on earth and heaven. In Job's first lament there is a focus of his eyes upon himself and his misery. In chapters 4-26 there is a focus upon the human situation. But in chapters 27-31 Job begins to gain more and more of a vision for what good God has done in the past and even what good He continues to do in the present. He still struggles back and forth, and he still expresses some confusion, but you begin to see a transition that God is achieving in his focus. It's really cool. As one example, people make chapter 28 to be the key chapter in the whole book - an amazingly God-centered theology of hope. It's as if Job is preaching to himself of the need to shake off his focus on the negative. In chapter 29 he remembers the sweet times that he had with God. In fact, you really need to read chapter 29, because it is a remembrance of the times when God said that Job was the ideal man among all men. If you men want to understand what it means to be a good leader, a good father, a good businessman, a good advocate, Job chapter 29 would be it.

I preached a sermon on that chapter one time that used Job as the model for true manhood - a justice seeker, a mercy giver, a nurturing father, a fearless protector, etc., etc. But in chapter 30, people mock him. So in chapter 31 he documents that he kept pure from sexual sin and even set a guard before his eyes and his mind to not lust after a maid. He documents how he had been innocent of injustice, innocent of trusting his wealth, innocent of being uncaring - that he even cared for the calamities of his enemies. Job ends by pleading to meet with God.

And this is where the mysterious Elihu suddenly appears on the scene. He was not mentioned earlier, though he had obviously been present. But this is the first mention of him. On the focus row of the chart you will see that Elihu clearly sets Job's eyes on God. In chapters 38-41 God sets Job's eyes on God. In 42:1-6 Job repents and fixes His eyes on God, who is the author and finisher of His faith. He finds God to be the solution rather than the problem. And the book ends by reversing the focus of the introduction. The introduction focuses on earth and heaven and the conclusion focuses on heaven and earth.

But there is another feature in the chart that helps us to understand this book. It is the Style row of the chart that gives us a clue on how to interpret the words of Elihu. There is huge controversy as to whether he is a good guy or

a bad guy. Most people only mention the prose in chapters 1-2 and the prose in chapter 42. But there are a few verses of prose at the beginning of chapter 32 that give us God's perspective on Elihu, Job, and the counselors. So there is prose, poetry, prose, poetry, prose. And the reason prose is thrown in at the beginning of chapter 32 is to clue us into the fact that Elihu is a good guy and he is going to be giving God's opinion by way of prophecy, and this will transition smoothly into God Himself speaking directly to Job. Elihu's words and God's Words are very similar. So turn to chapter 32, and let's read the introduction to his speech:

1 So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Notice that this is God's opinion - Job was righteous in his own eyes. His pain had made him more and more self-focused and made his vision of God to be more and more obscured. Verse 2:

2 Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he justified himself rather than God. Notice that it doesn't say that his wrath was aroused because he wrongly thought that Job justified himself rather than God. His wrath was aroused (and rightly aroused) because Job did indeed justify himself rather than God. Verse 3.

3 Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

In other words, they had condemned Job without any provable evidence. They had no answer to Job's evidence, yet they continued to hound Job and they continued to condemn Job. In fact, in desperation, they had finally began wildly throwing all kinds of false accusations against Job. That was not just.

Some people think that Elihu had a false humility, but verse 4 is God's opinion when it says,

4 Now because they were years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job. 5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused. 6 So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said:

And I also want to point out that Elihu does not speak for himself. He calls himself a messenger for God to show man God's uprightness (33:23). In 32:8 he says that the Spirit of the Almighty gives him knowledge. In verses 18-19 the Spirit within him compels him to speak and he cannot hold it in any longer. The word "spirit" there should be capitalized. This is akin to Jeremiah who tried not to prophesy, but it was impossible. God's Word was inside of Jeremiah like a fire and it had to come out. Elihu likens his prophecies to wine that must be vented; it must come out. In verse 22 he says that he is incapable of flattery or his Maker would take him away. In chapter 36:2 he says that he is speaking his words on behalf of God. That's

what a prophet does. In verse 3 he says that his words have been fetched from afar. In other words, he didn't make them up. These are words that came from God. In verse 4 he says that what he is about to share is perfect in knowledge. In other words, it is all inspired inerrant prophecy. He is not giving his own opinion. He is giving God's opinion. He speaks of himself as a mediator.

Hywel Jones, says that he doesn't trust any commentary on Job that sees Elihu as a bad guy. That's probably going a bit too far, but chapter 32 is the first chapter he turns to in all new commentaries, and if they get that wrong, they are probably off kilter elsewhere. Older Reformed commentaries all saw Elihu as a prophetic messenger of God who prepared the way for God Himself to speak. That's why Elihu is never condemned by God. And the relative length of his speech is huge compared to the others.

Elihu in effect quotes Job who wanted God to come down with majesty and speak to him like a man, and then Job would then answer him. And Elihu says, here I am. I am speaking to you through a man. Answer me. This is condescension for God to sit among the ashes with Job via this prophet. True counsel sits where the sufferer sits, but doesn't allow the sufferer to continue to sin in his suffering. He gets him beyond a man-centered perspective and into a God-centered perspective. In 33:12 he says, "Look, in this you are not righteous. I will answer you, for God is greater than man. Why do you contend with Him? For He does not give an accounting of any of His words." So true.

So what is the difference between Elihu's counsel and his friends? Even though there are some similarities (they are after all true believers who have good theology), there are huge differences. All four men had some good theology, but only Elihu's theology is flawless. Let me outline nine ways in which Elihu is quite different from the other three counselors.

- First, the friends say that suffering is always punishment for sin, whereas Elihu says that suffering is sometimes designed to spare us from sin and to cause us to love the Lord even more. Some men see Job 33:17 as being one of the key purposes for God's allowing of a testing - "In order to turn man from his deed, and conceal pride from man." It is easy to do the right thing by God's power and to do it in pride. Job had a high degree of sanctification, being blameless. But God is interested in ever greater holiness of heart. And Job learned humility, as can be seen by both of Job's responses to God and Job's willingness to pray for his persecutors. So Job 33:17 says that removing pride from Job was one of the purposes of this testing.
- Second, the friends said that Job suffered because he had sinned. Elihu says that Job had sinned because of his suffering. Those are two quite different conclusions.

Let me repeat that: the friends said that Job suffered because he had sinned (that this was punishment) whereas Elihu says that Job had sinned because of his suffering. It was not sin that led to his suffering, but he did have some sin in his responses to his suffering.

- Third, the friends said that Job's problem was his lack of integrity. Elihu doesn't deny the right of Job to defend his integrity. He stands with Job on that point. But Elihu says that Job has no right to deny God's integrity. And Job had indeed erred on occasion in doing so.
- Fourth, the friends were reductionistic on the reasons for affliction. They had a false Karma-like kind of theology where you always get back what you deserve. If you do a bad deed, you will get back a bad deed. If you do a good deed, you will get back a good deed. Elihu denies all that, and says that all God's kindnesses to us are a mercy. He also says that God has multiple purposes for afflictions. In 37:13 he says that sometimes God brings affliction for correction, but sometimes He brings it because the land as a whole needs it, and sometimes it is simply a mercy. And compared to hell it is a mercy. And I find it fascinating that he says that He sometimes brings the suffering for the land as a whole. Edom needed these afflictions to sift them and straighten out the land. And you see evidences of this need throughout the book. Anyway, throughout Elihu's speeches he strongly denies the friends' false theology that is akin to karma.
- Fifth, the friends took the doctrine of total depravity too far. The true Biblical view of total depravity is not that man can't get any worse than he is - of course he can. Rather it is that the totality of our being is affected by sin and the totality of our being needs God's grace. But Elihu denies that we should ever describe ourselves as worthless or utterly depraved. Total depravity is different than utter depravity. Bildad said that Job was no better than a maggot and that he was despised by God. But Elihu speaks of God's love, compassion, and mercies. He says, "God is mighty, but despises no one." So again, contrary to the opinion of many, Elihu is quite different in his application of theology than his friends.
- Sixth, the friends thought they had God figured out, but Elihu says, "How great is God - beyond our understanding!" We get into trouble when we try to put God into a box and say what God can and cannot do. Some people even believe that the sovereignty of God is the key word of this book. I haven't put it there since the word doesn't appear one time, but certainly the concept of God's sovereignty is everywhere, so they may be onto something.
- Seventh, Eliphaz used a metaphor of a sick man. Elihu uses the same metaphor in chapter 33 but uses it redemptively. He says, "Then He is gracious to him, and says, 'Deliver him from going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom...'" So Eliphaz uses the metaphor to speak of judgment while Elihu uses it to speak of God's redemptive purposes in Job's life.
- Eighth, just as Ecclesiastes shows that all meaninglessness will be resolved in eternity, Elihu shows how all apparent injustice will be resolved in eternity for the believer. In contrast, the three friends insist on that in time.
- Ninth, he felt sorry for Job having to drink in the scorn of the counselors like water. He did not engage in the same scorn. He disagreed with their attitudes.

And because Elihu is God's spokesman, it makes sense that in chapters 38-

42 God immediately picks up where Elihu left off, and in much the same line of reasoning. God accused Job of being guilty of insubordination and speaking without knowledge. And Job responds with repentance and adoration of God. God's speeches that put Job in his place and that spoke of all that God has done are designed to turn us from feeling sorry for ourselves to worship. Worship is one of the best ways to resolve the overwhelming feelings of injustice. Job had hints of that in his speeches - "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

But I want to read the whole of the last chapter to give a feel for how God resolved all of this.

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the LORD and said: 2 "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. 3 You asked, "Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?" Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, "I will question you, and you shall answer Me." 5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. 6 Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Job does have much to repent of. But now come words that have vexed commentators for a long time. Look at verse 7.

Job 42:7 And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.

Hadn't God just rebuked Job for bad words? Yes He had. And Elihu had brought correction as well. But on the issue that had started the debate - whether Job was being punished for some evil deed that he needed to step down from office over, the three friends had indeed slandered Job and Job was indeed correct that God had not brought these afflictions because of His sin. On the central issue, Job was correct. And he was the first to repent as well. Was there pride that came to the surface? Yes there was, and God dealt with it. And Job came out as gold refined in the furnace. Job had anticipated that all the way back in 23:10 when he said, "When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold." In that, Job was correct.

God continues to speak to the friends in verse 8:

8 Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."

Why the enormously costly sacrifice? Toby Sumpter says that it was because they were leaders of the nation and had led the nation in revolt. He says, These three men are not normal, ordinary citizens, speaking out of ignorance; they are kings or nobles who have been plotting to steal the kingdom from Job. They have to pay; they have to offer a sacrifice suitable for an entire nation. This may also confirm Girard's

suspicions that many people were led astray by the three friends in their conspiracy. This sacrifice is perhaps not only for the three friends but for the nation that has been led into sin with them.⁹

Verse 9:

Job 42:9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD commanded them; for the LORD had accepted Job. 10 And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Notice that the reversal in Job's life did not come until he was willing to forgive his friends and pray for them. Bitterness has a way of robbing us. Forgiveness has a way of enriching us. And specifically praying for blessing to come into the lives of our persecutors is a tough war of love, but it is a war that enables us to win over the devil. Verse 11:

11 Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold.

Job 42:12 Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys.

That's exactly double the number of animals that he had before. What about his children? Well, that is double as well. He still has his previous ten children in paradise, and God blessed him with ten more. We might lose our flocks, but if our children are believers, we will never lose our children.

Verse 13:

13 He also had seven sons and three daughters. 14 And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. 15 In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

Note that this giving of an inheritance to daughters seems to be approved of by the Lord.

Job 42:16 After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. 17 So Job died, old and full of days.

So that is the story of Job. And I want to take about two minutes to list ten more lessons we can learn from this wonderful book.

X. Ten lessons we can learn from Job

A. Bad things happen to good people

First, bad things happen to good people. That is undeniable. And when you are the recipient of those bad things, it can be a comfort to know that you are in good company with Job.

9 Sumpter, Toby J.. Job Through New Eyes: A Son for Glory . Athanasius Press. Kindle Edition.

B. We must never allow suffering to make us lose our hope in God

Second, we must never allow suffering to make us lose our hope in God. Instead, it should drive us to worship even as it did Job in the first chapter.

C. Though our friends may fail us, God never will

Third, though friends may fail us, God never will. God always comes through. He never lets us get more than we can handle. He loves to bless us.

D. Even when God appears silent, His presence is with us

Fourth, even when God appears to be silent, His presence is with us. God is in the midst of the storms.

E. Humility leads to wisdom; pride clouds our vision

Fifth, humility leads to wisdom, while pride clouds our vision. Job finally understood when he gained more humility.

F. God is sovereign over even bad things

Sixth, God is sovereign over even bad things. That brings me supreme confidence that this world is not out of control. It's right where God wants it as this particular moment.

G. Sometimes we sin in the midst of suffering

Seventh, sometimes we sin in the midst of suffering. Knowing that fact helps us to watch out and to be on guard not to fall into sin.

H. Sometimes we sin against our friends and need reconciliation

Eighth, sometimes we sin against our friends and need reconciliation. That certainly happened to the three counselors. They were used by Satan. Job's wife was used by Satan. Even Job was being pushed by Satan. But though he cursed the day of his birth in chapter 3, Satan never got Job to curse God.

I. God loves to bless the upright

Ninth, God loves to bless the upright. Job's life was full of blessing. Claim that for yourself.

J. Repentance and forgiveness delivers us and brings blessing

And finally, it was at the moment of Job's prayer for his persecutors that his situation changed. Repenting of bitterness and granting forgiveness to those who hurt us is often the beginning of incredible blessing that God bestows in our lives. May each of us learn the lessons of Job. Amen.