



**Bible Studies**  
**Wisdom through Suffering**

**12 studies**

**LEADERS NOTES**

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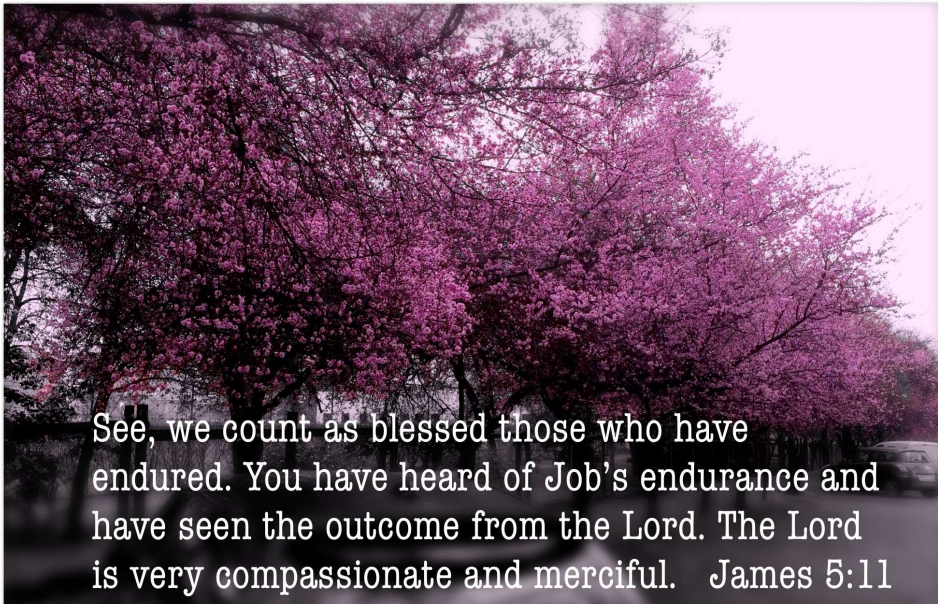
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# Wisdom through suffering

James 1:2-5, 5:7-11; Job 1-2

Study 1

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## Introduction

Often, this life seems extremely painful and unjust, and this may cause us to have doubts about how God manages the world. When we go through hard times or suffering, we find it difficult to make sense of it and this often causes us to question God's sovereignty and His wisdom. The book of Job was written with exactly these doubts and questions in mind. It is God's answer to our questions when things are tough. But the purpose of the book takes us way beyond our understanding of our own circumstances and reveals to us in an extraordinary way, the character of God and His purposes in His world. May you be richly blessed by your study of this book.

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## James 1:2-5, 5:7-11

1) Why does James highlight the patience or perseverance/endurance of Job?  
(See also: John 16:33, Romans 5:3-5, Hebrews 10:32-36)

2) What does the New Testament say about suffering?  
(Matthew 16:21-23, Mark 8:31, Luke 24:26-27, 1 Corinthians 12:26, 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, Philipians 1:29, 3:7-11, Hebrews 2:9-10, 11:32-40, 1 Peter 4:16,19, Revelation 2:10)

## Job 1-2

3) Who is Job and how is he described? (Read also Ezekiel 14:14,20)  
Why is it so important that this is established at the beginning of the book?

4) What is the accuser's role? What is he allowed to do? What is he forbidden from doing?

### Commented [1]:

James wants to highlight the fact that Job perseveres through suffering.

### Commented [2]:

Christ suffered, therefore his followers will also suffer in this life.

Suffering is part of the Christian life, so it should not surprise us when we face suffering in this life.

We are not promised an earthly life free from suffering... rather it is the opposite, Jesus promises us that if we follow Him, we will suffer.

The promise is that our eternal destiny with Christ in the new creation will be free from suffering, not here and now (in the now but not yet stage of God's plan)

### Commented [3]:

He lives in Uz, (an unknown place, most likely outside of Israel). It seems that he doesn't belong to God's people, but he is somehow still a faithful worshiper of God who he somehow knows.

He is blameless (which describes his authenticity rather than meaning that he is without sin)

He is upright

Fears God

And turns away from evil (Job honours God through his words and actions and lives his life turning away from wickedness)

... [1]

### Commented [4]:

It is important that Job's innocence is established at the beginning, that it be known at the start that God considers that Job is good.... This is because of the belief that all suffering is God's judgment because of sin, so it is important that it is clear that Job is not suffering because of something he has done, in fact it is his g... [2]

### Commented [5]:

The Satan, the accuser, the adversary

His role is to accuse!

He goes to and fro over the earth (looking for faithful ones to accuse?)

He is always twisting the truth

... [3]

### Commented [6]:

Only what God permits

He must ask for permission before he can do anything

God tolerates his presence, but this does not mean he enjoys the benefits of being in the presence of God, or the fullness of relationship with Him.

### Commented [7]:

He is unable to do anything beyond what God permits.

God is sovereign over all his creation, even evil beings who oppose Him and his people

He is not equal in power to God

5) What reaction does the accuser assume Job will have when he is tested?

**Commented [8]:**

He believes that if Job suffers he will curse God  
The accuser wants to get at why Job serves and worships God....

God knows that Job loves Him for who he is, not what he can get from him, but the accuser wants to test this before the celestial courtroom and challenges Job's true motives supposing that if God takes away his blessing from Job, there will no longer be any reason that Job would want to continue to serve Him. The accuser is suggesting that Job has hidden motives for serving God (to earn a prosperous and trouble free life)

"The book of Job demonstrates that it is necessary to see publicly that God deserves our worship, and that His value doesn't depend on His benefits."(Christopher Ash)

... [4]

6) Make a list of all the tragedies that occur in Job's life.

**Commented [9]:**

He worships and praises the Lord

"And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

Job 1:21

Job did not sin v.22

7) How does Job respond?

Job 1:20-22

Job 2:10

**Commented [10]:**

Job 2:10

"But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?"

In all this Job did not sin with his lips."

Even so, at the end of chapter 2 we see that Job is alone and broken on a rubbish heap, in immense pain.

8) How might his wife's reaction have affected him?

**Commented [11]:**

He could have agreed with her!

She also has lost everything, it is possible that all she wants is to end of their suffering and thinks that if Job dies (and maybe herself as well) that would be the end of it all.

Job could also have told her that she is foolish, but he only says that she speaks as someone who is foolish... he speaks carefully to her and doesn't judge her heart.

How are we affected we we see someone we love suffering greatly?

... [5]

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9) How does physical suffering affect us differently from other kinds of suffering?

**Commented [12]:**

Physical pain is really hard and wears us out, often it takes away our ability to think and reason and it weakens us. If it keeps up without stopping, it can cause us to become mentally and spiritually depressed.

10) What things in the story of Job point us to Jesus?

**Commented [13]:**

Job is a very great and a very rich man  
Jesus is the King of the universe, everything belongs to Him.

Job loses everything  
Jesus leaves everything and loses everything

They both suffer extremely and unfairly

“Job’s story is extreme, he is a great man who loses everything.... his life foretells and anticipates another man who’s greatness exceeds that of Job, and who’s suffering was much more profound.”(Christopher Ash)

# Wisdom through suffering

## Job 2:11-13 & Job 3

Study 2

### Job 2:11-1

1) Who visits Job? What do they aim to achieve with their visit?

2) How do they react when they see Job? What does this tell us about Job's suffering?

3) What do you think are the characteristics of a good comforter?

#### Commented [14]:

Job's Three Friends  
Eliphaz, Bildad & Zophar

Eliphaz is from Teman\*\*,  
Gen 36:4, 15 also Jeremiah 49:20; Amos 1:12; Obadiah 9.  
\*\*Teman is a place in Edom renowned for its wisdom

Bildad is from Shuah,  
Gen 25:1-6

and Zophar from Naamah.  
Genesis 4:22

We don't really have much information about these friends, and much like Uz, the places they are from are unknown. We can surmise that they are well known in the region and are, like Job, men of wealth and knowledge.

Christopher Ash says:  
"We have here not just three kind and loyal friends but three wise friends who between them represent, as it were, the combined resources of the wisdom of the world."

#### Commented [15]:

Job 2:11  
They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and to comfort him.

#### Commented [16]:

They are appalled... "And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him" (v. 12).

They cry  
They tear their robes in grief  
and they sit in silence with him for 7 days

As per Christopher Ash: The friends of Job, who it appears have known him for quite some time, find themselves behaving toward him as to a stranger. ... [6]

#### Commented [17]:

"Job's suffering is extreme, He has been taken away into a different realm, a realm of suffering so deep they cannot reach him."  
His friends treat him as though he were dead:  
... they "sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven" (v. 12)... "Dust speaks of mortality and death. To throw dust in the air (toward Heaven) so that it falls on their heads is vividly to identify themselves in their grief with Job's dead children and probably also with Job himself, who has been grasped by death and is alr... [7]

#### Commented [18]:

They listen  
They sympathise  
They get alongside the sufferer

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## Job 3

4) In this chapter we begin to see the use of poetry. Why do you think poetry is the main literary voice in the book of Job?

### Commented [19]:

Poetry gives expression to our emotions, our deepest longings, and the griefs and desires of our hearts  
Poetry conveys things that prose cannot, and it enables the reader/listener to be moved in a way that does not happen with other forms of literature.  
Poetry is also something that is more easily remembered and repeated, and it is evident that Job is a book that God wants us to take to heart and remember

5) As you read chapter 3, what themes or phrases stand out?

### Commented [20]:

Darkness  
Curse  
Isolation  
Fear  
Abandonment  
The overturning of all that is hopeful...light, birth, conception, singing  
The question why?

6) Compare this chapter with Psalms 22 and 88, what do these passages have in common?

Job is not speaking to his friends or to God, he is simply expressing the profound despair he is feeling, it is a soliloquy highlighting and intensifying the reader's understanding of Job's pain and loneliness. He is expressing the reality of 2:13... "his suffering was very great"

2:9 & 3:1 Job does not curse God, but his lament nevertheless begins with a curse, he curses something over which he has no possible control, Job can do nothing about the day of his birth, but his desire to curse it reflects his experience of feeling that everything good has gone wrong

Job's pain and despair are so great he wishes he had never been born.

... [8]

7) Can you find any sparks of hope in this chapter?

### Commented [21]:

There are feelings that the subject is experiencing the wrath of God  
They are overcome by terrors  
They are without strength  
They feel as though they are in darkness, isolated and trapped (Ps 88:8)  
They are unable to find rest  
They feel close to death  
There is moaning and distress being poured out like water  
Psalm 22 ends positively, but Job 3 and Psalm 88 only express darkness..

... [9]

### Commented [22]:

Job doesn't curse God  
Even though he longs for death, he still entrusts himself to God

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8) What can we learn about suffering and depression in the life of believers?

**Commented [23]:**

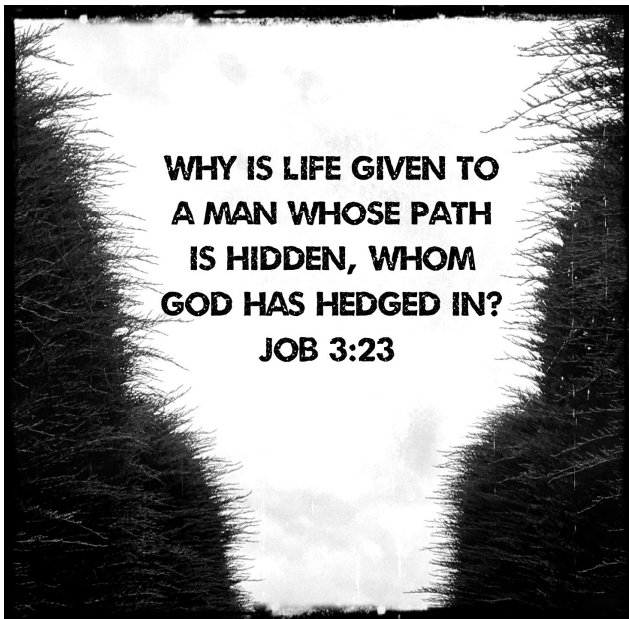
People of faith can go through times of profound anguish/depression  
Difficult circumstances can cause us to feel acute pain  
Even people of faith can feel far from God Pain and suffering is not necessarily linked to sin  
We are allowed to express our anguish before God, to Lament is something people of faith can and even should do

Christopher Ash: "A true Christian believer may be taken by God through times of deep and dark despair. This may happen to a man or woman who is affirmed by God as a believer before the darkness, who remains a believer in the darkness, and who will finally be vindicated by God as a believer after the darkness. He or she may be taken through this darkness even though he or she has not fallen into sin or backslidden from faith in Jesus Christ. This is a very important truth."

9) What things in this chapter remind us of Jesus?

**Commented [24]:**

Jesus himself uses psalm 22 as he suffers profound anguish on the cross, he feels abandonment and asks why.  
Job's innocent suffering is a shadow of, and points to, Jesus' greater suffering



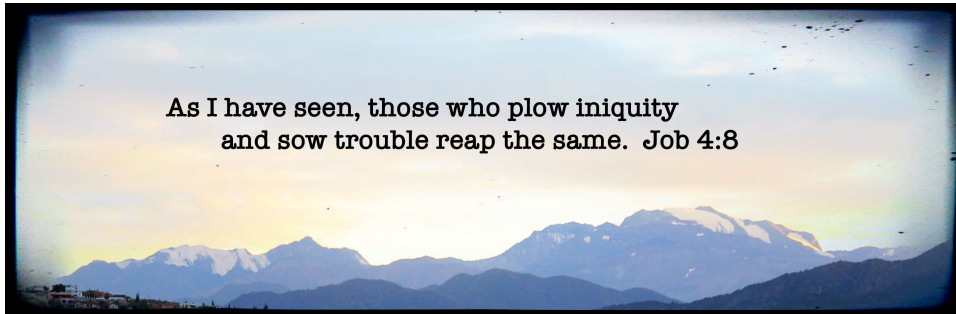
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# Wisdom through suffering

## Job 4-7

Study 3

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### The theology of Job and his friends

Before going further in our studies, it is important that we understand the theology of Job's comforters (this is also what Job also believes initially). Theologian and pastor [Christopher Ash](#) summarises it in the following way:

- 1) God is absolutely in control
- 2) God is absolutely just and fair
- 3) *Therefore* he always punishes wickedness and blesses righteousness - always
- 4) *Therefore*, if I suffer, I *must* have sinned and am being punished justly for my sin

The three friends believe this unreservedly, Job, however finds himself questioning these beliefs.

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## Job 4 -5

1) How does Eliphaz respond to Job's words from chapter 3? (4:1-6)

**Commented [25]:**

It seems that Eliphaz does not really understand the depth of Job's anguish.  
He tries to encourage Job by saying how much Job has been an encouragement to others (4:3)  
In 4:6 he says that Job should be confident if he lives with integrity, but then continues on to say that innocent people don't suffer, rather, it is those who do evil that suffer.

2) How does Eliphaz summarise his own theology?

**Commented [26]:**

v.7-9  
The innocent do not suffer  
Those who do evil will perish

3) What is the source of his beliefs?

**Commented [27]:**

V.8 what he has seen, ie. His experience in the world  
  
V.12-16  
A weird supernatural experience

4) Make a list of all the things we might agree with Eliphaz. Are there times/situations when what Eliphaz says is right? Why do his words not bring consolation to Job?

**Commented [28]:**

Humans are like dust (4:19)  
There are consequences for imprudent actions (5:2)  
Suffering is part of the fallen world (5:7)  
  
God does wonderful things (5:9)  
God sends rain (5:10)  
The poor, the lowly and the needy can cry out to God for help (5:11, 15, 16)  
Sometimes God disciplines people(5:17)  
God grants relief and salvation (5:18)  
God can redeem from death (5:20)  
Trusting in God brings blessing

These words do not bring Job any consolation because Job knows that he hasn't done anything to merit what he is suffering, he is innocent of evil, so what Eliphaz says doesn't add up with what he is experiencing.

5) What is Eliphaz inferring about Job?

**Commented [29]:**

He is inferring that Job has done something, has committed some sin, that has brought about God's anger and thus he is reaping the consequences: God is punishing him.

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## Job 6 & 7

6) Carefully read 6:8-13 What is Job's great fear?

**Commented [30]:**

Until now, Job has been able to endure and has not denied (or cursed) God, but he is fearful that the weight of his suffering will be so great that he will not be able to endure and he will forsake the Lord / will no longer fear the Lord (6:10)

7) How does Job respond to Eliphaz? Why is he so disappointed with him?  
How does Job describe Eliphaz's comforting words?

**Commented [31]:**

Job thinks that his friends ought to be showing compassion and encouragement (v.14), but he feels deceived because his friends promise of comfort (like flowing water) turns out to be like streams that have dried up.  
Job is disappointed that his friends are unable to comprehend his situation and it seems as though they don't really want to either, their goal is to say what they have come to say without really trying to understand Job's point of view  
It seems as though they are also treating him as bait of a fool who lacks real understanding.

8) How does Job describe his life? (compare again with Psalm 88)

**Commented [32]:**

His days are like those of a laborer, or slave (7:1-2)  
He feels miserable and feels as though everything is futile (7:3)  
His nights are endless nightmares where he is continually tormented and terrorized  
He feels close to death (more than that..its as if he is already dead and the worms are eating him 7:5)  
He is aware of how fleeting life is(7:7,9, 16)

9) How does Job feel about God?

**Commented [33]:**

He feels as though God is firing poisonous arrows at him (6:3)  
That he is a target for Gods anger (7:20)  
He feels as though God is somehow encircling him in some kind of sinister way and that he doesn't want to forgive his sin (7:16-21)

10) Compare Job's words in 7:17 with Psalm 8, how is his attitude similar/different from king David?

**Commented [34]:**

"What is man, that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart on him?"  
Job 7:17

"what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" Psalm 8:4

Job is feeling oppressed by God, but the psalmist rejoices in the care of God

11) Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, how is the wisdom expressed here different from what Job's friends are calling wisdom?

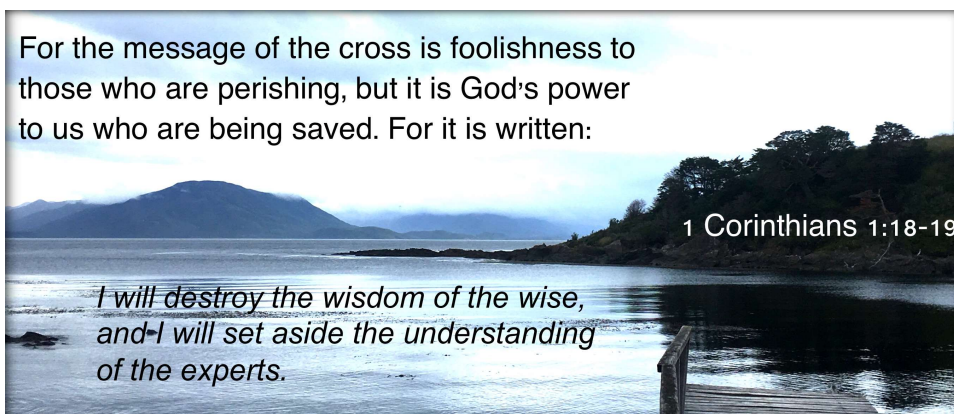
**Commented [35]:**

What Job's friends think is wisdom comes from the world, and what Job is looking for is wisdom from God. Paul says that the wisdom of God turns worldly wisdom on its head

12) How can the wisdom that Paul speaks of help us in times of suffering?

**Commented [36]:**

God has a different view of suffering than the world, he knows that suffering fulfills a purpose in people's hearts, minds and lives, so this should encourage us. It should be of great encouragement to Christians that Jesus has suffered like us in every way and so he truly understands our suffering; therefore, we are not alone in our suffering and we can be confident that he is not only with us, but he is also working out his purpose in our suffering



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# Wisdom through suffering

## Job 8-13:19

Study 4

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### Job 8

1) Summarise what Bildad says about Job's circumstances.

2) What is his solution to the problem of Job's suffering? Why is this not helpful or apt for Job's situation?

**Commented [37]:**

His recommendation is that Job repents

But Job doesn't have anything to repent of, according to chapters 1 & 2 (which neither Job or the friends know about), God himself has declared that Job is blameless (a man of integrity)

Job's suffering is not a consequence of his sin, rather it is his very righteous life that God has identified and that leads to the Satan questioning his motives and bringing suffering upon him.

### Job 9-10

3) What does Bildad say that Job agrees with?

**Commented [38]:**

Job does agree that the days of men are but a shadow (8:9), that God does not reject the blameless (8:20) and that God does punish the wicked.

But he does not understand what is going on in his own case, he himself thinks that God must be punishing him but he can't work out why.

4) How does Job describe God?

**Commented [39]:**

He is Just(9:2, 19)  
He is vast, wise, powerful and sovereign (9:4, 19)  
He is the Creator and does amazing and countless wonders(9:10)

Job also speaks of the destruction He can bring, and of his wrath which he feels has fallen upon him (9:13)  
Job recognizes that he is helpless before the strength, power and wrath of God (9:13,17) - he is feeling broken by the whirlwind/storm which he is saying God is using to destroy him (9:17)

5) How does Job sum up his own life?

He says God is hiding from him(9:11)

"It is all the same. Therefore I say,  
"He destroys both the blameless and the wicked." Job 9:22 \* this is an important statement that we will return to

Although Job knows in his head that God is just (9:2,19) at this point, he cannot see that justice in his own life or in the world.

6) What is the problem that Job describes, and what does Job long for to overcome this?

"Is it good for you to oppress,  
to reject the work of your hands,  
and favour the plans of the wicked?"  
Job 10:3

**Commented [40]:**

Short and fleeting (9:25-26)  
Full of pain, fear and darkness  
He is fed up with his life(10:1)  
Bitter  
Created and shaped by God (10:8-12)  
Oppressed and spurned

7) Compare Job 9:29-31 with Psalm 51:1-12, what does the Psalmist understand that Job doesn't?

**Commented [41]:**

Job recognizes that sin is the source of his problems with God (9:2)  
He knows that he cannot enter God's presence because he is a sinner  
He needs to be cleansed from his sin (9:30) but is unable to achieve the holiness that God requires  
He needs someone to mediate between them, someone to lift the rod of God's anger from him (9:33-34)

**Commented [42]:**

The psalmist has the security that his sins are forgiven, but Job is unsure, he knows that God is just but now he isn't sure.... because he thought he was forgiven due to the sacrifices he continually offered (Job 1:5), but his suffering has made him question whether he really has been forgiven after all.

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8) Read Hebrews 9:11-15, 1 Timothy 2:5-6 and 1 John 2:1, what do these passages teach us about what Job is longing for in 9:33-34?

**Commented [43]:**

Christ is our arbiter/ advocate / mediator  
What Job longs for is fulfilled in Christ

## Job 11

9) What does Zophar say to comfort Job? Is this actually helpful for Job?

**Commented [44]:**

“Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him, if you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then, free of fault, you will lift up your face; you will stand firm and without fear.”

Job 11:13-15

Zophar is convinced that Job must be hiding some secret sin so his advice is the same as that offered by the other friends.... turn from his sin.... However Job isn't hiding secret sin, his suffering has not been caused by anything evil that he has done, he doesn't need to confess anything

10) On who's behalf does Zophar claim to be speaking? Does he have any authority to speak this way?

**Commented [45]:**

Zophar believes he speaks on behalf of God, but he is really only speaking from his own point of view, he claims to understand and know God, but his words do not have the ring of truth about them that Job expects from one who speaks God's words, they are empty words.

## Job 12-13:19

12) How does Job respond to Zophar?

**Commented [46]:**

Basically he is saying that Zophar thinks he is wise but he's not, he has no consolation to offer Job and he is only repeating what has been said before.

13) How does Job challenge his friends? ( 12:5, 13:4-12)

**Commented [47]:**

He challenges them about their own comfort and their circumstances (12:5)  
And asks them how they would fare if God called them to account (13:9)  
He says the words they are speaking are worthless (13:12)

14) How does Job describe the justice and judgement of God?

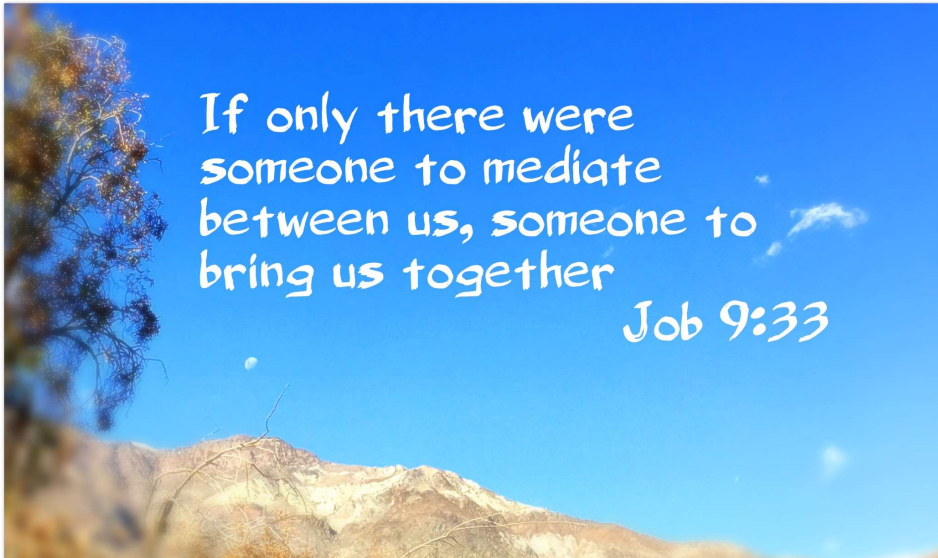
**Commented [48]:**

He describes the destructive power of God, how God overturns, and imprisons; how on one hand he withholds the waters and on the other he causes great devastating floods (12:14-15)  
He overturns the whole order of the world (12:17-24)  
His key point is that Gods justice is different from how the world understands it and we cannot understand his ways

15) What does Job want, and in what does he place his hope?

**Commented [49]:**

He wants to come before God and have the opportunity to defend himself (13:13, 18-19)  
He knows that his only hope is in God Himself (13:15)



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# Wisdom through suffering

**Job 13:20-17:16**

Study 5

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**Job 13:20-14:22**

1) Job now speaks directly to God, make a list of all of Job's questions:

2) What comparison does Job make in 14:7-12?

**Commented [50]:**

Job makes the observation that plants are able to bud and regrow even if they are cut down (appear to be dead), but humans are not able to do this, death appears to be the end.

**Commented [51]:**

3) What does Job long for in 14:13-15?

**Commented [52]:**

He longs to escape from God's wrath, to be able to see him face to face and have his sins forgiven.

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4) What destroys Job's hope in 14:18-22?

According to what is revealed in the New Testament (John 11:25, 1 Corinthians 15:12-20, 1 Peter 1:3-5), why can we have a certainty that Job didn't?

**Commented [53]:**

The finality of death is overwhelming

**Commented [54]:**

The hope of the resurrection

## Job 15

5) Summarise Eliphaz's argument in this chapter:

**Commented [55]:**

In essence, Eliphaz is saying: Job, you are not wiser than us, it is your words that are empty, what you say undermines the "true" understanding about God (ie. The truth that God blesses the good and punishes the wicked), it is the wicked who suffer so it is quite obvious that you, Job, must be an evil person.

8) What might lead us to the conclusion that Eliphaz is actually accusing Job in this poem?

**Commented [56]:**

He uses Job's own words in his argument and when he describes the suffering of the wicked, he uses as examples things that Job himself is suffering.

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## Job 16-17

7) Summarise Job's feelings in these two chapters:

**Commented [57]:**

Job is desperate to be comforted  
He feels that he is experiencing God's wrath and this brings incredible loneliness.  
He also feels as though he is innocent and can't understand why all this would be happening to him because he hasn't done anything that would merit what he is experiencing.  
He is looking for a mediator or someone who will advocate for him  
He feels as though he is on the brink of death

8) Read 16:18-21, what is this all about? (See Genesis 4:8-10, 9:5-6, Isaiah 26:21)

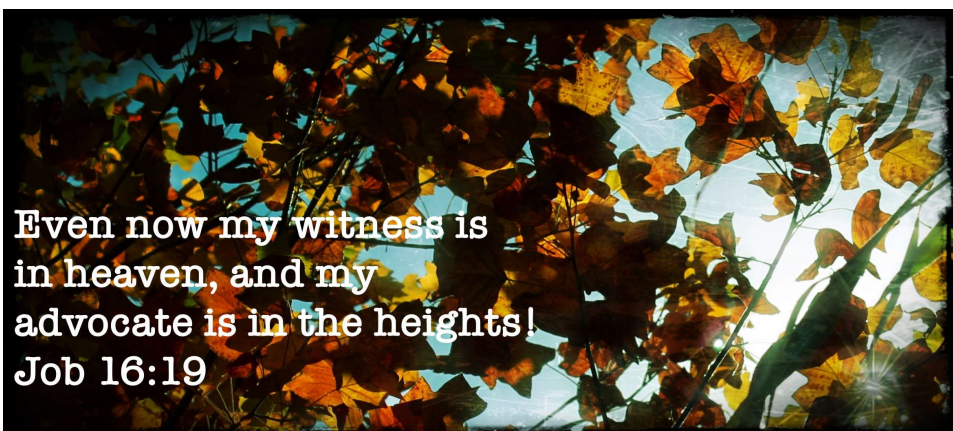
**Commented [58]:**

He is citing the story of Cain and Abel, and is declaring that God is just and he will not let the innocent suffer without some kind of intervention. God will avenge innocent blood, (the blood of those who are innocent cries out to him), and he will judge the wicked.

9) Where can we find hope in chapter 17? (See what the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

**Commented [59]:**

In spite of his physical condition, Job is growing in his understanding of God, and his faith is being strengthened. (v.9)



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# Wisdom through suffering

## Job 18-21

Study 6

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### Job 18

1) Make a list of everything Bildad says about the destiny of the wicked:

**Commented [60]:**

As per Christopher Ash:  
The fate of the wicked is:  
A place of darkness 18:5-6  
A place of punishment and imprisonment 18:7-10  
A place of terror and of being consumed 18:11-14  
A place of fire and perishing 18:15-16  
A place of separation from God and all his blessings 18:17-21

To be wiped out completely, no name and not even a remembrance of them on the earth (v.17)

2) What is the point he is trying to make?

**Commented [61]:**

Job is a sinner on the way to hell

Hell is the place where the wicked go, and it must be Job's destiny because he is already suffering most of what he describes

Bildad's world is a world with a certain order, and Job, by saying that he is suffering unfairly and that he is innocent, is challenging the order of Bildad's world.

3) Is what Bildad says applicable to Job?

**Commented [62]:**

Chapters 1&2 establish that Job is not wicked, in fact they tell us that he is a man of integrity, nevertheless he does actually seem to be suffering the torments of hell

Without Jesus, this does not make sense, but when we see that Jesus who was perfectly innocent and suffered the torments of hell on our behalf we can see that Job's innocent suffering points us to Jesus' perfect suffering for our redemption

## Job 19

4) Why do Bildad's words cause Job such anguish?

**Commented [63]:**

Job recognizes that Bildad is right in that it seems as though God is treating Job as an enemy, and that causes him to be crushed with anguish, because he doesn't want to lose his friendship with God

5) Describe the development of Job's understanding, as seen throughout his speeches so far, which lead to his declaration in 19:25-27.

**Commented [64]:**

In 9:33-34, Job longs for a mediator to take the rod of God's anger away from him

In 14:14-15 he wishes to escape from God's wrath and he longs for renewal... what if humans could live again?

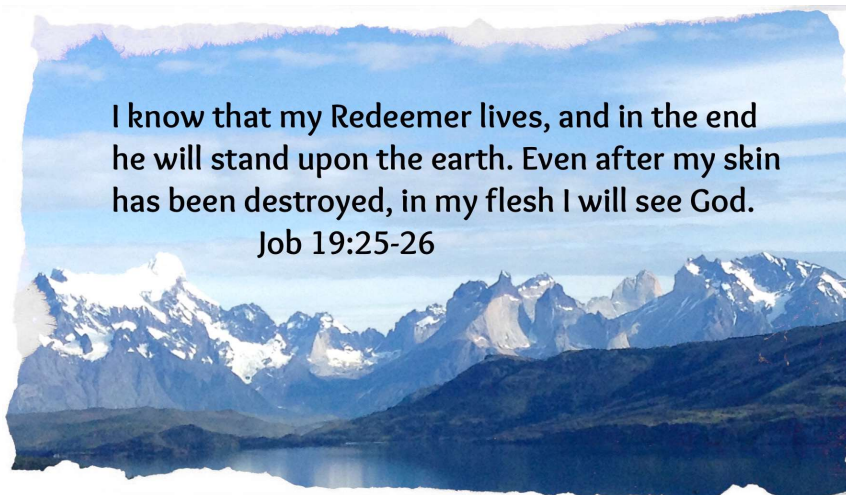
In 16:19-21 Job is certain that there must be a witness or defender in heaven, he is sure that God is just and will not leave his servant without justice

6) What is the warning that Job gives his friends? (19:28-29)

And finally in 19:25 he declares that he does have a redeemer who lives, it is God Himself who redeems him and there is hope beyond the grave, so he longs for that day.... "But I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the end he will stand on the dust. Even after my skin has been destroyed, yet I will see God in my flesh. I will see him myself; my eyes will look at him, and not as a stranger. My heart longs within me."

**Commented [65]:**

He warns his friends to be careful. If they continue to accuse him and treat him as someone who is wicked, they will be in danger of coming under God's judgement, not him.



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## Job 20

7) In this his final speech, what does Zophar say about the wicked and about Job?

**Commented [66]:**

He gives yet another portrait of the destiny of the wicked... he describes the wicked as those for whom evil is sweet to taste but its effects are like poison, and they will perish  
Zophar assumes that Job is guilty, and he offers no means of redemption or of grace.

8) Job's friends say the same thing over and over, why do you think these repetitions might have been included in the book?

**Commented [67]:**

In spite of the fact that what they say is misapplied to Job, what they describe is still a reality, those who turn away from God will face his judgement.

Their words should warn us about religion without grace.

Their words emphasize the horror of coming under God's wrath

We as New Testament believers ought to feel the weight of that judgement for all who do not know of the Salvation offered to us by Jesus, and this should compel us to share the good news of forgiveness and grace.

9) Read Romans 1:18, what does this passage tell us about what Zophar has said?

**Commented [68]:**

Everyone deserves that punishment, because we are all sinners

10) Read Colossians 2:13-14, what is the hope we can have even though we rightly deserve condemnation because of our sin?

**Commented [69]:**

Jesus took our punishment, he suffered in our place and he offers us forgiveness, mercy and grace!

---

## Job 21

11) In 21:4-6, Job shows his comforters the way they ought to respond to his suffering due to the fact that he is innocent, what does this teach us about how we ought to behave when we see someone who is suffering?

**Commented [70]:**

They should be horrified by what they see happening to Job, they should show him great compassion (whatever happened to their goal back in 2:11?)

What is happening to Job, an innocent man suffering unfairly, shows that something is wrong with the world, it is fallen, and it needs to be fixed....

It shows us that we should be very careful how we speak to and about those who are suffering, being careful not to judge, but rather to offer them God's mercy and grace.

12) How does Job respond to Zophar's accusations? How is his point of view different from that of Zophar?

**Commented [71]:**

Job tries to show him that the world isn't as straightforward as he thinks, there are innocent people who suffer (Job) and there are plenty of wicked people out there who are living lives that don't appear to have any consequences.

Things are not as black and white as the friends are making out, and they should be asking how will God fix this, because it is clear their worldly wisdom doesn't have the answers.

13) Is there any relationship between what we see of people's lives and the spiritual reality?

**Commented [72]:**

We don't know! ..... We cannot tell simply from looking at someone what their spiritual reality is.

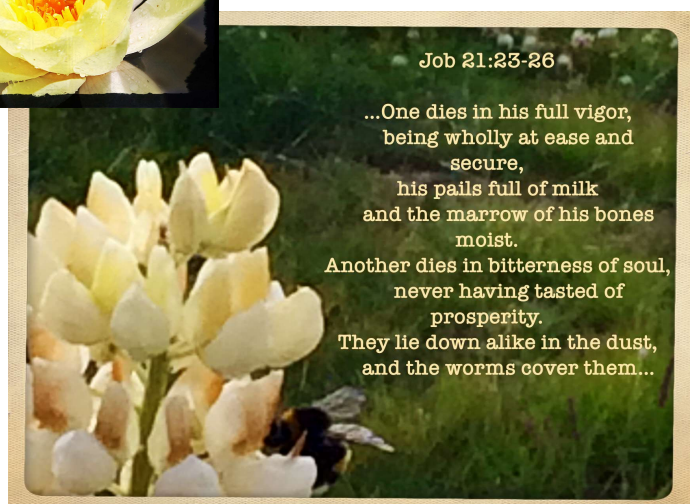
It is true that sometimes we do see the fruit either of wickedness or of godliness... but things aren't always as they appear because we cannot see peoples hearts or know their motives.

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14) Why is it dangerous to make these types of comparisons?

**Commented [73]:**

Because it would lead us to do what Jobs friends end up doing... judging rather than comforting or consoling.



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# Wisdom through suffering

## Job 22-24

Study 7

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### Job 22

1) Make a list of all the accusations Eliphaz makes about Job:

**Commented [74]:**

Is not your wickedness great and your sins endless? (v.5)

You take peoples clothes (v.6) (this is a reference to the way, in the Ancient Near East, that the clothes were taken from someone as a guarantee that their debt would be paid - this was regulated for the people of God in the Law, see Deut 24:10-13)

He is inhospitable (v.7)

He doesn't care for the vulnerable (v.9)

He walks in the paths of the wicked (v.15)

2) What evidence does he have to be able to make such serious accusations?

**Commented [75]:**

None

3) What is his advice to Job? Is this what Job needs to hear?

**Commented [76]:**

Make peace with God (v.21)

Listen to God's Words (v.22)

Turn back to God (v.23)

Separate himself from wickedness and do not confide in wealth (v.23-24)

This makes no sense for Job

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## Job 23

4) What is Job expressing in this chapter? What is the greatest desire of his heart? What is his biggest frustration?

**Commented [77]:**

What Job most wants is to speak with God and ask him all his questions, and defend himself before Him.... But he can't find him!

5) How is Job's faith displayed in this chapter?

**Commented [78]:**

Job continues to trust in the Lord  
He knows that God is watching, and that he knows everything that is going on  
He acknowledges that this is a test and that he will come out of it refined like gold. (v.10)

6) Compare 23:10 with Isaiah 48:10, Zachariah 13:9, Malachi 3:2 y 1 Peter 1:6-7, how have you seen God's refining work in your own life?

**Commented [79]:**

God refines his children, he wants them to reflect the image of his Son, and he has many ways to accomplish this in their lives, including suffering, all of which accomplish His good purposes.

7) Compare the words of Eliphaz in 22:23-30 with what Job says in 23:11-12, what does this show us? At the end of the book, what Eliphaz says in v.26-27, is fulfilled in Job's life...42:7-9. How is this a picture of what Christ does for us? (see John 17:9-11 and Hebrews 7:23-27)

**Commented [80]:**

Job tells us that in spite of Eliphaz saying he should turn to the Lord and treasure him above all else, he already does this. Job has never departed from the ways of the Lord as Eliphaz accuses

At the end of the book, Job becomes the one who mediates and intercedes for his friends., he prays for them and God forgives them. This is what Jesus does for us.

---

## Job 24

8) Summarise Job's argument in this chapter:

**Commented [81]:**

Job sees that innocent people suffer in the hands of the wicked v2-12  
And people who rebel against the Lord seem to be doing well for themselves v13-21

But God will bring justice and the wicked will be destroyed v22-25

9) What are Job's questions in this chapter? Have you ever asked similar questions? What is Job really questioning or doubting here, what is he hoping/longing for?

**Commented [82]:**

24:1 Job is questioning the timing of God's judgement

He is also longing for God to bring his promised justice and judgement

10) How can we see Job's hope reflected in the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:10?

**Commented [83]:**

Job recognizes that in this fallen world it is difficult to see God's justice, and he knows that things are not as they ought to be.

Job is longing for God's justice to be shown in this world... just as Jesus asks in the Lord's prayer.... "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

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# Wisdom through suffering

## Job 25-28

Study 8

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### Job 25

1) Can you describe Bildad's world view according to this, his last speech?

**Commented [84]:**

This is the order of the universe:  
God is sovereign (25:2-3)  
God is pure (25:4-5)  
Humans are impure, small and finite (he compares them with worms 25:6).

2) What would be the comforters response to the questions in 25:4? What does Job believe about this ? (See also: 4:17, 9:2, 14:4, 15:14-16)

**Commented [85]:**

"How then can a mortal be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure?" Job 25:4

The friends believe that humans are not pure, they recognize the truth of the fall, that sin is punished, and do talk about repentance, but it seems that this is accomplished by their own efforts to gain Gods approval and to gain his blessings.

Job also recognizes that humans are sinful, he suggests that what humanity needs is a mediator/ advocate/redeemer/Saviour

### Job 26

3) In verses 1-4, what does Job have to say about all that Bildad and the other friends have said to him?

**Commented [86]:**

Job says that his words and advice are not wise

---

4) What does Job say about God's sovereignty in this chapter?

**Commented [87]:**

Job is convinced that God is sovereign over all things, and that His ways are way beyond our understanding, in fact we only see a minuscule part of his great purposes

5) What is he talking about in verses 11-13?

**Commented [88]:**

God is sovereign over all the forces of evil.

Rahab -is a name sometimes used in the OT to refer to Egypt, it reflects opposition to God and his people (In Isaiah and Psalms) but it also can refer to the dragon/serpent or beast who opposes God.

When Job refers to both Rahab and the serpent, he is referring to all the forces of evil. It reminds us of the serpent in the garden of Eden (Gen 3) and of the Dragon in Revelation 12

Another name used in association with the forces of evil and opposition to God is Leviathan (a mythological monster of chaos) which we see in Job 3:8 & 41:1; as well as Isaiah 27:1



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## Job 27

6) What is Job doing and saying in verses 1-6?

**Commented [89]:**

Job is solemnly swearing that he has a clear conscience, that he is not deceiving anyone, nor is he covering up any hidden sins, even though they may continue to accuse him, he will not give up pleading his innocence before God

In v.1 he also says that God is not treating him fairly by allowing him to suffer like the wicked

7) What is Job saying in verses 7-12?

**Commented [90]:**

It is another warning for his friends... if they continue to accuse him it would mean that they have become just like evildoers who mistreat the innocent...so they should be careful, lest the judgement they have ascribed to the wicked, falls on them

8) Compare what Job says about the destiny of the wicked with what his friends have been saying. Is there anything that Job says that is different from what his friends have been saying? Is there anything they say that Job agrees with?

**Commented [91]:**

What they are saying is all very similar, they agree that God does judge the wicked, but the "friends" are accusing Job of being wicked, and saying that his suffering is warranted, whereas Job is describing what they might suffer should they continue in this posture of accusation.

The friend's motive is to accuse, Job's motive is to warn

---

## Job 28

9) Follow along and summarise the argument in this chapter:

28:1-11

**Commented [92]:**

In verses 1-11, Job demonstrates that the most precious and valuable things in this world are extremely difficult to find, but the search for them in the most difficult/dangerous places is worthwhile. People use much ingenuity and skill in their exploits to look for the most valuable treasures.

28:12-19

**Commented [93]:**

In v.12-22, Job explains that wisdom is more valuable than any worldly treasure, but it is even more elusive and difficult to find. The search for wisdom is very worthwhile ... but even if you were to look from the deepest depths to the highest heights it is impossible to find (28:14,21-22).

28:20-28

**Commented [94]:**

Finally, Job comes to the conclusion that all that humans can do is look to God because He is the source of all wisdom. (28:23-28). We are not told where wisdom can be found, rather we are directed to the One who knows (v.27). The poem ends with a declaration from God in v.28, which is written in prose (to differentiate it from the words of Job): "The fear of the Lord is this: wisdom. And to turn from evil is understanding." This reminds us what we were told about Job in chapters 1&2... he is described as one who fears the Lord and turns away from evil!

---

10) What is wisdom, and where can it be found? (See also Romans 11:33-36, 1Corinthians 1:24 and Colossians 2:3)

**Commented [95]:**

True wisdom can only be found in the Lord  
"Christ is God's power and God's wisdom" 1 Cor 1:24

11) Read James 3:13-17, compare the difference between God's wisdom and the "wisdom" of the comforters.



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# Wisdom through suffering

## Job 29-32:5

Study 9

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1) Compare and contrast the life of Job before and after his tragedies:

### Job 29

The way things were

### Job 30

The way things are now

2) Compare how Job describes his own life with the way Eliphaz described it in chapter 22, what point is Job trying to make?

**Commented [96]:**

Job has not done anything that Eliphaz has accused him of, in fact he has lived a very honorable life

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3) What do these chapters reveal about the deepest desires of Job's heart?

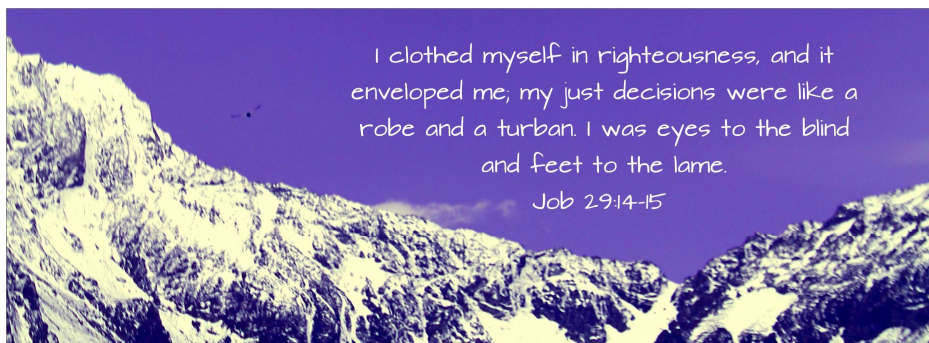
**Commented [97]:**

The most important thing for Job is his relationship with God, and he also values his relationships with others

4) How do both these pictures point to Jesus?

**Commented [98]:**

Job lives a righteous life that anticipates the Servant of the Lord prophesied in Isaiah  
Job's suffering anticipates the Suffering servant  
Jesus is the Servant that this anticipates



## Job 31

5) These are the final words of Job to his comforters, what is his main argument in this chapter?

**Commented [99]:**

Job swears solemnly using words that are similar to those used in ancient covenants, and states that his conscience is clear, that he has no hidden sin, and if he is found out to be guilty he is prepared to suffer the consequences

6) How could we describe Job from what he has said from chapters 3-31?

**Commented [100]:**

He is questioning God's justice, he thinks he deserves better than what he has been dealt

The idea of retribution is something that Job and his friends agree on...

The friends say Job is suffering therefore he is getting what he deserves, so the problem is Job  
Job says I'm innocent, I'm not getting what I deserve, so the problem must be with God...

7) How has Job challenged God? Could this be a problem?

**Commented [101]:**

He is a man with a genealogy (the only one in the book, and it is repeated twice... so therefore it must be significant)

Generally in the Bible, genealogies help us understand connections within the people of God. It is highly likely that Elihu's genealogy connects him with God's people, so he comes to Job (someone outside the people of God) and speaks God's truth into his situation.

Elihu, we shall see, is a prophetic voice, and his name is similar to another prophetic voice -Elijah

It will become evident that the role of Elihu in this book is to prepare Job for the arrival of God.

## Job 32:1-5

8) Who is Elihu?

**Commented [102]:**

He is angry with Job for challenging God and doubting his justice

He is angry with Job's friends because in all their wisdom they have been unable to refute Job and yet they condemn him

9) Why is he so angry? Is his anger justified?

**Commented [103]:**

Elihu is mad because Job justified himself rather than God, not because Job is innocent, he is not agreeing with the three friends that Job is suffering because he is guilty of something..... the key to understand this text is: "Job justifies himself rather than, or more than than God". The problem, according to Elihu, is not that Job defends his innocence, rather, the problem is that he does this rather than glorifying God (he does glorify God in Chapters 1 & 2, but as his suffering is prolonged he does this less). Job could have focussed on God in his speeches (as he does in ch 28), but rather he focuses again and again on himself and his innocence. Job was so busy insisting on his own innocence that he spent very little time carefully reminding himself and his friends of God's reputation, God's honour and God's providential sovereignty.

Job was right about being innocent, but he was wrong in the way he does it, and this causes Elihu to become indignant.

As Job's suffering turns inward and he questions the sovereignty of God, demanding answers from him, then, as far as Eliu is concerned, Job is going too far... Elihu is passionate about defending the justice and the name and the honour of Almighty God

... [10]



*Therefore listen to me, you men of  
understanding. It is impossible for  
God to do wrong, and for the  
Almighty to act unjustly. Job 34:10*

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# Wisdom through suffering

## Job 32-34

Study 10

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### Job 32:6-33:33

1) What compels Elihu, and with what authority does he claim to speak? (32:8-10, 7-22)

**Commented [104]:**

Elihu claims to speak with the authority of God, with words inspired by his Spirit

2) How does Elihu's show he has been paying attention to all that has been said by Job and his friends?

**Commented [105]:**

He uses the words of Job and his friends in his arguments, not only accurately repeating their words but also aiming to understand what is behind their words

Elihu agrees with Job that his friends are not wise, in spite of their knowledge and age.  
v.14 says "But Job has not directed his argument to me, and I will not respond to him with your arguments."  
So Elihu is planning on speaking something different from what the friends have said

3) What does Elihu say to show Job that he is trustworthy? (32:20-33:7)

**Commented [106]:**

Elihu speaks to Job and asks him to listen (33:1-2), giving Job a number of reasons to trust him : he is sincere (33:3), he is compassionate (33:6-7) and because he is also a human created by God who speaks with words given by His Spirit (33:4-5)

Elihu comes alongside Job, he comes with humility to be with Job, and he brings God's words to him

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4) Elihu challenges both Job and his friends that God speaks. How and/or when does Elihu explain that God speaks?

33:14-18

33:19-22

**Commented [107]:**

Elihu shows two ways that God speaks:  
1) through dreams, or via someone's conscience (33:15-18)  
2) through suffering (33:19-22).

5) According to Elihu what is God's purpose in sending suffering? (33:29-30)

**Commented [108]:**

Elihu explains that God speaks with the purpose of salvation, with the goal of restraining sin and sparing people from going to the pit (33:17-18, 29-30). So suffering also has this same aim

6) In 33:23-28, Elihu says a number of things which are designed to be of encouragement to Job, what are they?

**Commented [109]:**

Elihu affirms the things that Job has been learning through his suffering. Elihu includes Job's circumstances in God's justice, he acknowledges that there is "underserved" suffering, so Job is suffering even though he is innocent. He assures Job that although God may not have answered all the questions he had about why he is suffering, God has actually been speaking to him and teaching him things during this time (in spite of the fact that Job has felt far from God), he reminds Job about the need humans have for a mediator who will intercede for them to overcome the consequences of sin. Elihu gives Job hope that the things he has been thinking and longing for about God during his darkest hours are true

7) Read Hebrews 1:1-2 and John 1:14-18, how does God speak to his people this side of the cross?

**Commented [110]:**

Elihu comes with a prophetic voice, and tells Job how God speaks through dreams and suffering, we mustn't discount these as ways that God still reaches out to people; but we are now living after the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, where we have preserved for us the written word. It is therefore our priority, to listen to the words of Jesus as they have been recorded for us in the scriptures. Any revelation we receive must be backed up by the written word of God

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## Job 34

8) What does Elihu accuse Job of in v. 5-9 and 35-37?

**Commented [111]:**

He shows that Job is questioning the justice of God (34:5).  
Unlike Job's friends, Elihu isn't concerned about what Job might have done to bring about his suffering, he is more concerned about the way Job has responded to his suffering and what this reveals about what is going on in Job's heart. He doesn't accuse Job of hiding sin, rather, he quotes Job's own words and makes it clear that by saying these things, Job is defying and questioning God's justice, and it is Elihu's aim to proclaim and defend God's justice and fairness.

9) Compare Elihu's accusation of Job in v.8 with Eliphaz's accusation in 15:16, how are they similar, and what is different about Elihu's words?

**Commented [112]:**

Eliphaz has previously accused Job of drinking "injustice like water" (15:16) which is a false accusation. Now Elihu uses similar language and says that Job "drinks up scoffing like water" (34:7), he is making an accurate summary of Job's current attitude toward God: Job's questioning and defiance (especially 9:22 where he says "God destroys the blameless and the wicked alike" so therefore that "it profits nothing to seek God" 34:9) is actually mocking God, and challenging his very being, and by doing this he is speaking as one who opposes God (34:8-9).

10) How does Elihu describe God in this chapter?

**Commented [113]:**

"It is impossible for God to do wrong, and for the Almighty to act unjustly." v.10

God is Almighty  
God is Just  
He has Authority over all the earth  
He is all Powerful  
He doesn't show partiality  
He sees all things  
He punishes wickedness  
He listens to the cries of the poor and afflicted

11) What is Elihu's warning to Job? (v.31-47) How is this similar to the warnings Job has given his friends previously? (19:29; 27:11-12)

**Commented [114]:**

Elihu is warning Job that if he continues speaking this way (mocking God, questioning his justice), God will treat him as one of the wicked.  
Elihu is careful not to say that Job is wicked, rather he says that Job "keeps company with wicked men" (34:80) and "answers (or speaks) like a wicked man" (34:36), this is similar to how Job warns both his wife and his friends (2:10, 19:29; 27:11-12).

12) Is it necessary sometimes to warn or challenge someone? How can this be done with grace and love? (Ephesians 4:11-16)

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# Wisdom through suffering

## Job 35-37

Study 11

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### Job 35

1) If we go through a prolonged time of suffering or discouragement, how could this affect our faith? What do we need to hear in times of doubt?

*We have seen that throughout his speeches Job has struggled, sometimes recognising the sovereignty and justice of God (9:4-10; 12:13,22-23; 23:22; 24:23-24; 26:6-14; 27:11; 28:1-28; 31:2,4) and sometimes doubting or questioning (9:22; 12:16-20;19:6; 21:5-7,23-26; 24:1; 27:2; 30:26; 31:4,6).*

2) Compare Job's attitude at the beginning (1:21 y 2:10) with his attitude as he finishes speaking in ch. 31, is Elihu justified in his accusations against Job?

*(v.2 in the original language is somewhat difficult to interpret, it could be rendered*

*"... righteous before God?" or*

*... more righteous than God?"*

*Given that Job has never stated that he is more righteous than God it is probably safe to conclude that the most apt translation is the first.)*

3) What is Elihu trying to say in this chapter?

v. 4-8

v. 9-15

**Commented [115]:**

Elihu challenges Job's (and his friend's) incorrect thinking, he states that God is not influenced by people's actions. This doesn't mean that what they do isn't important to him or that their actions don't require a response from him, but rather he is saying that God is transcendent, what people do doesn't change who he is. No matter how much sin is in the world, God still remains Holy. He is still good no matter what people do (34:6). On the other hand, God doesn't need people's good deeds or works, no matter how much good they do, God is not indebted to them (34:7).

**Commented [116]:**

What Elihu is saying here is a bit more challenging... He explains that there is a difference between those who shout, lament or cry out about their unjust circumstances, and those who seek justice crying out in faith to God. We have seen throughout our studies that Job has had moments of longing for God and seeking him in desperate faith, and that in spite of his circumstances the greatest longing of his heart has been for his relationship to be restored with God; but Elihu is saying that Job's defiant words, his demands to get answers and being angry that God is not responding immediately to him, appear to be the cries of someone without faith. These are the "empty words" he speaks without knowledge" (v.16) At the same time as challenging Job, Elihu is trying to encourage Job to keep trusting God, no matter how difficult or long his suffering is. He is challenging him to be careful in his moments of doubt, to not believe the lies of those who don't trust in the Lord. He wants Job to keep looking to God and respond to him in the same way he did in the beginning, to love and bless the Lord because of Who he is and not for what he thinks he deserves to get from God.

4) Read Psalm 73 and compare the Psalmists experience and reaction with that of Job. The Psalmists turning point is in v.17, how is it that *we* can enter the "sanctuary" of God? (Hebrews 4:14-16)

## Job 36:1-26

5) What is Elihu saying in v.1-4?

**Commented [117]:**

Elihu wants Job to understand that he is not speaking from his own understanding (like the friends have been doing), but rather, he says he gets his knowledge from "afar", that is from God (36:3). This is why he says in(36:4) "Be assured that my words are not false; one who has perfect knowledge is with you." Elihu is not saying he is perfect or that he has perfect knowledge, but that God's words are being spoken, so God is in their midst. Elihu aim is to get Job to lift his eyes from himself to see the glory and greatness of God.

6) What does Elihu state about God here?

**Commented [118]:**

He is saying that although God is Greater than humans, he isn't indifferent to them. He reminds Job that God sees all that people do p, and it matters to Him (36:5). He sees the wicked, the afflicted and the righteous (36:6-8). He cares for the oppressed, punishes the wicked and corrects the arrogant (36:8-9). Sometimes suffering comes, and God uses it to reveal what is inside the heart, open someones ears to the Lord's correction, and to call them to repentance (36:8-10). He does say that those who are righteous will be blessed and the wicked will be punished (36:11-12). But suffering isn't necessarily a punishment, but rather it is the way God refines and determines the inclination of the heart. (36:15-16)

7) Make a list of all the warnings and advice Elihu gives Job in this chapter:

**Commented [119]:**

Verses 13-21 are words of consolation as well as warning for Job. Elihu reminds Job that God speaks in the midst of suffering (36:15) and that God is calling to him to "lure him from the jaws of distress"(36:16), so he should not hold resentment or anger in his heart like the wicked (36:13-14). He should refrain from judging others (36:17) and not wish for the judgment of God to come (36:20) lest God judge him (36:17). Job should take care not to be enticed by riches because this is not where he will be sustained or find strength (36:18-19), and importantly he should not be inclined to evil and be tempted to think that this is better than suffering (36:21).

## Job 36:27-37:24

8) What example does Elihu give Job to encourage him to lift his eyes towards God?

**Commented [120]:**

He uses the image of a storm, just as Job had done in 28:25-27

9) Summarise what Elihu says about God as he finishes his speeches:

**Commented [121]:**

God controls all aspects of the weather (something humans have no control over), according to His will, he can use it to punish or bless as he sees fit (37:8-18). If Job can see this and can grasp just how great God's understanding and wisdom is compared with his own human understanding, how could he dare to challenge God? (37:14-20) Finally Elihu leave Job with his last words: "Be wise Job, acknowledge who God is and prepare to have the appropriate attitude before Him, because He's coming!" (37:21-24)

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10) What has Elihu achieved through his speeches?

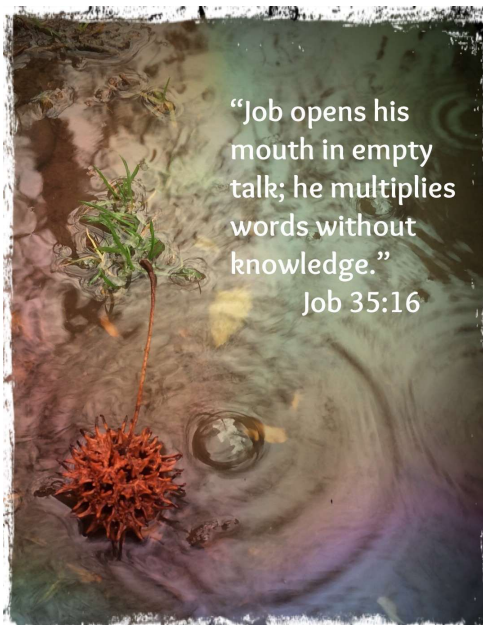
**Commented [122]:**

Elihu's goal has been to prepare Job for the arrival of the Almighty . He has challenged Job's stubborn heart and has warned him of the danger of his defiant attitude. He has also reminded Job of the truths of God that Job already knows (or has been learning) and he has lifted Job's eyes to see the truth and wonder and glory of the Righteous and Just Living God.

11) How does Job respond to all that Elihu has said?

**Commented [123]:**

Job remains silent, he has no reply to what Elihu has said. Job was very quick to refute his friends who were in error, so the fact that he does not refute Elihu is evidence that he is pondering his challenging words and taking them to heart.

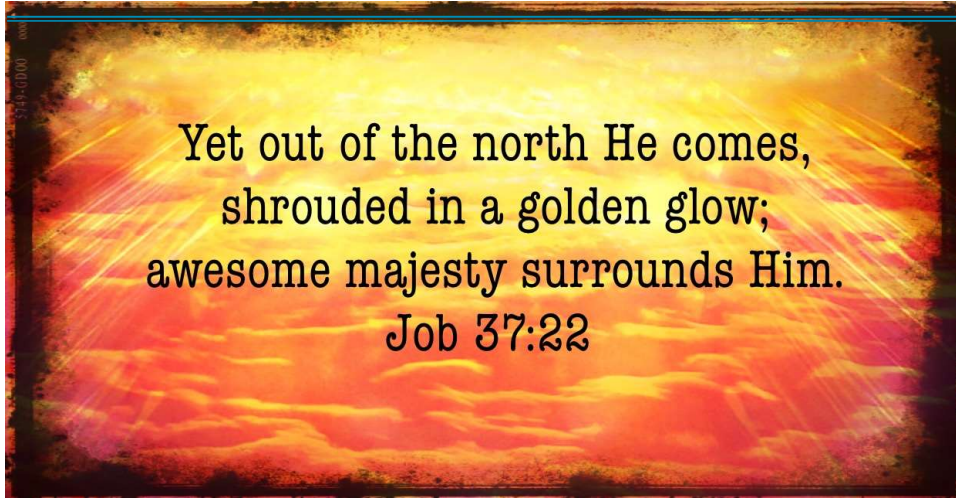


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# Wisdom through suffering

## Job 38-42

Study 12



### Job 38:1-3

1) How does God arrive?

**Commented [124]:**  
In the whirlwind

2) Review 9:17, 21:18, 27:20-21, 37:9 How has the whirlwind been spoke of before? Why is it significant that God arrives this way?

**Commented [125]:**  
The whirlwind has been described as the way God executes judgement, it is seen as a tool of destruction.  
  
God arrives in all his power, but he doesn't use it to destroy Job, instead of bringing judgement, God brings wisdom  
  
God arrives in the middle of Job's suffering, he is present in the suffering of Job and, in spite of what Job has been thinking, he is not indifferent ... God cares about him

3) How does God address Job? (Compare with what Job had said to God in 13:22.)

**Commented [126]:**

"I will question you, and you shall answer me." Job 38:3

"Then call, and I will answer, or I will speak, and You can respond to me."  
Job 13:22

God uses the same words that Job has used to challenge Him  
God speaks directly to Job

4) What accusation does God make against Job?

"Dress for action" / "Brace yourself". God is asking Job to be prepared (as if he were going into an intellectual wrestling match).. he will need all his strength as he comes before God.

5) Read 34:35, 35:16 y 38:2, what do these words that God speaks tell us about what Elihu has said?

**Commented [127]:**

"Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" Job 38:2

The word "counsel" is used to describe the way God manages his creation and his justice

God is asking who it is that dares to speak things about Him that do not affirm the truth of his perfect justice in the way he runs the world, and therefore hides/ darkens his character

What Job has said causes those who listen to undervalue, question or even scorn the truth about God

God is not saying that everything Job has said is incorrect (in fact in 42:7-8, God says Job has spoken correctly about God, unlike his friends), but it is ... [11]

## Job 38:4-39:30

6) How does God reveal himself to Job?

**Commented [128]:**

God is saying the same thing that Elihu has been saying. This confirms that Elihu has been speaking correctly.

In the warning against the friends in 42:7-8 Elihu is not included

7) What is the point of all the questions that God asks Job?

**Commented [129]:**

God reveals himself through his Word...

With a series of questions

These questions have to do with the way he manages His creation

**Commented [130]:**

By asking these questions to Job personally, instead of just making statements about his sovereignty, God is requiring that Job think carefully about the world and the way God runs it. More specifically, God wants Job to think about the bad things or evil he has seen in the world and acknowledge that God is also sovereign over these things.

Job has challenged God's running of the world, God is showing Job a few specific details about the way ... [12]

8) Read chapters 38 and 39 carefully, what is God demonstrating? What contrasts can you observe in this poem?

**Commented [131]:**

We can see a pattern and a purpose in these questions: starting with questions about the earth and the sea (38:4-21), followed by questions about the heavens (38:22-38) and then questions about the wild animals of the earth and sky (38:39-39:30), God is reminding Job about his creative work (Gen 1) and his sustaining work of upholding the universe. God relentlessly asks question after question, instead of just stating these things about himself. The questions not only help Job to recognise that he has absolutely no idea what is required to rule over creation, but, as Christopher Ash explains, they also require Job to think more profoundly about the full extent of God's sovereignty.

In the poetry of these words, we can see a series of contrasts: light and dark, good and bad, chaos and order, visible and invisible, wild and tame, wise and foolish, predator and prey and life and death. Nothing in creation, says God, is out of his sight or beyond his control. God specifically wants Job to think about the all of the things he has seen in the world including his own suffering, and recognise that everything, from the earth's foundations to the distant galaxies, including even the smallest details, is under His personal oversight and care.

9) What can we learn about God's sovereignty in these chapters?

**Commented [132]:**

This first speech features the "counsel of God" in the way he runs his world, and it is clear that he is Sovereign over all things.

**Commented [133]:**

What Job Has said before:

"I will say to God:  
"Do not declare me guilty!  
Let me know why You prosecute me."  
Job 10:2

"I will speak, and let come on me what may." "Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated." (13:13, 18)

"I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say to me."  
23:4-5

"I would give Him an account of all my steps." Job 31:37

What happens, now that he has his chance:

"I am so insignificant. How can I answer You? I place my hand over my mouth.  
I have spoken once, and I will not reply;  
twice, but now I can add nothing."  
Job 40:4-5

... [13]

## Job 40:1-5

10) How does Job respond to this first speech from God? Compare this with what he had said previously about what he would say if he ever had the opportunity to talk to God (10:1-4; 13:13,18-19,22-24; 23:4; 31:37).

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## Job 40:6-41:34

11) How does God now accuse Job in 40:8?

**Commented [134]:**

“Get ready to answer Me like a man;  
When I question you, you will inform Me.  
Would you really challenge My justice?  
Would you declare Me guilty to justify yourself?”  
Job 40:7-8  
By saying that because he is innocent he doesn’t deserve suffering, Job is telling God he is guilty of being unjust. So in this speech God is going to address the issue of Job’s challenge to his justice.

12) What is the challenge God gives to Job in 40:10-14?

**Commented [135]:**

“Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor, and clothe yourself in honor and majesty. Unleash the fury of your wrath, look at all who are proud and bring them low, look at all who are proud and humble them, crush the wicked where they stand. Bury them all in the dust together; shroud their faces in the grave. Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you.”  
Job 40:10-14

13) Describe the two beasts:

**Behemoth:** (40:15-24)

**Leviathan:** (41:1-34)

Basically God says to Job... OK then, if you think you can do a better job at delivering justice... let’s see you do it!

**Commented [136]:**

It is a creature (created by God)  
It has an insatiable hunger  
It is immensely powerful  
It cannot be captured, and it can hide itself  
Only its creator can approach/destroy it with the sword

**Commented [137]:**

Another created being  
Terrifying  
With impenetrable armour  
Horrific teeth  
Fire comes out of its mouth and smoke from its nose  
When it snorts or sneezes it throws out flashes of light  
Eyes like the rays of dawn  
A heart as hard as a rock  
It terrifies all who confront it  
It causes destruction and Chaos wherever it goes  
It is unable to be destroyed by human weapons  
It is the king over all that are proud

---

15) Why do you think God has challenged Job to gain dominion over these beasts in particular? (Also read Job 3:8, 9:13 & 26:12-13; Psalm 74:14, 104:26; Isaiah 27:1)

**Commented [138]:**

If Job can control these two creatures he will be able to show God that he is sufficiently powerful and wise to then be able to justly rule over the rest of creation. These two creatures are legendary beasts, that are symbolic of evil, chaos and death, so God's challenge is for Job to show his power over these things.

16) What does God want to say/reveal about himself in these chapters? What are the most important things we ought to know and remember in difficult times?

**Commented [139]:**

Job has no power (we as humans have no power over the supernatural world) God is all powerful, and there is no force in the universe beyond his control (even the supernatural forces of evil)

This must point us to what Jesus has done to defeat those powers, with his own death and resurrection.

See also: Hebrews 2:14-15, Colossians 2:13-15, Revelation 12:7, 9-11; 19:11-16 & 19:19-20

17) In the end, did God explain to Job why he was suffering?

**Commented [140]:**

No  
But, Job learns/recognises that he is in the middle of a great battle, but it is God who wins because He is God, he is the Creator and he is the Almighty.  
He acknowledges that it isn't for him to decide what is fair or unfair, there is suffering in the world that is unfair, but God is sovereign even over that.

For us as Christians, we have this assurance: See 1 Peter 4:12-13 & Romans 8:18, 31-39

## Job 42:1-6

18) How does Job respond to what God has revealed to him? What does he repent of?

**Commented [141]:**

Job finds that he now knows God in a way that he has never before... before he had just "heard" of God, but now he has "seen" him.

Job acknowledges that he has spoken of things that he did not understand and he retracts all those words (Job 42:6)

He repents in dust and ashes of the things he has said that have questioned God's justice and judgement.

## Job 42:7-9

19) What does God say about Job and what does he say about Job's friends ?

Job

Friends

### Commented [142]:

He says that Job has spoken the truth about him. Job has sought God the whole time and has not wavered in his longing for restored relationship with Him. God tells his friends that Job is right, that he hadn't done anything to deserve punishment.

### Commented [143]:

God says that they have not spoken rightly about God, they had condemned Job even though he was innocent, and they have now come under God's judgment. God shows that they thought that it is what people do that either earn them favour or displeasure from God, and their hearts show they are not right with God.

Up until this point they haven't shown any signs of having a relationship with God, but now God will make it possible for them to come before Him, through his mediator.

### Commented [144]:

They need to come before God with an offering, the sacrifice of seven bulls and seven rams, and they will need Job to intercede for them.

Job becomes the mediator!

This foreshadows Christ, the perfect mediator.

See: 1 Timothy 2:5-6, Hebrews

Also: Luke 22:31-32

20) What do the friends need to do to appease the wrath of God? What is Job's role in this process?

## 42:10-17

21) What happens before God restores everything? What happens in the end?

### Commented [145]:

Job firstly recognises the compassion and mercy of God in the midst of his circumstances, and in spite of the fact that his circumstances haven't changed, he exalts God. Christopher Ash says that "the most deeply compassionate and merciful thing God can do, is to humble and bring us low so that we bow before him and lean on him and trust him."

Job is brought to a place of acceptance... Instead of saying he doesn't deserve to be treated this way he accepts that the hand of God brings both good and bad, but God is always to be praised (2:10)

And, in his humbled state, and even though his circumstances haven't changed, Job worships, serves and intercedes for his friends before God.

We see that God first restores Job's relationship with himself in the midst of his difficult circumstances, then, only at the end, he restores the fortunes of Job.

The restoration of Job, points to the resurrection and the future hope of all who belong to Jesus. Our hope is not found in happiness or convenience in this life, but in the life to come. It points to and eternal reality. ... [14]

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22) Compare 42:11 with 19:13-19, what does this show us about the importance of the community of believers and the way they ought to support and comfort those who are suffering?

**Commented [146]:**

"He has alienated my family from me; my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. My relatives have gone away; my closest friends have forgotten me.

All my intimate friends detest me; those I love have turned against me."

Job 19:13-14, 19

"All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the Lord had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring."

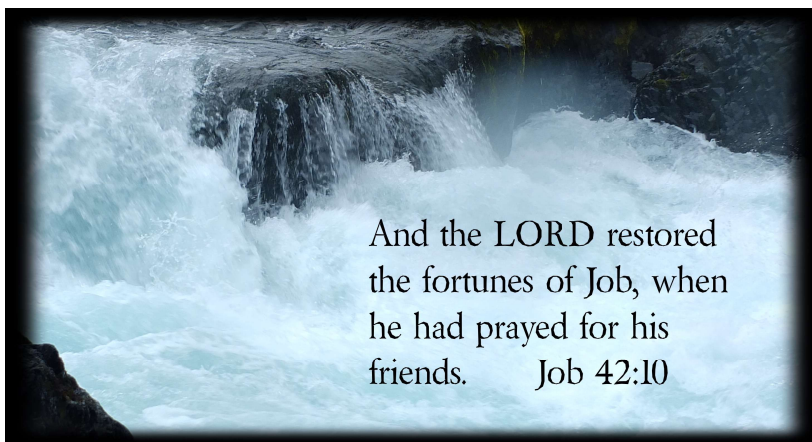
Job 42:11

It is through the compassion and support of the community that God restores Job.

Chapter 19 shows us the cruelty of a belief system that anything bad that happens to someone is a punishment that is deserved; this leads to people judging and abandoning sufferers.

Chapter 42:11 shows us the blessing of mercy and compassion in the community of believers which leads to support and restoration

23) What have you learned from the book of Job?



He lives in Uz, (an unknown place, most likely outside of Israel). It seems that he doesn't belong to God's people, but he is somehow still a faithful worshiper of God who he somehow knows.

He is blameless (which describes his authenticity rather than meaning that he is without sin)

He is upright

Fears God

And turns away from evil (Job honours God through his words and actions and lives his life turning away from wickedness)

God calls him his servant (just like Abraham and Moses.... and the prophesied messiah)

He is the greatest of all the people of the East

He is very rich

He has lots of property and possessions

He has lots of children

He lost everything in one day

It is important that Job's innocence is established at the beginning, that it be known at the start that God considers that Job is good.... This is because of the belief that all suffering is God's judgment because of sin, so it is important that it is clear that Job is not suffering because of something he has done, in fact it is his great faithfulness to God that draws both the attention of God and of the Satan

As Christopher Ash says " it is necessary that it is publicly seen that in this world there is a great man, who became great because he is good, and that he continues to be good even when he is no longer great"

The Satan, the accuser, the adversary

His role is to accuse!

He goes to and fro over the earth (looking for faithful ones to accuse?)

He is always twisting the truth

In God's eyes, Job is a righteous man, and God wants his faith to shine before an audience that goes beyond his family or the inhabitants of Uz, God wants to show his faith to a celestial audience for His own Glory.

The adversary of God and of his servant is one of the "sons of God" (1:6, 2:1), these are beings who are more powerful than humans but they are still creatures who are less powerful than God. In spite of their presence before God, His sovereignty is not in danger. God is preeminent and sovereign over all His creation without rival. He rules the world using a multitude of supernatural powers, even ones that are evil. The accuser can "negotiate" with God, but is only able to do what God allows.

**Page 4: [4] Commented [8] Julie's Changes 7/08/2020 5:12:00 AM**

He believes that if Job suffers he will curse God  
The accuser wants to get at why Job serves and worships God....

God knows that Job loves Him for who he is, not what he can get from him, but the accuser wants to test this before the celestial courtroom and challenges Job's true motives supposing that if God takes away his blessing from Job, there will no longer be any reason that Job would want to continue to serve Him. The accuser is suggesting that Job has hidden motives for serving God (to earn a prosperous and trouble free life)

"The book of Job demonstrates that it is necessary to see publicly that God deserves our worship, and that His value doesn't depend on His benefits."(Christopher Ash)

The accuser challenges Job's authenticity and devotion and asks  
Why does Job truly serve God?  
Is his devotion only superficial?  
Does God deserve to be worshipped simply for being God?  
Or is Job just trying to gain something from God?  
Does Job think he deserves something from God because of his devotion?

The readers of Job are prompted to review their own motives as they read the accuser's challenge.

**Page 4: [5] Commented [11] Julie's Changes 7/08/2020 5:24:00 AM**

He could have agreed with her!

She also has lost everything, it is possible that all she wants is to end of their suffering and thinks that if Job dies (and maybe herself as well) that would be the end of it all.

Job could also have told her that she is foolish, but he only says that she speaks as someone who is foolish... he speaks carefully to her and doesn't judge her heart.

How are we affected we we see someone we love suffering greatly?

**Page 6: [6] Commented [16] Julie's Changes 14/08/2020 6:07:00 AM**

They are appalled:... "And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him" (v. 12).

They cry  
They tear their robes in grief  
and they sit in silence with him for 7 days

As per Christopher Ash: The friends of Job, who it appears have known him for quite some time, find themselves behaving toward him as to a stranger. There is alienation rather than fellowship. Job is unrecognizable.

**Page 6: [7] Commented [17] Julie's Changes 14/08/2020 6:10:00 AM**

"Job's suffering is extreme, He has been taken away into a different realm, a realm of suffering so deep they cannot reach him. "

His friends treat him as though he were dead:

... they "sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven" (v. 12)... "Dust speaks of mortality and death. To throw dust in the air (toward Heaven) so that it falls on their heads is vividly to identify themselves in their grief with Job's dead children and probably also with Job himself, who has been grasped by death and is already being dragged down into the realm of the dead. Job is to them like a friend being sucked down by quicksand in the desert; they long to draw him up, but he is beyond their reach. He is as good as dead".

"To them Job is no longer a living person. Their silence may be not so much a silence of sympathy (although it may have begun as such) but a silence of bankruptcy. They say nothing because they have nothing to say that will bring him comfort. It seems to them too late for that."

"Whatever the meaning of their silence, the book of Job brings home to us the loneliness of suffering. The friends came with kind intentions. They came together. They brought with them the wisdom of the world, all the resources available within the world to comfort their suffering friend. But they were bankrupt, able to sympathize up to a point but utterly unable to comfort. Before they came, Job was all

alone on the rubbish heap. After they came, he was yet more deeply alone as he sat alongside them but was utterly ignored by them with not a word addressed to him as a person.”

“Job’s suffering was, deeper than merely physical. It was made sharper by mental and spiritual grief. It was an anguish and an agony. This man who had been a very great man (1:3) now suffers a very great suffering.”

All quotes by Christopher Ash

Page 7: [8] Commented [20] Julie's Changes 14/08/2020 6:42:00 AM

Darkness

Curse

Isolation

Fear

Abandonment

The overturning of all that is hopeful....light, birth, conception, singing

The question why?

Job is not speaking to his friends or to God, he is simply expressing the profound despair he is feeling, it is a soliloquy highlighting and intensifying the reader’s understanding of Job’s pain and loneliness. He is expressing the reality of 2:13... “his suffering was very great”

2:9 & 3:1 Job does not curse God, but his lament nevertheless begins with a curse, he curses something over which he has no possible control, Job can do nothing about the day of his birth, but his desire to curse it reflects his experience of feeling that everything good has gone wrong

Job’s pain and despair are so great he wishes he had never been born.

Page 7: [9] Commented [21] Julie's Changes 14/08/2020 7:19:00 AM

There are feelings that the subject is experiencing the wrath of God

They are overcome by terrors

They are without strength

They feel as though they are in darkness, isolated and trapped (Ps 88:8)

They are unable to find rest

They feel close to death

There is moaning and distress being poured out like water

Psalm 22 ends positively, but Job 3 and Psalm 88 only express darkness..

the Bible acknowledges that people of faith do experience darkness

Page 35: [10] Commented [103] Julie's Changes 16/10/2020 6:01:00 AM

Elihu is mad because Job justified himself rather than God, not because Job is innocent, he is not agreeing with the three friends that Job is suffering because he is guilty of something..... the key to understand this text is: "Job justifies himself rather than, or more than than God". The problem, according to Elihu, is not that Job defends his innocence, rather, the problem is that he does this rather than glorifying God (he does glorify God in Chapters 1 &2, but as his suffering is prolonged he does this less). Job could have focussed on God in his speeches (as he does in ch 28), but rather he focuses again and again on himself and his innocence. Job was so busy insisting on his own innocence that he spent very little time carefully reminding himself and his friends of God's reputation, God's honour and God's providential sovereignty.

Job was right about being innocent, but he was wrong in the way he does it, and this causes Elihu to become indignant.

As Job's suffering turns inward and he questions the sovereignty of God, demanding answers from him, then, as far as Eliú is concerned, Job is going too far...

Elihu is passionate about defending the justice and the name and the honour of Almighty God

He is more concerned about God's reputation than Job's

Elihu insists that it matters how Job responds to God in the midst of his suffering.

Page 45: [11] Commented [127] Julie Haddon 21/10/2020 11:43:00 PM

"Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" Job 38:2

The word "counsel" is used to describe the way God manages his creation and his justice

God is asking who it is that dares to speak things about Him that do not affirm the truth of his perfect justice in the way he runs the world, and therefore hides/ darkens his character

What Job has said causes those who listen to undervalue, question or even scorn the truth about God

God is not saying that everything Job has said is incorrect (in fact in 42:7-8, God says Job has spoken correctly about God, unlike his friends), but it is important that God addresses the things that Job has said that are not correct as Elihu has just been doing)

Page 45: [12] Commented [130] Julie Haddon 21/10/2020 11:53:00 PM

By asking these questions to Job personally, instead of just making statements about his sovereignty, God is requiring that Job think carefully about the world and the way God runs it. More specifically, God wants Job to think about the bad things or evil he has seen in the world and acknowledge that God is also sovereign over these things.

Job has challenged God's running of the world, God is showing Job a few specific details about the way it runs and is challenging Job if he really thinks he could do a better job!

**Page 46: [13] Commented [133] Julie Haddon 22/10/2020 12:25:00 AM**

What Job Has said before:

"I will say to God:  
"Do not declare me guilty!  
Let me know why You prosecute me."  
Job 10:2

"I will speak, and let come on me what may." "Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated." (13:13, 18)

"I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say to me." 23:4-5

"I would give Him an account of all my steps." Job 31:37

What happens, now that he has his chance:

"I am so insignificant. How can I answer You? I place my hand over my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not reply; twice, but now I can add nothing."  
Job 40:4-5

Just as when he heard from Elihu, Job is silent, he actually has nothing to say to the Lord, all of the arguments he had before have disappeared.

**Page 49: [14] Commented [145] Julie Haddon 22/10/2020 1:22:00 AM**

Job firstly recognises the compassion and mercy of God in the midst of his circumstances, and in spite of the fact that his circumstances haven't changed, he exalts God.

Christopher Ash says that “the most deeply compassionate and merciful thing God can do, is to humble and bring us low so that we bow before him and lean on him and trust him.”

Job is brought to a place of acceptance... Instead of saying he doesn't deserve to be treated this way he accepts that the hand of God brings both good and bad, but God is always to be praised (2:10)

And, in his humbled state, and even though his circumstances haven't changed, Job worships, serves and intercedes for his friends before God.

We see that God first restores Job's relationship with himself in the midst of his difficult circumstances, then, only at the end, he restores the fortunes of Job.

The restoration of Job, points to the resurrection and the future hope of all who belong to Jesus. Our hope is not found in happiness or convenience in this life, but in the life to come. It points to an eternal reality.

\*\*\*Important Note\*\*\*

His restoration is not because of his repentance, or his service or his obedience, rather it is a gracious gift from God.

It isn't because Job endured through all the suffering so God blesses him, rather it is because Job is his servant whom he loves and he freely gives him abundance, just as he had given him suffering.

We may see some of the blessings of a life lived in Christ in this life, but this is not the normal life of a follower of Jesus, the normal life is one of hardship and dependence on Him, but our hope is that there is blessing beyond this life that will last an eternity.