

# Job

The book of Job is fascinating – and it's not as well-known as it should be. What some people know about it goes like this: Job was an upright man but the devil persuaded God to give him permission to destroy Job's life. After the devil did that Job complained, then God rebuked Job, then Job repented and got his wealth back.

The trouble with this summary is that it skips the entire middle section of Job. Some people are familiar with the first two chapters of the book and know how the story ends, but the rest is a blur. This is unfortunate because the middle chapters of Job are the heart of the book! When people act as if the book of Job is just three chapters long they shortchange themselves. The other chapters are there for a reason and it's not because the Bible was too short and God was trying to stretch it out.

What I'd like to do is take a look at the *entire* book of Job, not just the parts at the beginning and the end.

## ***The Beginning Of The Story***

Job was an upright man:

**Job 1:1:** “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”

He had 10 children:

**Job 1:2:** “And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.”

He had great wealth:

**Job 1:3:** “His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.”

Since Job was already an old man when these events happened (Job 38:21), and he lived 140 years afterward (Job 42:16), that implies Job lived to be around 200 or 300 years old. The only time in history when people lived that long was shortly after the Flood. Job was probably born sometime between the Flood (~2348 BC) and the birth of Abraham (~2056 BC). Given the lifespans of the people involved it's possible that Job and Noah were alive at the same time. It's also possible that Job was still alive when Abraham was born.

Job was such an astoundingly good person that when Satan went to Heaven to present himself to God, the Lord asked the devil about Job:

**Job 1:7-8:** “And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?”

There's a lot that can be said about Satan's access to Heaven and his ability to accuse people before God, but since I've talked about that elsewhere I'm not going to repeat it here<sup>1</sup>. The

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1 This topic is explored in the lesson on demons:  
<http://stories.cyragon.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Demons.pdf>

main point I want to make is that *the Lord was pleased with Job's righteousness!* God Himself said that Job was “perfect and upright” and there was *no one else like him on Earth*. Job was literally the most upright person in the world. (If Noah was still alive when this happened – and there's no way to know if that's the case – then that would mean Job was even more upright than Noah.)

The devil claimed that he wasn't impressed. He said that Job was only serving God because He had given him great wealth. Satan asked God for permission to destroy Job's life, and the Lord granted it:

**Job 1:9-12:** “Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.”

Satan wasted no time. He immediately took away all of Job's possessions, including his servants and family:

**Job 1:16-19:** “While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them

away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.”

The body count in these verses is quite high. Job's servants *and* his ten children were all killed in order to test Job's faith. The Bible doesn't tell us how many servants Job had (only that he had a “very great household”), but it's possible that dozens of people died here. These people weren't killed because they had done something wrong. Instead they were killed because God was using Satan to test Job's faith. Let me say that again: a lot of people were killed in brutal ways (fire from heaven, the sword of the Chaldeans, etc.) in order to test *Job*. Here is something to think about: how many times has something happened to us because God was testing *someone else*? It's easy to think that whatever that happens to us is about us in some way, but that might not be the case at all.

In one day Job lost everything, including his children. Interestingly, though, Job did *not* lose his wife. When Satan took away everything that was a blessing to Job he didn't touch his wife. The only thing we know about her is that she urged Job to curse God and die. In other words, when Satan was trying to make Job miserable he decided to spare her life, and she tried to get Job to sin.

Some people have tried to defend Job's wife, but think about it. If she was truly a blessing to Job then do you really think the devil would have spared her? The fact that Satan took away everything from Job *except for her* isn't a good sign.

Despite this disaster Job refused to curse God. Instead he

actually blessed Him:

**Job 1:20-22:** “Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”

Job believed that God was in control of what happened and that He had every right to give him wealth or take it away. Instead of cursing God he fell down and worshiped Him. This is astounding and testifies to the genuineness of Job's faith. Job actually *blessed* God instead of cursing Him!

This didn't go unnoticed. The next time the devil came to present himself before the Lord, God once again brought up the subject of Job:

**Job 2:1-3:** “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. And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.”

In both cases *God* is the one who brought up the subject of

Job – not just once, but twice! Satan didn't single out Job for persecution. Instead God mentioned Job and essentially used him to taunt Satan. God told Satan that he was wrong: even though Job had lost everything he had, he was still upright and he still held on to his integrity.

God also said that Job was destroyed *without cause*. This is going to become an important point. None of this happened because Job had sinned! All of it was to test Job's integrity.

In response to this the devil didn't admit he was wrong. Instead he said that God just hadn't cursed Job enough. Satan asked for permission to destroy Job's health, and God granted it:

**Job 2:4-6:** “And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.”

One thing to keep in mind is that God already knew how this was going to play out. God is omniscient; He has all knowledge. He knew what was going to happen when Satan did this and He knew how it was going to end. God wasn't doing this because He was curious about what Job would do!

Once again the devil didn't waste any time. He immediately struck Job with a painful disease:

**Job 2:7-8:** “So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.”

Job had now lost all of his children, all of his possessions, and his health as well. At this point his wife urged him to curse

God and die:

**Job 2:9:** “Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.”

Despite all of this, however, Job still didn't curse God:

**Job 2:10:** “But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”

Job's wife asked him to curse God, but he refused to do so. The Bible then says that Job didn't sin with his lips. Does that mean he sinned in his heart? It's tempting to think so but the text doesn't say that. This passage could easily have said that Job refused to curse God out loud, but he did curse Him inwardly, but it doesn't. All we know is that when his wife tempted him to curse God he refused. That's a point in Job's favor.

Notice the argument that Job makes. “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” That's a remarkable statement! How many people think that way? When something good happens to us we rejoice, but when we face a grievous trial it's a different story. Very few people ever say what Job said! Instead some people become angry with God for allowing something terrible to happen to them.

The truth is that Job was right. God *is* supreme and has every right to send us pleasant things or difficult trials. We are His creation! He is the potter and we are the clay (Isaiah 64:8). As hard as it is, we must be willing to receive both good *and* evil from the hand of God. Even Christ had to endure the cross.

This is the part where some people skip over to the end, but we're not going to do that. Instead we're going to press on. There are 39 more chapters to cover before we reach the

conclusion of the story, and those chapters are *not* filler material.

## ***Job Claims God Was Wrong***

Job wasn't left alone in his plight. When his friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar found out what happened they came to visit him. What they saw left them literally speechless:

**Job 2:11-13:** “Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.”

Job's suffering was so extreme that his friends didn't even recognize him! They were so overcome with grief that they sat down with him and said nothing *for an entire week*. They were deeply moved.

Eventually Job broke the silence and started talking. He cursed the day he was born:

**Job 3:3:** “Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.”



He wished that he had never been born at all:

**Job 3:11:** “Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?”

He asked why life was given to people who were in great misery and longed for death:

**Job 3:20-22:** “Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?”

Job was *intensely* unhappy. He was in tremendous pain and wanted to die. His friends, however, decided *not* to comfort him. Throughout this entire experience they never said anything like “Oh, your poor thing. You must feel awful. Is there anything I can do to help?” Instead they told Job over and over that *he* was the problem.

Eliphaz was the first friend to speak up. He told Job that the reason all those terrible things happened to him was because Job was a bad person. In fact, Eliphaz insisted that no one who was innocent ever suffers! Only wicked people have problems:

**Job 4:7-8:** “Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.”

You and I know that Eliphaz was completely wrong. *God Himself* said that Job was perfect and upright, and the disasters

which fell upon Job happened “without cause”! Job actually *was* an innocent person who was suffering. On top of that, the entire point Eliphaz was making is wrong. Innocent people are killed all the time while wicked people lead long and prosperous lives. (Job himself is going to point that out later in this book).

However, Eliphaz wasn't done. He also told Job that the reason God killed all 10 of his children was because Job was a very wicked person. It was all Job's fault:

**Job 5:2-4:** “For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one. I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation. His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.”

After blaming Job for the death of his children, Eliphaz told Job he should be happy that God was correcting him. After Job repented of all his evil deeds and learned his lesson, God would make everything better:

**Job 5:17-18:** “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.”

Once again, Eliphaz was *completely* wrong. Job's children weren't killed because Job had done something wrong. However, Eliphaz does illustrate why Satan chose to keep Job's friends alive. The three of them made the situation even *worse!* They accused Job of terrible sins and made him even more frustrated.

Job responded by reminding his friends that he was a very unhappy person who was drowning in grief:

**Job 6:2-3:** “Oh that my grief were throughly

weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.”

Job's constant reminders that he was suffering never did any good. None of his three friends ever said anything comforting or supporting to him. All three of them just went from bad to worse.

Job told Eliphaz that he had *not* sinned and his friends were *not* helping him at all:

**Job 6:25-27:** “How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove? Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind? Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.”

Job repeated that *he was suffering greatly* and he had lost all hope:

**Job 7:5-7:** “My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good.”

After this moving speech from Job, Bildad spoke up. He ignored everything Job said and told him that he was a liar:

**Job 8:2:** “How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?”

Bildad insisted that if Job was truly a good person then God would have blessed him instead of cursed him:

**Job 8:6-7:** "If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase."

Once again we see that Job's friends had no words of compassion for him at all. Instead they called him a liar and accused him of being a very evil person. They will spend the entire book insisting that Job was an exceptionally bad person! (With friends like these who needs enemies?)

Job maintained his innocence (because *he really was innocent*) and wished that he could reason with God:

**Job 9:15:** "Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge."

Job wanted to bring his case before God and ask why he was being treated this way. Why was God oppressing an innocent man? Didn't God know that it was wrong to oppress the innocent?

**Job 10:2-3:** "I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me. Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?"

Job wanted to remind God that human beings were fragile and life was short. He thought that God's eternal existence had caused Him to forget what life was like:

**Job 10:4-6:** “Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth? Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man's days, That thou enquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?”

Job thought it was bitterly unfair that God was oppressing him. What made it even worse was that there was no way to escape from God's power:

**Job 10:7-8:** “Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand. Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me.”

Job believed that God had made a mistake, or done something wrong, or was out of touch with reality. Job knew that he was innocent but he couldn't understand why he was suffering. He therefore came to the conclusion that God was doing something wrong. He wanted to confront God in person so he could tell Him that He had made a mistake. This is the sin of Job and this is why God condemns Job at the end of the book. Job never comes out and curses God, but he does say “Since I'm righteous, God must be wrong”.

As we read this story thousands of years later it's easy to look at Job and condemn him. After all, Job *was* wrong and God *did* condemn Job. It's easy to overlook the fact that *we do the very same thing*. How many people respond to tragedy by condemning God for allowing it to happen? When something terrible happens, some people react as if God had no right to do what He did, and that He's wrong to treat them that way. People who do that are committing the same sin that Job did.

The truth is that God is completely righteous, holy, just, and good. Everything that He does is the right thing to do, no matter how much it might hurt us. All of His ways are right and

all of His judgments are just. It may seem to us that it's unjust, from our limited perspective and knowledge, but that doesn't mean it actually *is* unjust! There was more going on here that Job didn't know about, but instead of trusting God he condemned Him – and we're tempted to commit the same sin.

## ***Job Wants A Resurrection***

Next, Zophar spoke up. He told Job that he was a liar and that God had punished him less than he deserved:

**Job 11:3-6:** “Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed? For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.”

Zophar said that if Job just repented of his many sins then God would make everything better:

**Job 11:13-16:** “If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear: Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away:”

He closed by saying that God was against the wicked, which explains everything that happened to Job:

**Job 11:20:** “But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.”

All three of Job's friends had now spoken, and not a single one of them comforted Job. Instead all three condemned him. They all insisted that Job was being cursed because he was evil, and if he repented all would be well again.

Job wasn't amused. He called his friends liars and told them to be silent:

**Job 13:4-5:** “But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value. O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom.”

Job wanted to know why God considered him to be His enemy:

**Job 13:24:** “Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?”

Notice the thought process here. Job believed that since God had taken everything away from him, God must be upset with him about something. Job knew that he was innocent so he wanted to argue his case with God and get Him to change His mind. He was convinced that God had made a mistake.

It's easy for us to do exactly what Job did. God actually wasn't upset with Job. Instead He was proud of him! The reason all these things happened was because God was testing him. Likewise, the reason Job's children were crushed to death wasn't because they had sinned; it was to test Job. It's true that God judges sin, but sometimes He brings trials into our lives that aren't connected to sin at all. Sometimes He allows things to happen to test our faith and see if we'll trust Him even when things are at

their very bleakest.

Job wasn't done. He was upset that death was permanent and longed for God to resurrect His people:

**Job 14:12-14:** “So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again?” all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.”

Interestingly, Job later said that he knew his Redeemer was coming and that God would raise him from the dead. Despite what he said here he evidently *did* believe that there was going to be a resurrection. I think these verses represent a time when Job's despair got the better of him.

The Bible is quite clear that the dead *will* live again. Jesus told us that those who believe on Him shall never die (John 11:25-26) and that God would raise them up at that last day (John 6:40). Through Christ we do have everlasting life! Job longed for a resurrection, and thanks to Jesus we know that our resurrection is a certainty. God really has given us everlasting life! Those who believe on Christ *will* live again, and that's an exciting thing. We don't have to feel hopelessness.

### ***Job's Friends Insist Only Bad People Suffer***

Next, Eliphaz spoke up again. He called Job a liar, even though he had no evidence to support it:

**Job 15:3-6:** “Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good? Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest



prayer before God. For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou choosest the tongue of the crafty. Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.”

He went on to say that he and his friends were a lot older than Job so he should just be quiet and listen to them:

**Job 15:9-10:** “What knowest thou, that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us? With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father.”

Eliphaz was committing a logical fallacy. Being older doesn't automatically make your arguments true! Saying “Well, I'm older than you, so there!” is actually pretty childish. Job's three friends may have been old but everything they said was wrong. God actually condemns them at the end of the book! Being old doesn't automatically mean that you know what you're talking about.

Eliphaz argued that Job couldn't possibly be righteous because everyone was a sinner:

**Job 15:15-16:** “Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?”

It's true that all have sinned, and it's also true that no one is righteous apart from Christ. However, the person who called Job righteous was *God Himself!* This means Eliphaz was wrong. If God says that you're righteous then *you are righteous.*

After telling Job that he was *definitely* an awful person who drinks iniquity like water, Eliphaz explained that the lives of the wicked are full of pain:

**Job 15:20:** "The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor."

Therefore, Job's pain must be happening because he was a wicked person.

Job told Eliphaz that he was wrong and that his friends were utterly failing to comfort him:

**Job 16:2:** "I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all."

By now Job noticed that his friends spent all their time claiming that he was a vile monster, and hadn't said a single comforting thing to him. He told them that if their positions were reversed he would be kind to them and strengthen them:

**Job 16:4-5:** "I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you. But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief."

Job then resumed his complaints against God. He said God had delivered him over to the hands of the wicked:

**Job 16:11:** "God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked."

He wished once again that he could argue his case before God:

**Job 16:21:** "O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!"

Job said that he had become a byword:

**Job 17:6:** "He hath made me also a byword of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret."

He also added that all of his friends were idiots:

**Job 17:10:** "But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you."

Job's friends weren't happy about being called idiots. Bildad was pretty irritated about it and tried to defend himself:

**Job 18:3:** "Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight?"

I'm on Job's side here. Throughout this entire event his friends showed a complete lack of wisdom and compassion. They would have been much better off if they'd just remained silent.

Bildad went on to say that bad things happened to bad people. He apparently believed that if he just said it enough times Job would eventually agree with him:

**Job 18:5:** "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine."

All three of his friends kept repeating the same thing. Only evil people suffer, so since Job was suffering he must be evil. If Job repented then God would bless him and everything would be fine again, because nothing bad ever happens to good people.

By now Job had pretty much had it with his friends. He asked them how long they were going to keep bothering him:

**Job 19:2-3:** “How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me.”

Job then turned his attention back to God. He cried out that God had wronged him and no one cared:

**Job 19:6-7:** “Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net. Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment.”

Job said his life was so bad that his friends, his family, and even small children despised him:

**Job 19:18:** “Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me.”

Job begged his friends to have pity on him:

**Job 19:21:** “Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.”

For the record, his friends never did take pity on him. They insisted on condemning Job, right up until God Himself confronted them and condemned *them* for being fools.

Interestingly, Job wished that his words were printed in a book:

**Job 19:23-24:** “Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead

in the rock for ever!"

Job got his wish. His words, and the words of his friends, were indeed printed in a book! Considering how the story turned out, I wonder if he regrets making that statement. If it was me I'd rather *not* have 39 chapters of the Bible dedicated to the time I made an utter fool of myself and accused God of error. I'm glad the book of Job is in the Bible, but I'm wondering if perhaps this didn't turn out the way Job expected. Job believed that God had wronged him, but in reality he was the one who wronged God.

Despite what Job said earlier he really did believe in the resurrection:

**Job 19:25-27:** "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

Job knew that in the latter days his "redeemer" would come. He knew that even though he would die, he would one day see God "in my flesh". There's an interesting tension here between Job's earlier cries of "death is the end!" and "after death I will see God in the flesh". I think his earlier statement was just his despair getting the better of his judgment.

### ***Job's Friends Insist He Is Evil And Will Perish***

Zophar immediately tried to destroy Job's hope in his redeemer. He told Job that the triumph of wicked hypocrites like Job was short, and he would perish forever:

**Job 20:5-7:** "That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a

moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?"

Zophar said God would do this to Job because he had done incredibly evil things:

**Job 20:19:** "Because he hath oppressed and hath forsaken the poor; because he hath violently taken away an house which he builded not;"

Apparently it wasn't enough for Zophar to call Job a liar. Now he was accusing Job of terrible crimes that there was no evidence for at all. No one had any proof that Job had done these things, and that's because *Job hadn't done those things*. But that didn't stop Job's friends! They just made things up and charged him with one horrific crime after another.

Job spoke up and asked if he could get a word in before they continued mocking him:

**Job 21:3:** "Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on."

Job pointed out that despite what his three friends had been saying, some of the wicked led very comfortable lives. The hand of God didn't seem to be against them:

**Job 21:7-9:** "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them."

Job said the idea that bad things only happen to bad people and that good things only happen to good people is wrong – *and he was correct*. There are many cases where good people (such as Jesus Christ) suffered awful things (like being crucified), while terrible people led long and healthy lives. The entire premise of his friends' argument was wrong!

Job did add that ultimately the wicked would be judged by God:

**Job 21:19-20:** “God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it. His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.”

Job ended by telling his friends that they were completely wrong:

**Job 21:34:** “How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?”

Eliphaz, however, refused to listen. Despite the complete lack of evidence, he insisted that Job's iniquities were infinite and his crimes had no end:

**Job 22:5-7:** “Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.”

Eliphaz told Job that he thought he could hide his sins from God, but he was wrong:

**Job 22:13:** “And thou sayest, How doth God

know? can he judge through the dark cloud?"

Eliphaz said that if Job repented then he would become wealthy again:

**Job 22:23-25:** "If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver."

Job's friends were no longer simply wrong; they were now *ludicrously* wrong. They went far beyond accusing Job of sin and now accused Job of an infinite list of high crimes against humanity! They furthermore claimed that if Job repented then God would bless Job with great wealth, because God always makes sure that all good people are wealthy.

These arguments are laughable, and that's why Job was mocking them. Job knew what his friends refused to admit: sometimes the righteous do suffer, sometimes people of integrity are poor, and sometimes wicked people are rich and powerful.

Job ignored his friends and turned his attention back to God. He wished once again that he could argue his case with God. He was convinced that if he could just talk to God that He would fix things and strengthen him:

**Job 23:3-6:** "Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me."



Job turned out to be completely wrong. God *did* plead against Job with His great power. God did *not* strengthen Job; instead He put him in his place. God broke Job's pride and made him realize that he had no right to condemn God.

Job argued that he was a good person who highly esteemed God's commands:

**Job 23:11-12:** “My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.”

Job said he was afraid of God because He did as He pleased and no one could stop Him:

**Job 23:13-15:** “But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him. Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.”

Job wanted a God who was accountable *to him* – a God that he could control. At the end of this book God reminded Job that He has infinite power and wisdom, and that Job's wisdom and strength are nothing in comparison. God won't be held accountable by anyone and He doesn't have to explain His actions. People may want to judge God, but the Lord is the great Judge and He will one day judge us all.

After Job said that he was a good person who had done nothing wrong, he talked about the sins of the wicked:

**Job 24:2-4:** “Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.

They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge. They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together."

Job said that despite doing all of these terrible things, the wicked sometimes get away with it:

**Job 24:12:** "Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them."

Sometimes God allows the wicked to get away with all kinds of horrible sins and does nothing to stop them. There are times when He allows them to do terrible abominations and they don't suffer for it. Instead they lead comfortable lives.

This doesn't last forever, though. Ultimately God does judge the wicked:

**Job 24:24:** "They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn."

Job is reminding his friends of a very obvious fact: the wicked are *not* always punished immediately for their sins, and in fact some evil people lead long and prosperous lives.

His speech about the terrible crimes that the wicked get away with must have been quite convincing because after this his friends didn't have much to say. The only friend who spoke up again was Bildad, and his pitiful speech only lasts six verses. Bildad feebly protested that no one could possibly be considered righteous in God's sight, so Job *must* be a bad person:

**Job 25:4:** "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a

woman?”

Even though Bildad only spoke up for six verses, Job *really* went off on him and talked for *seven straight chapters*. Job repeated yet again that God had taken away his judgment and vexed him:

**Job 27:2:** “As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul;”

Job wished that he was back in the good times when his life was wonderful:

**Job 29:2:** “Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me;”

Job said that he was now despised by the lowest class of people:

**Job 30:1:** “But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.”

Job said that he obeyed God and served Him, but in return God had treated him with cruelty:

**Job 30:21:** “Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.”

Job finished by saying he had *not* sinned and he wished God would answer him:

**Job 31:35:** “Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer

me, and that mine adversary had written a book.”

Job's final argument was a summary of what he had been saying all along. He insisted that since he was a good person, God was doing something wrong. He believed that God had made a mistake and he wished he could talk with Him and set Him straight.

Job's three friends never condemned him for this line of reasoning. In fact, they never responded to it at all. Since they were unable to convince Job that he was an evil monster, they just gave up:

**Job 32:1:** “So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.”

## ***Elihu Talks To Job***

After all of this Elihu speaks up. Elihu wasn't one of Job's three friends. The Bible says he was someone who had been standing around listening but was afraid to speak up because of his youth:

**Job 32:6-7:** “And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.”

Elihu he decided to speak up because he realized Job's friends were fools:

**Job 32:9-10:** “Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.”

Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.”

The reason he was motivated to speak was because Job spent his time justifying himself *instead of justifying God*:

**Job 32:2:** “Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.”

Elihu pointed out that Job had been saying he was a good person and yet God was against him:

**Job 33:8-11:** “Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me. Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy, He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.”

Elihu condemned Job for this line of reasoning. He pointed out that God wasn't accountable to Job:

**Job 33:12-13:** “Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.”

Elihu said that God was greater and wiser than man, and He didn't have to give an account of Himself to anyone. Elihu pointed out that Job claimed to be more righteous than God:

**Job 34:5:** “For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.”

Elihu said that Job's line of reasoning was utter nonsense because God was wholly righteous and never did evil:

**Job 34:10:** “Therefore hearken unto me ye men of understanding: far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.”

Elihu said Job should have asked God to teach him the things he couldn't see and to show Job if he had sinned:

**Job 34:31-32:** “Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.”

Elihu said that Job's real problem was that he had been condemning God:

**Job 34:37:** “For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.”

Elihu added that it was wrong for Job to claim that he was more righteous than God:

**Job 35:2:** “Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?”

Elihu urged Job to remember the unsearchable greatness of God by pondering His creation:

**Job 36:26-28:** “Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his

years be searched out. For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof: Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly.”

As we will see in a minute, God will later use this same line of reasoning! When the Lord speaks to Job He will use examples from His creation to illustrate His greatness.

Elihu finished by reminding Job that God does things we can't comprehend, and His creation illustrates this:

**Job 37:5-6:** “God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend. For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.”

This is the last we hear from Elihu. He's not mentioned again, and if Job had anything to say in response it's not recorded. What we do know is that when God condemned the foolishness of Job's friends, He didn't condemn anything Elihu said.

## ***God Confronts Job***

After this something unexpected happens: God Himself comes and talks to Job. All throughout Job's discussion with his friends he repeatedly wished that he could talk to God. Once Elihu finished speaking with Job he got his wish.

It's worth taking a moment to stop and realize what God did *not* say. God never told Job what was going on. God never explained that he was being tested or that Satan had accused him. The Lord didn't encourage Job either. Instead He rebuked him:

**Job 38:1-2:** “Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without

knowledge?"

God demanded to know where Job was when He created the world:

**Job 38:4-7:** "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Why did God say this? Well Job's argument was that God was out of touch and he knew more than God did. The Lord was essentially saying this: "Job, if you're so great then where were you when I created the world? If you know everything then answer My questions:"

**Job 38:16-18:** "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all."

God then started talking about His creation. Was Job the one who created the animals? Do the birds fly by Job's wisdom?

**Job 39:26-27:** "Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south? Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?"



God finished by saying that since Job was daring to instruct God then let him answer these questions. If Job really thinks that he knows more than God then let him prove it:

**Job 40:1-2:** “Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.”

Job was horrified. He realized that he had sinned, and he had nothing to say:

**Job 40:3-5:** “Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.”

Job admitted that he had sinned – but as you can see, he didn't ask God for forgiveness. So God continued. The Lord condemned Job for daring to condemn Him:

**Job 40:6-8:** “Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?”

God told Job that if he was so great and powerful then he should step up and prove it:

**Job 40:9-14:** “Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad

the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him. Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee."

Job, of course, could do none of these things.

God went on to talk about the astounding creatures He had made (the behemoth and the leviathan) and reminded Job that *everything* belongs to Him:

**Job 41:11:** "Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine."

Throughout the entire book Job had stubbornly held on to his pride to such an extent that he was willing to *condemn God Himself*. God, however, wasn't pleased. While He does lift up the humble, He resists the proud:

**James 4:6:** "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

Job's speeches lacked any trace of humility. He proudly insisted that he was right and God was wrong. Because of this, when God met him He did *not* lift him up. Instead He rebuked Job and reminded him that He was great and Job was small, weak, and foolish.

God broke Job's pride. By the time He was done Job repented:

**Job 42:5-6:** "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

But the story isn't done. Job wasn't the only person who God was upset with. The Lord was also angry with Job's three friends. God told Job's friends that His wrath was against them as well:

**Job 42:7-9:** “And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job.”

Interestingly, God never rebuked Elihu, the young man who condemned Job for condemning God.

Once Job prayed for his three friends, God restored the his wealth and prosperity:

**Job 42:10-13:** “And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat

bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters.”

Job had ten more children. He lived for another 140 years and saw his children to the 4<sup>th</sup> generation:

**Job 42:16-17:** “After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.”

This isn't the last mention of Job in the Old Testament. He's also mentioned in the book of Ezekiel, where the Lord holds him up as an example of a righteous man:

**Ezekiel 14:14:** “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.”

When the Lord wanted to mention someone up as an example of incredible righteousness He chose Noah, Daniel, and Job. That's quite a testimony! It's true that Job sinned by condemning God, but he repented of it and became a wiser man.

## ***In Conclusion***

There may be times in our life when terrible things happen to us – things that, from our vantage point, seem unfair. When those events take place the Lord wants us to *live by faith* (Habakkuk 2:4). That means He wants us to trust Him instead of curse Him. He wants us to cast all our cares upon Him, for He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). He wants us to keep serving Him in spite of the pain and keep trusting in Him.

The trial of our faith is exceptionally important (1 Peter 1:7). Without faith it's impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). There may be times in our life when we don't understand what's going on – and when that happens we *must* trust God. We must believe God when He tells us that He loves us (John 3:16), that He cares about us, and that He will always be with us and never forsake us (Matthew 28:20).

That's the heart of the book of Job. Live by faith and not by sight. There's much more going on than what we know – so in times of trouble we must seek God instead of fleeing from Him. Those who put their trust in God, and who continue to trust in God, will not be ashamed (Romans 9:33).