

Job Part 3: Of God & Job (Chapters 27-42)

Job 42

42 Then Job replied to the LORD:

²“I know that you can do anything,
and no one can stop you.

³You asked, ‘Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?’
It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about,
things far too wonderful for me.

⁴You said, ‘Listen and I will speak!
I have some questions for you,
and you must answer them.’

⁵I had only heard about you before,
but now I have seen you with my own eyes.

⁶I take back everything I said,
and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance.”

⁷After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has. ⁸So take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer on your behalf. I will not treat you as you deserve, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has.” ⁹So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite did as the LORD commanded them, and the LORD accepted Job’s prayer.

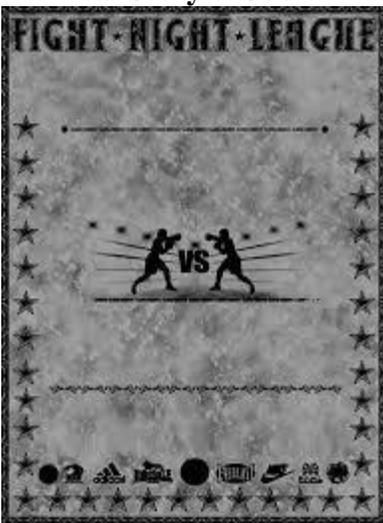
¹⁰When Job prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes. In fact, the LORD gave him twice as much as before! ¹¹Then all his brothers, sisters, and former friends came and feasted with him in his home. And they consoled him and comforted him because of all the trials the LORD had brought against him. And each of them brought him a gift of money^[a] and a gold ring.

¹²So the LORD blessed Job in the second half of his life even more than in the beginning. For now he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 teams of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. ¹³He also gave Job seven more sons and three more daughters. ¹⁴He named his first daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. ¹⁵In all the land no women were as lovely as the daughters of Job. And their father put them into his will along with their brothers.

¹⁶Job lived 140 years after that, living to see four generations of his children and grandchildren. ¹⁷Then he died, an old man who had lived a long, full life.



The Real Story of Job



JOB v. God

We often see Job as a struggle between Job & God
But in doing so we miss the context of the entire book
God is not challenging Job



SATAN v. GOD

Satan is Challenging God
Part of the literary artistry of this tale is that Job is found at the very pivot of this battle.
In a sense Job represents humanity's place in a cosmic existential struggle.

In the tale of the tape, Satan loses hands down.
There is no way he can beat God.
But this isn't a friendly contest.
This is all about Good vs. Evil.
And evil doesn't play by any rules.
The Way Satan thinks he can hurt God is through Job.
You see, humanity has always been weak.
Genesis told us the story of the weakness of humanity.
If Satan can get the one good person - the champion of humanity's goodness to fall,
He lands a body blow to God.
He can't win against God, but he's pretty sure he can win against Job.
Vengeance is not about winning the war.
It is about forcing a pyrrhic victory.
Causing maximum pain and suffering against the Victor.

Job in a sense isn't just about suffering.
It goes even deeper, more visceral than that.
It asks - What is the meaning of our existence in light of suffering?
And that is the question that will be answered by the Book of Job.

The Breaking of Job

Satan has reduced Job from



to



Satan has gotten Job up against the ropes.
But Job never sees Satan.

Job loses his fortune.
Job loses his family.
Job loses his health.
Job loses his hope.
Job loses his mind.
Job loses his faith.

Job finally breaks.
No more silence, no more blind fear of God or faith in God.
He challenges God to answer him.
In all religious understanding God needs not respond.
All his ways are mysterious.
Job is but a gnat to the divine.
In all other religions, the Gods are frivolous - anthropomorphic.
God here may seem uncaring, perhaps even fickle.

Job has lost everything.
But he has not lost God.
God hears Job.
God sees Job.
God Answers Job.
Mystery is not frivolity.
Mystery is not elusive.
The Story of Job reaches the very limits of his existence of feeling, knowing, sensing.
To be a disciple is to be naked and laid bare.
"God, to whom all secrets are laid bare."
God is present at that place.
God meet us there at the end of all things.
And we may not comprehend or grasp any reason or answer or comprehension.



The throes of a child's feverish tantrum in the arms of their parent.

[Illustration]

One screams while the other whispers.
What happens when we blame the wrong person for our pain.
We do not know how to separate sovereignty from causality.
Just because God is sovereign does not mean he desires our suffering.
Suffering is a state of being, not the chief evil in existence.
Do you not know that is why we pray?
Prayers have a range from screams to silence.

1st Question: Did You Create the World?



Job (2014), Bob Booth

"I want to Die."

Chapter 3:11-14

¹"Why wasn't I born dead?

Why didn't I die as I came from the womb?

¹²Why was I laid on my mother's lap?

Why did she nurse me at her breasts?

¹³Had I died at birth, I would now be at peace.

I would be asleep and at rest.

Job throws in the Towel.

He is giving up on life.

To kill oneself is to kill all the world.

To erase all experience of good or evil, joy or pain, love or hatred

All these are in the balance of human experience.

God challenges Job.

This is not merely tender love - it is directional.

It is firm but also has purpose.

Job is not treated like a weakling.

38 Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind:

²"Who is this that questions my wisdom
with such ignorant words?

³Brace yourself like a man,
because I have some questions for you,
and you must answer them.

⁴"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell me, if you know so much.

⁵Who determined its dimensions
and stretched out the surveying line?

⁶What supports its foundations,
and who laid its cornerstone

⁷as the morning stars sang together
and all the angels shouted for joy?

Have you not considered the complexity,
the beauty, the power, the breadth and height of creation?

Have you tamed it?

Can you control it?

Hurricanes, Wild beasts, earthquakes.

The morning breeze, the sunshine, the rain.
The flowers, the oceans, the mountains, the sky.
The celestial bodies, heaven and earth.

[Video] To Exist

Video Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6qi393Z7L8>

Audio Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzNvk80XY9s>

"Saturn" by Asleep at Last

Exercise: A Prayer for those facing Natural Illness or Disaster

Hurricane, Fire, Flood, Earthquake, Famine, Disease - Cancer, MS, Mental Health, Chronic Conditions)

2nd Question: Can you Mete Out Ultimate Justice?



"Why have you Abandoned Me?"

Chapter 30 (Chapters 29-31)

¹⁶ "And now my life seeps away.

Depression haunts my days.

¹⁷ At night my bones are filled with pain,
which gnaws at me relentlessly.

¹⁸ With a strong hand, God grabs my shirt.^[a]

He grips me by the collar of my coat.

¹⁹ He has thrown me into the mud.

I'm nothing more than dust and ashes.

²⁰ "I cry to you, O God, but you don't answer.

I stand before you, but you don't even look.

²¹ You have become cruel toward me.

You use your power to persecute me.

²² You throw me into the whirlwind

and destroy me in the storm.

²³ And I know you are sending me to my death—

the destination of all who live.

Job is asking if God has given up on him.

The reality is that God has never given up on him.

God has always believed in Job.

God has believed that Job is his champion against Satan.

God has not given up on him.

But Job is giving up on the goodness of God.

He is questioning the silence of God.

So God asks him what he knows about Justice.

Job 40

⁶Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind:

⁷"Brace yourself like a man,
because I have some questions for you,
and you must answer them.

⁸"Will you discredit my justice
and condemn me just to prove you are right?

⁹Are you as strong as God?
Can you thunder with a voice like his?

¹⁰All right, put on your glory and splendor,
your honor and majesty.

¹¹Give vent to your anger.
Let it overflow against the proud.

¹²Humiliate the proud with a glance;
walk on the wicked where they stand.

¹³Bury them in the dust.
Imprison them in the world of the dead.

¹⁴Then even I would praise you,
for your own strength would save you.
God has the whole picture and the long game in mind.
Our salvation comes through ultimate injustice.

The Death of Jesus.

The Creation killing the Creator.

Deicide.

Mercy precedes Justice.

God creates an escape hatch where there is no escape.

He let's all people know of it.

Then justice will fall.

Yes, there is suffering, and injustice in the present.

But the wicked will not escape justice forever.

The great and terrible day of the Lord.

Jesus Comes first as the Lamb, the Sacrifice, the Saviour.

Then he will return as the Lion, the Judge, the King.

It is fitting that he who by his blood offers freedom for all will also be the judge of all.

"The wheels of Justice turn slowly but they grind exceedingly fine."

Justice delayed is not justice with-held

Only by mercy does anyone escape the just wrath of God.

And only those who throw themselves upon that mercy extended through the kindness of Christ will find it.

All others will discover the justice of God.

Inasmuch it is within your ability, act justly.

In doing so you bring the Kingdom of God.

Job simply bows his head to this and knows he cannot answer God.

He does not know the breadth of creation.

He does not know God's plan of redemption.

And in the end he admits that.



In his surrender, he finds victory.
He finds peace and that God has never left him.
We may lose our faith, but God does not lose his.
This is the paradox of the disciplined life.
It is in dying to ourselves that we receive eternal life.
It is actually victory over ones-self.

Exercise: A prayer for mercy for the enslaved & oppressed and a prayer for justice.
(War, Famine, Human trafficking, addiction, persecution...)

Restoration



Julian of Norwich (c.1342-1416)

14th Century England

Grew up in a time of the Black Plague (1346–53) in Europe

that wiped out est. 30-60% of Europe. 70-200 Million people.

Half of everyone you know would have died.

Her story was that she had taken ill when in her 30s.

Paralyzed and almost blinded she was given last rites.

As she looked upon the crucifix held over her she had a vision of Christ.

Subsequently 16 other visions.

She recovered at the end of these vision.



Became an anchorite in Norwich.

She was a constant counsel to those in need who came to her.

Her written work is "Revelations of Divine Love."

She understood how God suffered with his creation.

She saw God as loving in the midst of suffering.



"All shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well."

(for more, see: <https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/incontext/article/julian/>)



This too will be true of our friend Job.

In this great parable, the one who suffers intercedes for this foolish friends.

The one who suffers and finds faith also finds compassion.

Some think that God rewarding Job double is a bit of a cop out.

Well, everything worked out for him.

That interpretation is short-sighted and misses the point.

Job does not point to mere temporal success and wealth

It points towards the ultimate end.

I don't know if this is the end we will know in this life or in the life to come.
I don't have that foresight and I am not God.
Some are only blinded by their pain.
Others through their pain discover the true nature of God.
For God has suffered the day we became lost.
And he has been looking for us ever since.

Refrain



So let me say this again:
To be a disciple is to be naked and laid bare.
"God, to whom all secrets are laid bare."
God is present at that place.
God meet us there at the end of all things.
And we may not comprehend or grasp any reason or answer or comprehension.
That is not the point.
The point is that Job discovers that God is found in agony.
God is found in the deepest and darkest of places to be present.

Job, the representative of the struggle of the Good,
Shows that our place is at the very centre of the cosmic war
to save the soul of humanity.
You see, the Kingdom of God is not one of territory or political power.
It is planted in the very heart and soul of human hearts.
It is within you and me and everyone you touch that the fight continues today.

In the very heart of darkness, Jesus alone holds the light.
Jesus descended to the dead and set the captives free.
We live within that mystery of salvation.

Prayer for Salvation of ourselves and all the lost.