Job

Bible Stories Anthology — Job 1–2; 38–42

Copyright 2026

Distribution of this study as is in its entirety is permitted & encouraged.

Author: John Lobota

Research Assistant: Claude Cowork

papertiq@bellsouth.net

> **Romans 15:4** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

Why These Stories Were Written — Romans 15:4

Paul had just quoted a thousand-year-old psalm and applied it to Christ (Romans 15:3, quoting Psalm 69:9), and then he explained why he could: *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning*. **Written aforetime** — the scriptures that already stood before this present age of grace opened at Pentecost: the record God gave through Moses, the prophets and the writings, along with the Gospel accounts of Christ's earthly ministry, which belong to that same time before Pentecost. (When Paul wrote these words, the scriptures he had in hand were the Hebrew scriptures; the Gospels had not yet been written down.) **Written for our learning** — "learning" is the Greek word for *teaching*, the very word rendered "doctrine" in 2 Timothy 3:16. These are not quaint tales; they are doctrine in narrative form. Adam, Ruth and David never knew us, but God did, and He had their lives recorded with us in mind — written *for* us, though not all of it written *to* us, which is why we read Israel's history as our instruction and not as our marching orders. **Through patience and comfort of the scriptures** — "patience" is literally *remaining under*, the staying power we gain from watching men and women stay under a load; "comfort" is a *calling alongside*, the strength God brings when He meets them there, which is why Paul calls Him "the God of patience and consolation" in the very next verse. **That we might have hope** — not a wish, but confident expectation: the return of Jesus Christ and everlasting life with Him. That is why these accounts exist, and it is how they should be read.

Why?

In one day, a man lost everything.

His oxen and donkeys were stolen and his servants killed. Fire fell from the sky and burned up his sheep and shepherds. Raiders took his camels. And then a messenger came running with the worst news of all: a great wind had struck the house where his ten children were feasting, and the house had fallen on them. They were all dead.

A few days later his body broke out in painful sores from head to foot. He sat on the ash heap outside the town, scraping himself with a broken piece of pottery. His wife told him to curse God and die. His friends came to comfort him — and spent thirty chapters telling him it was his own fault.

The man's name was Job, and his question is the oldest question of the human heart: *Why do the righteous suffer?*

But the book of Job does something no other ancient book does. It lets the reader see behind the curtain. Before Job loses anything, we are shown a scene in heaven that Job himself never sees. We learn who struck him, and why, and where the limits were set. Job never learns it. We do.

This is the story of a man who suffered without knowing why — of the adversary who struck him, the friends who blamed him, the God who answered him from the whirlwind, and the end the Lord had in view all along.

The Setting

When. Scripture does not date the book of Job, but the story itself points to the time of the **patriarchs** — the age of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob:

- Job's wealth is counted in flocks and herds, like Abraham's (Genesis 12:16; 13:2).
- Job acts as priest for his own family, offering burnt offerings himself (1:5), as Noah, Abraham and Jacob did — before the Law gave that work to the priests of Aaron.
- There is no mention of the Exodus, the Law of Moses, the tabernacle or Israel.
- Job lived another **140 years** after his trial (42:16), a lifespan like those of the patriarchs.
- The coin mentioned at the end, the *qesitah* (**"a piece of money,"** 42:11), appears elsewhere only in the time of Jacob (Genesis 33:19; Joshua 24:32).

Was Job a real man? Yes. Ezekiel names him with Noah and Daniel as one of three righteous men (Ezekiel 14:14, 20), and James speaks of **"the patience of Job"** (James 5:11). The book is history, written in the form of poetry for most of its length.

Where. "The land of Uz" (1:1). Lamentations links Uz with **Edom**: **"O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz"** (Lamentations 4:21). One of Job's friends, Eliphaz, is a **Temanite**, and Teman was a grandson of Esau and a district of Edom (Genesis 36:11; Jeremiah 49:7). So the story most likely takes place east or southeast of the land of Israel, in or near Edom or northern Arabia. Job was **"the greatest of all the men of the east"** (1:3).

The book. Job is mostly Hebrew poetry. It opens with two chapters of prose (the story), then a long poetic middle (chapters 3–41) — Job's lament, three rounds of speeches between Job and three friends, a younger man named Elihu, and finally God Himself speaking from a whirlwind — and closes with a short section of prose (42:7-17). This story follows the prose frame and God's answer closely, and summarizes the long middle.

Who.

- **Job**, a wealthy, righteous man of Uz.
- **Job's wife.**
- **Satan**, the adversary.
- **The sons of God**, the angels.
- **Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite**, Job's three friends.
- **Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite**, a younger man.
- **The LORD.**

The administration. The **Patriarchal** administration — the long age from the Flood to the giving of the Law, when God dealt with families through their heads and the head of the house acted as priest.

The Story, Told Faithfully

A Perfect and 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.*

"Perfect." The Hebrew *tam* does not mean sinless. It means *whole, complete, of integrity* — a man without hypocrisy, the same on the inside as on the outside. Jacob is called by the same word, **"a plain man"** (Genesis 25:27; story 10). Job himself says plainly, **"I have sinned"** (7:20). His *perfection* was wholeness of heart toward God.

"Upright." Straight, honest in his dealings.

"One that feared God, and eschewed evil." He reverenced God, and he turned away from evil. These four descriptions are given **three times** in two chapters — once by the narrator (1:1) and twice by God Himself (1:8; 2:3). Whatever happens to Job, the book wants us to know from the start: it was not because he was wicked.

> **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.*

"Seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses." Notice the *ands* — a figure called **polysyndeton** that slows the list down so we feel the size of each part. Job was a great sheikh of the east, wealthy beyond measure.

> **Job 1:5** *And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.*

"When the days of their feasting were gone about." His seven sons took turns hosting feasts, each on **"his day"** (1:4), probably their birthdays, and invited their three sisters. When each round of feasting ended, Job **"sanctified them"** — called them to purify themselves — and offered a burnt offering for each child.

"It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." The Hebrew word here, surprisingly, is *barak*, which normally means **bless**. The writers of Scripture avoided writing *curse God* directly, so they wrote *bless God* and let the context show the meaning. This is a figure called **euphemism** — putting a gentler word in place of a harsh one. It appears four times in these chapters (1:5, 11; 2:5, 9).

"Thus did Job continually." Job did not wait for his children to sin. He prayed for them and offered for them as a habit, just in case. It is a picture of a father's constant care for his children before God.

The Adversary

> **Job 1:6** *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.*

"The sons of God." In the book of Job this phrase (*bene ha-elohim*) means the **angels**, God's heavenly servants. At creation, **"the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy"** (38:7).

"Satan." In Hebrew, *ha-satan* — **"the adversary,"** the opposer, the accuser. The word has the article: *the* adversary. He is not one of God's loyal servants doing a job. He is God's enemy and man's, the one Jesus called **"a murderer from the beginning"** and **"a liar, and the father of it"** (John 8:44), and the one

Revelation calls **"the accuser of our brethren … which accused them before our God day and night"** (Revelation 12:10).

"Came also among them." He came among the angels, but he was not one of them in purpose. The scene does not tell us everything about heaven; it gives us what we need to understand Job's story.

> **Job 1:8** *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?*

God, not Satan, brings up Job's name. **"Hast thou considered my servant Job?"** God was proud of Job: *there is none like him in the earth.*

> **Job 1:9** *Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?*
> **Job 1:10** *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.*
> **Job 1:11** *But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.*

"Doth Job fear God for nought?" The adversary's accusation: *Job only serves You because You pay him well.* It was an attack on Job — and on God. If the accusation were true, then no one loves God for who He is; they love Him only for what He gives.

"Hast not thou made an hedge about him?" Notice what Satan admits. God had built a protective wall around Job, his family and everything he owned — and Satan could not get through it. The adversary himself testifies that God protects His own.

"But put forth thine hand now." Satan asks *God* to strike Job.

> **Job 1:12** *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.*

"All that he hath is in thy power." God did *not* put forth His hand. He allowed the adversary to act — and set a limit: **"only upon himself put not forth thine hand."** Then it was **Satan** who **"went forth from the presence of the LORD."**

This verse is one of the most important in the Bible for understanding suffering. The adversary is real. He wants to destroy. He cannot go beyond what God allows. And when he acts, it is *his* hand that strikes, not God's.

One Terrible Day

> **Job 1:13** *And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:*
> **Job 1:14** *And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:*
> **Job 1:15** *And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

Four messengers came, one after another, each one still speaking when the next arrived:

- **The Sabeans** — raiders from Sheba in Arabia — took the oxen and donkeys and killed the servants (1:15).
- **"The fire of God is fallen from heaven"** and burned up the sheep and shepherds (1:16).
- **The Chaldeans**, in three bands, took the camels and killed the servants (1:17).
- **A great wind from the wilderness** struck the house where Job's children were feasting, and it fell on them (1:18-19).

> **Job 1:16** *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.*

"The fire of God." The servant called it *the fire of God*, as anyone in that day would have called lightning. His report was accurate about what he saw; it was not a statement about who sent it. The reader knows: it was the adversary, acting under God's permission (1:12). The Bible records the servant's words truthfully, without endorsing his explanation.

> **Job 1:19** *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.*

"I only am escaped alone to tell thee." The same words four times (1:15, 16, 17, 19). Each messenger, the only survivor. The repetition hammers the blows one after another, the way they fell on Job.

Notice what the adversary used: human raiders, fire from the sky, a desert wind. Satan was behind events that looked like crime and "natural disaster." Nothing in the servants' reports would have told Job who was really behind them.

Job's Response

> **Job 1:20** *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,*
> **Job 1:21** *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.*
> **Job 1:22** *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

"Rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground." The signs of deep mourning in the ancient east. Job grieved. He did not pretend nothing was wrong.

"And worshipped." In the same motion as his grief, he bowed before God.

"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." Everything he had, he had been given. *Thither* means back to the earth, the dust from which man was made (Genesis 3:19). Birth and death mark out the whole of life; this is a figure called **merismus**, naming the two ends to mean everything between.

"The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away." Job spoke as men of his time spoke, crediting God with what happened. He did not know about the scene in heaven. The reader does. As this series understands it, Scripture often speaks of God *doing* what He *permitted* — a Hebrew way of speaking called the **idiom of permission**. Job's words were not the full truth about who struck him; they were the words of a faithful man who knew that nothing happened outside God's control, and who refused to let go of God.

"Blessed be the name of the LORD." Satan had said Job would *curse* God to His face. Job *blessed* Him — the real *barak* this time.

"In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Job did not accuse God of wrongdoing. The adversary's first accusation had failed.

Skin for Skin

The scene in heaven was repeated (2:1-3). God said of Job, **"still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause"** (2:3).

"Thou movedst me against him, to destroy him." Here God Himself speaks of Job's trouble as if He had done it — because it happened by His permission — while the narrator has just shown us that it was Satan who acted. God's words and the narrator's report stand side by side, so that we can see the idiom and understand it.

"Without cause." God declares it plainly: Job had done nothing to deserve this.

> **Job 2:4** *And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.*
> **Job 2:5** *But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.*

"Skin for skin." Probably a proverb of trade: a man will give one skin for another. Satan's meaning: *a man will give up anything — his flocks, even his children — to save his own skin.*

> **Job 2:6** *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*
> **Job 2:7** *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.*

"Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." A new permission — and a new limit. Satan could touch Job's body, but not take his life.

"So went Satan forth ... and smote Job." Again, the text names who struck: **Satan.** Not "the LORD smote Job."

"Sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." The Hebrew *shechin* means inflamed sores or boils — the same word used of the plague of boils in Egypt (Exodus 9:9). Later Job describes worms in his flesh, skin cracking and running (7:5), fever (30:30), weight loss (19:20), and sleeplessness (7:4). The exact disease cannot be identified. It was agonizing, disfiguring and long.

> **Job 2:8** *And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.*

"He sat down among the ashes." Outside ancient towns was the ash heap, where rubbish and the ashes of fires were burned and dumped. Outcasts, beggars and the diseased sat there. The greatest man of the east now sat on the town dump, scraping his sores with a piece of broken pottery.

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

> **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.*

"Curse God, and die." Again *barak*. His wife had lost ten children too. Her words came out of her own pain, and Scripture does not tell us more about her. But her counsel was exactly what Satan wanted.

"Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh." Job did not call her a fool; he said she was speaking *like* one. The word *foolish* (*nabal*) means godless, morally foolish (Psalm 14:1).

"Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Again, Job spoke the language of his day, crediting God with all that came. And **"in all this did not Job sin with his lips."** He did not curse God. The adversary's second accusation had failed too.

Three Friends

> **Job 2:11** *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.*
>
> **Job 2:12** *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.*
>
> **Job 2:13** *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.*

"Made an appointment together." They agreed to come together, from their different homelands, out of real love for Job.

"They knew him not." Job was so disfigured they did not recognize him.

"They rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads." They joined in his mourning.

"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." This was the best thing they did. They came, they wept, they sat with him on the ash heap, and they kept quiet. Seven days of silent company was the customary period of mourning for the dead (Genesis 50:10; 1 Samuel 31:13). Sometimes the best comfort is simply to be there. **"Weep with them that weep"** (Romans 12:15).

Then they opened their mouths, and everything went wrong.

The Long Argument

Job's lament (chapter 3). Job broke the silence first: **"After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day"** (3:1) — the day he was born. *Let the day perish wherein I was born* (3:3). He did not curse God; he cursed his birthday, and wished he had never lived. These are raw words of agony, and Scripture records them honestly. Faith is not the same as feeling fine.

The friends' theory. The three friends spoke in turn, three rounds of speeches (chapters 4–27). Their words are often beautiful and often contain truth, but they all rest on one idea: *God always blesses the*

righteous and always punishes the wicked in this life. You are suffering terribly. Therefore you must have sinned terribly. Eliphaz put it first and most clearly:

> **Job 4:7** *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?*

Bildad said Job's children must have died for their own sins (8:4). Zophar said Job deserved even worse than he got (11:6). By the end, Eliphaz was accusing Job of crimes he had never committed — taking pledges from the poor, refusing water to the thirsty, sending widows away empty (22:5-9). Their theory was neat, and it was wrong. And because it was wrong, they had to invent sins to make it fit.

Job's answers. Job held to his integrity: he had not sinned in a way that deserved this. But he had no explanation either. He knew nothing of the scene in heaven. So he swung between despair and faith, between protest and trust:

- Despair: **"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope"** (7:6).
- Accusing God of being his enemy (16:9-14; 19:6-11) — words he would later take back.
- Trust: **"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him"** (13:15).
- Confidence: **"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"** (23:10).

A cry for a mediator. In his agony, Job longed for someone to stand between him and God:

> **Job 9:33** *Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.*

"Daysman" is an old English word for an **umpire** or arbitrator — someone who sets a day for a hearing and lays his hand on both parties to bring them together. Job felt that God was too great to reason with, and there was no one in between. Remember that cry.

A hope beyond death. Job asked the great question: **"If a man die, shall he live again?"** (14:14). He knew that death was a sleep: **"So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep"** (14:12). And yet, in the depths of the book, he rose to one of the greatest statements of hope in the Old Testament:

> **Job 19:25** *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:*
> **Job 19:26** *And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:*
> **Job 19:27** *Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*

"My redeemer." The Hebrew *go'el* is the **kinsman-redeemer** — the near relative who would buy back what had been lost, avenge wrongs, and defend the helpless (Leviticus 25:25; Ruth 3:9; story 20). Job's family had abandoned him (19:13-19). But he knew he had a Redeemer who lives.

"He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." At the last, his Redeemer would stand on the earth as the final word in Job's case.

"Yet in my flesh shall I see God." The Hebrew of 19:26 is hard, and it can be translated more than one way. But the plain sense is resurrection hope: after his body was destroyed in death, Job expected to see God — with his own eyes, **"and not another."** He did not expect to float away as a spirit at death. He expected to sleep in the dust and be raised. As this series understands it, the Redeemer Job longed for is

God, who redeems His people through the one He sent — the man Christ Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead and through whom He will raise the dead at the last day (John 5:28-29; Acts 17:31).

Wisdom (chapter 28). In the middle of the debate stands a poem about wisdom: men can dig mines into the earth for gold and sapphires, but where can wisdom be found? It ends: **"Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding"** (28:28) — the very words with which the book had described Job (1:1).

Elihu (chapters 32–37). When the three friends had nothing left to say, a younger man named Elihu spoke. He was angry at Job for justifying himself rather than God, and angry at the friends for condemning Job without proving anything (32:2-3). He argued that God speaks to men in many ways, including through suffering, to turn them back from the pit (33:14-30), and he too longed for a **"messenger … an interpreter"** who would say, **"Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom"** (33:23-24). God never answers Elihu directly, and readers have long differed over whether he was wiser than the others or just another young voice who did not know the whole story. As this series understands it, Elihu said much that was true about God's greatness and prepared the way for God's own voice — but he, too, did not know what the reader knows.

Out of the Whirlwind

At last, God spoke.

> **Job 38:1** *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,*
> **Job 38:2** *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*
> **Job 38:3** *Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.*
> **Job 38:4** *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.*

"Out of the whirlwind." A storm — the kind of manifestation that showed God's presence and power (Ezekiel 1:4; Nahum 1:3).

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" God's first words were a correction. Job had spoken beyond what he knew. He had accused God of being his enemy and demanded that God answer him in court (31:35). God did not accept that.

"Gird up now thy loins like a man." Tuck up your long robe into your belt, ready for action — a picture for *get ready*.

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Then came something no one expected. God did not explain the scene in heaven. He did not mention Satan. He did not tell Job why. Instead, He asked Job question after question — more than seventy of them — about creation:

- **The earth** — who measured it, who laid its cornerstone, **"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"** (38:4-7).
- **The sea** — who shut it in with doors and said, *Here shall thy proud waves be stayed* (38:8-11).
- **Light and darkness, snow and hail, rain and lightning, the stars** — *Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?* (38:31).
- **The animals** — the lion, the raven, the wild goat, the wild donkey, the wild ox, the ostrich, the horse, the hawk, the eagle (38:39–39:30).

This chain of questions is a figure called **erotesis**, questions asked not for information but to make a point. And sometimes God's questions carry gentle **irony**: **"Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?"** (38:21).

What was the point? *Job, you cannot run even the smallest part of My creation. You do not understand how I feed the young ravens or when the wild goats give birth. How then can you understand all My ways with you?* God did not humiliate Job. He showed Job His own greatness — and His care for every creature, even those no man ever sees.

> **Job 40:3** *Then Job answered the LORD, and said,*
> **Job 40:4** *Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.*

"I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." Job had nothing more to say.

Behemoth and Leviathan

God continued (40:6–41:34), describing two great creatures:

> **Job 40:15** *Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.*
> **Job 40:17** *He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.*

Behemoth (40:15-24) is the plural of the Hebrew word for *beast*, probably meaning *the beast of all beasts*. He eats grass like an ox, lives among reeds and rivers, and is **"the chief of the ways of God"** (40:19). Many commentators identify him with the **hippopotamus** or the **elephant**. But **"He moveth his tail like a cedar"** fits neither: the hippo and elephant have small tails. For this reason many creation scientists believe Behemoth was a large **sauropod dinosaur**, living alongside man, which fits the creation account in which land animals and man were made on the same day (Genesis 1:24-27). This is a reasonable reading, though not one Scripture states directly.

Leviathan (chapter 41) is a fearsome creature of the waters, armoured with scales like shields, whom no hook or spear can conquer (41:1-2, 15, 26). Many identify him with the **crocodile**. Others see a great extinct sea creature. Scripture elsewhere also uses *Leviathan* as a picture of God's enemies (Psalm 74:14; Isaiah 27:1).

Why end with these two? God was showing Job creatures that no man could tame or conquer — and that God made them and rules them. As this series understands it, there may also be a hint here of a greater enemy that no man can overcome but God can: **"He is a king over all the children of pride"** (41:34).

I Have Heard … Now I See

> **Job 42:1** *Then Job answered the LORD, and said,*
> **Job 42:2** *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*
> **Job 42:3** *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

"Therefore have I uttered that I understood not." Job admitted he had spoken beyond his knowledge.

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

> **Job 42:6** *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." This is the turning point of the book. Job never got the explanation he demanded. He never learned about Satan's accusation. But he met God — and that was enough. His questions were not answered; they were swallowed up in the presence of the One who answered them.

"Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." *Abhor myself* may mean *I despise my words* or *I retract what I said*. Job did not repent of hidden sins the friends had accused him of; he repented of speaking against God from his ignorance.

The Verdict

> **Job 42:7** *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.*

"Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath." Here is the surprise. God had corrected Job — but His **wrath** fell on the friends. Job had spoken rashly in his pain, but he had been honest with God and had spoken *to* Him. The friends had spoken *about* God, defending a theory that made God look like a machine of reward and punishment — and in doing so they had slandered an innocent man. Their theology was wrong, and God said so.

"My servant Job." God called him *my servant* four times in two verses (42:7-8). The man the friends had condemned, God honoured.

> **Job 42:8** *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.*

"My servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept." The friends had to bring sacrifices — and Job had to pray for them. The man they had wounded would be the one to intercede for them.

Twice as Much

> **Job 42:10** *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.*

"The LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends." *Turned the captivity* is an idiom meaning *restored his fortunes*. And notice when: **when he prayed for his friends.** Job's restoration came when he forgave and interceded for the men who had hurt him.

"The LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before." Satan had taken; God gave back double.

> **Job 42:11** *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.*

"All the evil that the LORD had brought upon him." Here the narrator himself, who had shown us step by step that Satan did the damage, sums it up as *the evil that the LORD had brought*. He is not

contradicting himself. He is using the same idiom of permission that God used in 2:3 — after first showing the reader exactly what lay behind it. (The word *evil*, *ra'*, here means *calamity*, *trouble*, not moral wickedness.)

"A piece of money, and every one an earring of gold." Gifts to help him start again.

> **Job 42:12** *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.*
> **Job 42:13** *He had also seven sons and three daughters.*

Double of everything — except the children. Job received exactly twice his sheep (7,000 → 14,000), camels (3,000 → 6,000), oxen (500 → 1,000 yoke) and donkeys (500 → 1,000). But he received **the same number of children**: seven sons and three daughters. Many readers have noticed this and drawn a beautiful conclusion: Job's first ten children were not lost forever. They were sleeping in death, awaiting the resurrection, so that in the end Job would have twenty — twice as many. Scripture does not say this, and it is only an inference, but it fits Job's own hope: **"If a man die, shall he live again?"**

> **Job 42:14** *And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.*
> **Job 42:15** *And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.*

The daughters' names. Jemima probably means *dove*; **Kezia** means *cassia*, a fragrant spice; **Keren-happuch** means *horn of eye-paint*, a container of the cosmetic women used to beautify their eyes. They were named for beauty, peace and fragrance — the opposite of the ash heap.

"Their father gave them inheritance among their brethren." Daughters did not usually inherit when there were sons (compare Numbers 27:8). Job gave them an equal share. The man who had suffered so much had learned to be generous.

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

"Full of days." Satisfied with life. The same was said of Abraham (Genesis 25:8) and Isaac (Genesis 35:29). Job died, and rests in the grave until the resurrection, when he will see his Redeemer with his own eyes, **"and not another."**

Where the Story Leads

To the Messiah

The daysman. Job cried, **"Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both"** (9:33), and **"O that one might plead for a man with God"** (16:21). God has given that daysman: **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"** (1 Timothy 2:5). He is a man — one who can lay his hand on us — and he has been raised and exalted by God, so that he can lay his hand on our behalf before God's throne.

The Redeemer who lives. Job said, **"I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."** God is the Redeemer of His people, and He has done His redeeming work through His Son, **"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity"** (Titus 2:14). Jesus Christ died, was raised from the dead and ascended to God's right hand, and he will return to the earth: **"this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"** (Acts 1:11). On that day **"the dead in Christ shall rise first"** (1 Thessalonians 4:16), and Job will see God's salvation with his own eyes.

The innocent sufferer. Job suffered **"without cause"** (2:3), was condemned by his friends, mocked by others (30:1, 9-10), and abandoned by family. Jesus suffered without any sin at all: **"who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth"** (1 Peter 2:22). Job was not sinless; Jesus was. Job's suffering tested his faith; Jesus' suffering paid for ours.

The intercessor for his accusers. Job prayed for the friends who had wronged him, and God accepted him on their behalf. Jesus prayed for those who crucified him: **"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"** (Luke 23:34). Now, raised and ascended, **"he ever liveth to make intercession for them"** (Hebrews 7:25).

The accuser defeated. In Job, Satan accused, and God answered with Job's faithfulness. Jesus said to Peter, in words that echo Job's story: **"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not"** (Luke 22:31-32). Through his death and resurrection, Christ has undone the one **"that had the power of death, that is, the devil"** (Hebrews 2:14). The accuser of the brethren will be **"cast down"** (Revelation 12:10).

To the Grace Administration

A real adversary. Job 1–2 pulls back the curtain on the battle every believer is in. **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith"** (1 Peter 5:8-9). **"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil"** (Ephesians 6:11). **"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"** (John 10:10). The believer need not assume *God did this to me.*

No one can accuse us now. Satan accused Job before God. But in Christ: **"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"** (Romans 8:33-34).

Don't be Job's friends. Suffering is not proof of sin. Jesus said of a man born blind, **"Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents"** (John 9:3). When a brother or sister suffers, sit with them first; **"Weep with them that weep"** (Romans 12:15); and never add blame to grief.

God's grace in suffering. Paul asked three times to be delivered from **"a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me"** (2 Corinthians 12:7), and received grace instead: **"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness"** (2 Corinthians 12:9). Not every trial is removed in this life; God's grace is always enough to stand in it.

The end of the Lord. "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11). *Patience* is endurance, staying under the load. *The end of the Lord* is the outcome God brought about.

The middle of Job's story looked like abandonment; the end showed God's heart. **"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"** (Romans 8:18).

Comfort others. God **"comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God"** (2 Corinthians 1:4).

To the Topic of Suffering

- **The adversary is real** — and he is the one who steals, kills and destroys.
- **God sets the limits** — "only upon himself put not forth thine hand."
- **Scripture often speaks of God doing what He permitted** — the idiom of permission.
- **Suffering is not proof of sin** — God's wrath fell on the friends' theory.
- **Grief is not unbelief** — Job wept, mourned and complained, and God called him "my servant."
- **We do not always get the "why"** — Job never did.
- **Seeing God is greater than having answers.**
- **Forgiveness opens the door to restoration** — "when he prayed for his friends."
- **The end reveals God's heart** — "very pitiful, and of tender mercy."
- **The final answer is the resurrection** — "I know that my redeemer liveth."

The Main Takeaway

Job of Uz was "perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil," the greatest man of the east; when the adversary, Satan, accused him before the LORD of serving God only for gain — "Doth Job fear God for nought?" — God allowed Satan to touch all that Job had, and later his body, but set a limit each time, and it was Satan who went out and struck: raiders, fire, wind, the death of all ten children, and sore boils from head to foot; Job grieved, worshipped, and said, "blessed be the name of the LORD," and "in all this Job sinned not"; his three friends sat with him in silence seven days, then insisted for thirty chapters that his suffering proved hidden sin, while Job held to his integrity, longed for a "daysman" to stand between him and God, and declared, "I know that my redeemer liveth"; God answered out of the whirlwind not with an explanation but with Himself — "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" — and Job said, "now mine eye seeth thee"; God's wrath fell on the friends, "for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath," and when Job prayed for them the LORD restored him and gave him twice as much as before. Suffering comes from a real adversary, not from a God who delights to wound; it is not proof of sin; God sets its limits, meets His people in it, and in the end shows Himself "very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

- **Know your enemy** — the adversary, not God, is the destroyer.
- **Hold fast your integrity** in trial.
- **Do not blame the sufferer.**
- **Be honest with God** — He can handle your grief.
- **Seek God more than answers.**
- **Pray for those who hurt you.**
- **Look to the end** — the Redeemer lives.

For Our Learning — The People

- **Job.** Of the land of Uz; "perfect and upright"; greatest of the men of the east; tested, restored, lived 140 more years.
- **Job's wife.** Shared his losses; urged him to "curse God, and die."
- **Job's first children.** Seven sons and three daughters, killed when the house fell.
- **Satan.** "The adversary"; accused Job before God; struck him under limits God set.
- **The sons of God.** The angels, who present themselves before the LORD (1:6; 38:7).
- **Eliphaz the Temanite.** The eldest friend; from Teman in Edom.
- **Bildad the Shuhite.** Perhaps descended from Shuah, son of Abraham and Keturah (Genesis 25:2).
- **Zophar the Naamathite.** The third friend; his home is unknown.
- **Elihu.** Son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram; the young man who spoke last.
- **Jemima, Kezia and Keren-happuch.** Job's later daughters, the most beautiful in the land, given an inheritance.

For Our Learning — Customs and Orientalisms

- **The head of the family as priest,** offering burnt offerings (1:5).
- **Birthday feasts** — "every one his day" (1:4).
- **Wealth counted in livestock** and servants.
- **Raiding bands** of Sabeans and Chaldeans.
- **Rending the mantle and shaving the head** in grief (1:20).
- **The ash heap** outside the town, where outcasts sat (2:8).
- **Scraping sores with a potsherd.**
- **Sprinkling dust on the head** in mourning (2:12).
- **Seven days of silent mourning** (2:13; Genesis 50:10).
- **The daysman** — an umpire who lays his hand on both parties.
- **The kinsman-redeemer (go'el).**
- **"Gird up thy loins"** — tuck the robe into the belt for action.
- **Hand on the mouth** — a sign of silence and awe (40:4).
- **The qesitah** — "a piece of money" (42:11).
- **Earrings of gold** as gifts.
- **Daughters given an inheritance** with their brothers (42:15).

For Our Learning — Figures of Speech

A figure of speech is a deliberate departure from the plain, ordinary way of saying something, used by God to add emphasis and feeling. These are the ones in this story:

- **Euphemism** — "bless" (*barak*) written in place of "curse" God (1:5, 11; 2:5, 9).

- **Polysyndeton (many ands)** — “seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen” (1:3).
- **Metaphor** — “an hedge about him” (1:10), God’s protection.
- **Repetition** — “I only am escaped alone to tell thee” (1:15, 16, 17, 19).
- **Merismus (the whole by its two ends)** — “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither” (1:21).
- **Idiom of permission** — “thou movedst me against him, to destroy him” (2:3); “all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him” (42:11) — what God permitted, spoken of as His doing.
- **Proverb** — “Skin for skin” (2:4).
- **Simile** — “swifter than a weaver’s shuttle” (7:6).
- **Erotesis (rhetorical questions)** — God’s questions from the whirlwind, “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?” (38:4).
- **Irony** — “Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born?” (38:21).
- **Prosopopoeia (personification)** — “the morning stars sang together” (38:7).
- **Idiom** — “gird up now thy loins” (38:3); “turned the captivity” (42:10), restored his fortunes.

What the Bible Actually Says

- **Job was perfect and upright** — not sinless, but whole-hearted.
- **Satan accused Job** of serving God for gain.
- **God did not put forth His hand;** He allowed Satan to act within limits.
- **Satan struck Job,** both his possessions and his body.
- **Job worshipped** and did not sin with his lips.
- **God said Job suffered “without cause.”**
- **The friends said Job’s suffering proved his sin;** God’s wrath fell on them.
- **Job spoke beyond his knowledge,** and God corrected him.
- **Job longed for a daysman** and declared, “I know that my redeemer liveth.”
- **God answered from the whirlwind** with questions about creation, not with an explanation.
- **Job never learned of the scene in heaven.**
- **Job prayed for his friends,** and God restored him.
- **Job received double his possessions** and ten more children.
- **James calls the end of Job’s story** proof that “the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

God’s Will and Intent

- **God protects His people** — the hedge was real.
- **God sets limits on the adversary.**
- **God is good;** He is not the author of Job’s affliction.
- **God values faith that serves Him for who He is,** not for what He gives.
- **God hears honest grief.**
- **God corrects error** — in Job and in his friends.

- **God reveals Himself** when He does not explain.
- **God restores** — “very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”
- **God has given a mediator and Redeemer,** His Son Jesus Christ, who died, was raised and ascended to His right hand, and through whom He will raise the dead.