

# WHERE IS GOD WHEN LIFE IS SO MESSSED UP?

*the story of Job*



CITY BIBLE  
FORUM

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# WHERE IS GOD WHEN LIFE IS SO MESSED UP?

## *the story of Job*

### WHAT'S INSIDE

The experience of suffering in our lives and in our world can make us ask: Where is God? What is God doing?

The Bible's story of Job tells us what God is doing in the midst of suffering. We do not know who wrote the book of Job, or when. Having said that, a copy of Job was found at the Qumran Caves amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls. This makes it likely that the first copy of Job was written before 300 BC. We also don't know if Job was a real person or not. There are no historical markers in the book to anchor the story, Without these details it has a sense of "once upon a time". The book of Job is located in the "Wisdom Literature" section of the Old Testament. Quite possibly the book was written to teach principles about the nature of suffering, the relationship between wrongdoing and suffering, and the role of God in this.

**Session 1**      Winners and Losers

**Session 2**      Advice to losers

**Session 3**      Not-so-blind faith

**Session 4**      Resolution

Each study has the passage of the bible to be studied, discussion questions and some explanatory notes.



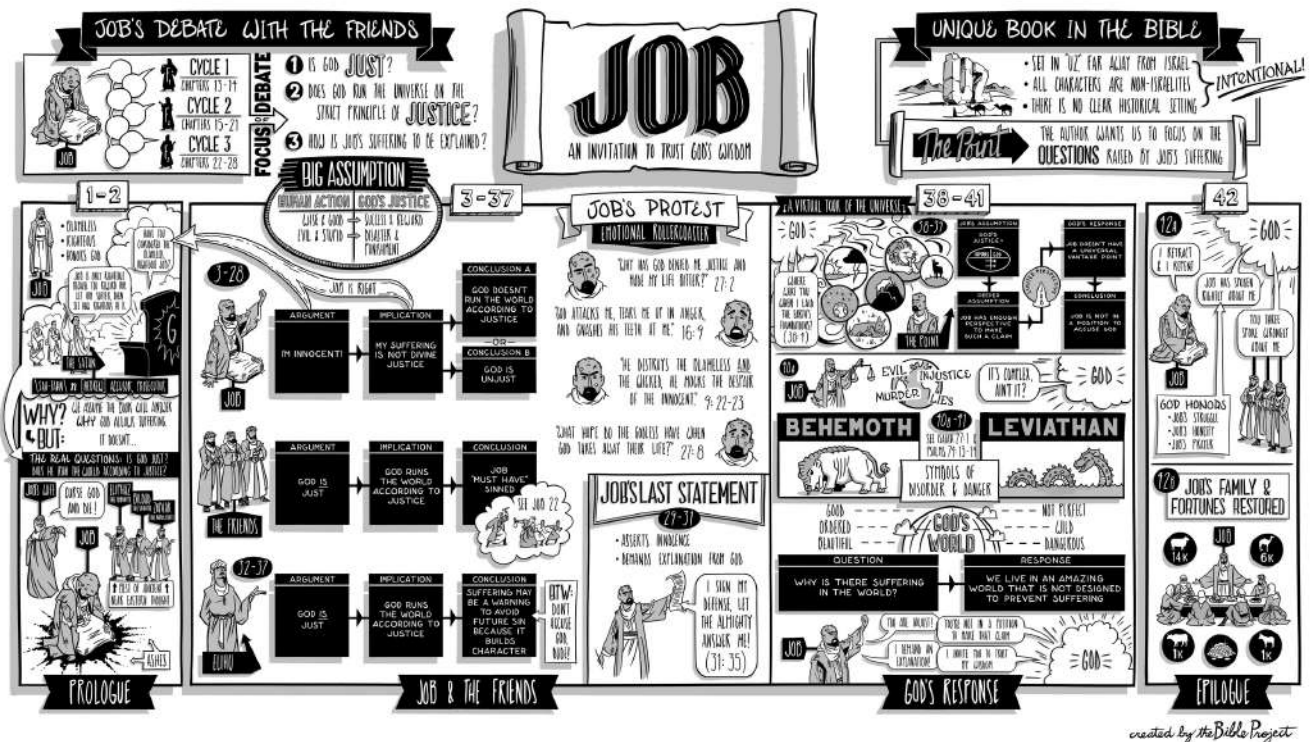
# SESSION 1: WINNERS AND LOSERS

## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT TO LEARN?

The book of Job was written to teach principles about the nature of suffering, the relationship between wrongdoing and suffering, and the role of God in this.

## CONTEXT FOR THE STORY

Job is a man who lives in the land of Uz. It is unclear whether “Uz” is a real place or not. Job could be a real person or this could be a story designed to teach principles (which can be just as powerful).



Job overview from The Bible Project

# SESSION 1: WINNERS AND LOSERS



## BIBLE READING: JOB 1:1-16

In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. 2 He had seven sons and three daughters, 3 and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East. 4 His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

6 One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. 7 The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. 10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

13 One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" 16 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"



# SESSION 1: WINNERS AND LOSERS



## BIBLE READING: JOB 1:17:2:1-10

17 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" 18 While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 19 when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship 21 and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." 22 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

2:1 On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

3 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason."

4 "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. 5 But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face." 6 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life." 7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. 8 Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes. 9 His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" 10 He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

# SESSION 1: WINNERS AND LOSERS



## QUESTIONS

1. What caught your attention in what you just read?
2. What questions do you have?



## NOTES

Like any story, how the main character is introduced is important. What we initially learn about Job is very positive. He is introduced to us as “blameless and upright”. However, this doesn’t necessarily mean Job has never done anything wrong and lived a perfect moral life. But he's a good guy. He does “fear God” and “shun evil”; he also makes sacrifices for his children to “purify” them from any sin or wrongdoing. Assuming that Job would also make sacrifices for his own sin, he is “blameless” in the sense that there is no wrongdoing that he can still be blamed or held accountable for.

Job is also described as the “greatest” man in the east. This could be because of his wealth, given the details we are given about his assets. It could also be because his large number of children feasting together is a sign of family warmth and intimacy. However, it is more likely that Job is the “greatest” in the sense of knowing what matters in life (to fear God and shun evil). Job even has God’s commendation that he is blameless and upright and there is none like him. This is very important for the unfolding story. Job’s suffering is not punishment for wrongdoing, or because God decided he did not like Job for some unspecified reason.

# SESSION 1: WINNERS AND LOSERS



## NOTES

Satan's name in the original language literally means "the accuser".

Satan's accusation of Job is: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" In other words, would Job worship God if he got nothing good in return? Job fears/reveres God because of how God treats him, which up to this point has been kindly.

In saying this, Satan is having a go at God too.

If Job is faking his worship, then God is the one who being mocked. On the other hand, if God is trying to buy Job's love then God is participating in a sham. The heart of this accusation is that God is not worthy of following because he just bribes people to follow him.

Is Job the sport in a tussle between God and Satan? It appears as if God is prepared to let Job lose everything in order to prove to Satan that his accusation is wrong.

And yet - Job's initial responses are interesting. "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised". "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

Now Job wasn't privy to the dialogue between God and Satan in the heavens.

But given what he knows of God – God isn't sporting with him. God is exercising his divine right to do what he wants. The narrator's comments make it clear that Job's understanding of God is correct: "In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing." "In all this, Job did not sin in what he said".

If God's honour is on the line in light of Satan's accusation, then the stakes are high here. God is not using Job's severe suffering and loss to prove a minor point. The integrity of God is at stake.

# SESSION 1: WINNERS AND LOSERS



## QUESTIONS

1. Job says: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."

How does this compare with the common sayings of today: "It is what it is" or "everything happens for a reason"?

2. Satan says: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" How do you think your interest in God would go if you suddenly lost everything?



## TAKEAWAYS

What will you think/feel/do differently based on what you have learned today?



## SESSION 2: ADVICE TO LOSERS

### WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT TO LEARN?

The book of Job was written to teach principles about the nature of suffering, the relationship between wrongdoing and suffering, and the role of God in this.

### CONTEXT FOR THE STORY

Job was a great man who has lost everything: his children, his wealth and even his health. Initially he responds quite positively: “Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” Behind the scenes, unbeknown to Job, Satan has accused God of buying off his followers. God’s integrity is at stake. God gives Satan permission to take everything from Job to show Satan, Job and readers, that Satan’s accusation is wrong.



Gustav Dore, 1866, 'Job and his friends'. Wikimedia commons

## SESSION 2: ADVICE TO LOSERS



### BIBLE READING 1: JOB 2:11 – 13

1 When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. 12 When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. 13 Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.

### BIBLE READING 2: JOB 4:6-9, 5:17-22 ELIPHAZ'S ADVICE

6 "Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways your hope? 7 Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? 8 As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. 9 At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger they perish."

17 "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. 18 For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal. 19 From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will befall you. 20 In famine he will ransom you from death, and in battle from the stroke of the sword. 21 You will be protected from the lash of the tongue, and need not fear when destruction comes. 22 You will laugh at destruction and famine, and need not fear the beasts of the earth."

### BIBLE READING 3 : JOB 8:2-6 BILDAD'S ADVICE

2 "How long will you say such things? Your words are a blustering wind. 3 Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right? 4 When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin. 5 But if you will look to God and plead with the Almighty, 6 if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your rightful place.

## SESSION 2: ADVICE TO LOSERS



### BIBLE READING 4: JOB 11:2-6 ZOPHAR'S ADVICE

2 "Are all these words to go unanswered? Is this talker to be vindicated? 3 Will your idle talk reduce men to silence? Will no one rebuke you when you mock? 4 You say to God, 'My beliefs are flawless and I am pure in your sight.' 5 Oh, how I wish that God would speak, that he would open his lips against you 6 and disclose to you the secrets of wisdom, for true wisdom has two sides. Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin."

### BIBLE READING 5 : JOB 16:1-3 JOB'S RESPONSE

Then Job replied: 2 "I have heard many things like these; you are miserable comforters, all of you! 3 Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing?"

### BIBLE READING 6: JOB 32:1-5,33:8-14 ELIHU'S ADVICE

4 Now Elihu had waited before speaking to Job because they were older than he. 5 But when he saw that the three men had nothing more to say, his anger was aroused:

8 "But you [Job] have said in my hearing— I heard the very words - 9 'I am pure and without sin; I am clean and free from guilt. 10 Yet God has found fault with me; he considers me his enemy. 11 He fastens my feet in shackles; he keeps close watch on all my paths.'

12 "But I tell you [Job], in this you are not right, for God is greater than man. 13 Why do you complain to him that he answers none of man's words? 14 For God does speak—now one way, now another—though man may not perceive it.

## SESSION 2: ADVICE TO LOSERS



### BIBLE READING 6: JOB 32:19-22, 29-30 ELIHU'S ADVICE

19 "Or a man may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in his bones, 20 so that his very being finds food repulsive and his soul loathes the choicest meal. 21 His flesh wastes away to nothing, and his bones, once hidden, now stick out. 22 His soul draws near to the pit, and his life to the messengers of death."

29 "God does all these things to a man— twice, even three times- 30 to turn back his soul from the pit, that the light of life may shine on him."



### QUESTIONS

1. What caught your attention in what you just read?
2. What questions do you have?

## SESSION 2: ADVICE TO LOSERS



### NOTES

Job's three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar – Elihu joins them later) pay a condolence call. They sit with Job for a week in silence, out of respect for Job's grief. Then they feel compelled to offer some words of comfort. They attempt to explain to Job why these calamities have befallen him.

These bible passages are snapshots of some very long speeches.

Eliphaz' understanding of the situation is that the innocent don't perish. Since Job's children have perished, then it must be they who reaped evil and sowed trouble. God is disciplining Job, it will be hard but God won't break him: "From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will befall you".

Bildad (unsympathetically!) says that Job's children sinned and that's why they died and that's why Job is suffering. He appeals to Job to turn from his sin if he wants to be restored.

Zophar says that while Job might say he is innocent in God's eyes ("I am pure in your sight") however that is not the case – Job is not innocent. In fact God has forgotten or overlooked some of Job's sin. The implication is that Job's sin is the reason why he is suffering.

Elihu is upset because he thinks Job is justifying himself rather than God – in other words, that Job is in the right, not God. There is no way God would inflict suffering on Job if Job were innocent. Elihu believes that God sometimes speaks through pain, so that people might turn back from their intended path and enjoy life. So in the end, he's not saying anything radically different from Job's other three friends. What is new with Elihu is the idea that God is using suffering to get Job's attention to turn back to him.

## SESSION 2: ADVICE TO LOSERS



### NOTES

So if we were to summarise the explanation of Job's friends:

- Suffering comes because of sin – it is cause and effect
- Job is suffering therefore he must have sinned
- The way forward for Job is to turn from his sin
- God is using suffering to get Job's attention to turn back to him

The problem here is that the friends have a neat little framework of cause and effect thinking: that suffering comes because of sin.

They then try to squeeze Job into that neat little framework of thinking. Job is suffering and so therefore Job must have sinned. They have no room in their neat little framework of thinking for:

- Job's blamelessness
- God's positive verdict on Job (God considers Job blameless)
- Satan's role in all of this

We are aware of these things because we know the start of the story. Granted Job's friends don't know this, so perhaps the strongest statement we can make:

- What they got wrong was applying their neat little framework too rigidly.



## SESSION 2: ADVICE TO LOSERS



### QUESTIONS

1. Job's friends are eager to give Job a reason for his suffering. Often when people suffer one of the first questions they ask is "why".

Why do we want a reason for our suffering?

2. "God does all these things to a man— twice, even three times- to turn back his soul from the pit, that the light of life may shine on him".

How do you feel about the idea that God may be using suffering to get your attention?



### TAKEAWAYS

What will you think/feel/do differently based on what you have learned today?

## SESSION 3: NOT-SO-BLIND FAITH

### WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT TO LEARN?

The book of Job was written to teach principles about the nature of suffering, the relationship between wrongdoing and suffering, and the role of God in this.

### CONTEXT FOR THE STORY

Job's lost everything: family, wealth and health. His friends say this is because he's sinned. Job knows he is innocent. (The reader also has God's commendation of Job as "blameless and upright"). Initially Job responded to his loss quite positively: "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?". He thinks his friends are "miserable comforters". He's now looking to God for some answers.



"Gonzalo Carrasco, 1881, 'Job on the dunghill'. Wikimedia commons

## SESSION 3: NOT SO BLIND FAITH



### BIBLE READING 1: JOB 6:2-4

2 "If only my anguish could be weighed and all my misery be placed on the scales!  
3 It would surely outweigh the sand of the seas— no wonder my words have  
been impetuous. 4 The arrows of the Almighty are in me, my spirit drinks in their  
poison; God's terrors are marshalled against me."

### BIBLE READING 2 : JOB 16:7-14

7 "Surely, O God, you have worn me out; you have devastated my entire  
household. 8 You have bound me—and it has become a witness; my gauntness  
rises up and testifies against me. 9 God assails me and tears me in his anger and  
gnashes his teeth at me; my opponent fastens on me his piercing eyes. 10 Men  
open their mouths to jeer at me; they strike my cheek in scorn and unite together  
against me. 11 God has turned me over to evil men and thrown me into the  
clutches of the wicked. 12 All was well with me, but he shattered me; he seized  
me by the neck and crushed me. He has made me his target; 13 his archers  
surround me. Without pity, he pierces my kidneys and spills my gall on the  
ground. 14 Again and again he bursts upon me; he rushes at me like a warrior."

### BIBLE READING 3 : JOB 13:15-23

15 "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his  
face. 16 Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless man would  
dare come before him! 17 Listen carefully to my words; let your ears take in what  
I say. 18 Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated. 19 Can  
anyone bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die. 20 Only grant me  
these two things, O God, and then I will not hide from you: 21 Withdraw your  
hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. 22 Then summon  
me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply. 23 How many wrongs and  
sins have I committed? Show me my offence and my sin."

## SESSION 3: NOT SO BLIND FAITH



### BIBLE READING 4: JOB 14:13-17

13 "If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me! 14 If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come. 15 You will call and I will answer you; you will long for the creature your hands have made. 16 Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin. 17 My offences will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin."



### QUESTIONS

1. What caught your attention in what you just read?
2. What questions do you have?

## SESSION 3: NOT DO BLIND FAITH



### NOTES

In the midst of his suffering, Job describes God as a terrifying enemy waging war against him. God is like an archer who fires poison arrows, who seizes Job by the neck and crushes him, who pierces his kidneys. Job is overcome by the onslaught.

Job wants to have his day in court. He wants God to explain himself: “Summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply. How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin.”

In other words, Job wants God to explain himself. For Job, faith (or belief or trust; same words) is not just blindly accepting what is happening to him. He brings his issues with God to God. There is agony and accusations – but also deep longing. “Though he [God] slay me, yet I will hope in him”. Job longs to come into God’s presence, to meet him, to be justified, vindicated and be seen to be right with him.

Job knows he has been made by God to have a good relationship with God. It's this which he is longing for. Job doesn't want to endure God's anger – he wants forgiveness and reconciliation.

Job is railing at God: ‘Why is this happening to me?’ but at the same time desperately longing to meet his terrifying, mysterious God, the God he does not understand and yet the God he needs and the God he loves.

## SESSION 3: NOT SO BLIND FAITH



### QUESTIONS

1. "Though he [God] slay me, yet will I hope in him". What do you think is remarkable about these words? Job takes his issues with God to God.
2. How might this change how you approach God?



### TAKEAWAYS

What will you think/feel/do differently based on what you have learned today?



# SESSION 4: RESOLUTION

## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT TO LEARN?

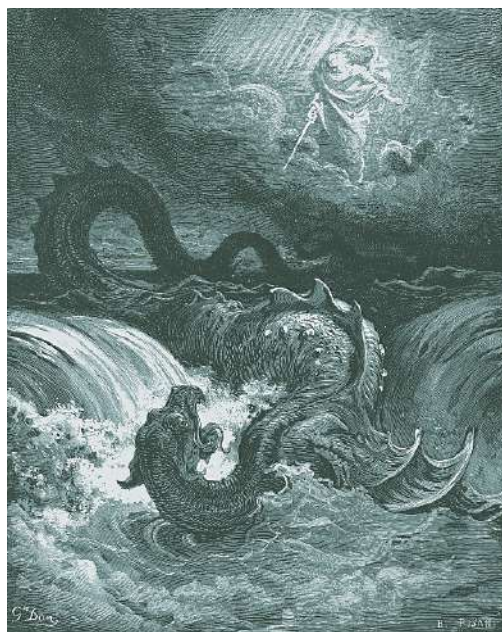
The book of Job was written to teach principles about the nature of suffering, the relationship between wrongdoing and suffering, and the role of God in this.

## CONTEXT FOR THE STORY

Job's lost everything: family, wealth and health. Job knows he's innocent, and so sin can't be the cause of his suffering. He wants God to explain to him why he is suffering. For Job, there is agony and accusations but he will not abandon God. Finally, God is about to speak.

## GOOD TO KNOW

- In the Bible passage you are about to read, God refers to a "Leviathan". This is probably a reference to Satan himself. God is saying he is the one who has Satan on a leash!
- To "repent" is to change one's mind. The change usually occurs in relation to how one thinks or acts in ways that are displeasing to God.



Gustav Dore, 1866, 'The destruction of the leviathan'. Public domain

## SESSION 4: RESOLUTION



### BIBLE READING 1: JOB 38:1-11, 41-1-2

1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm. He said 2 “Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? 3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. 4 Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. 5 Who marks off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? 6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone – 7 while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? 8 Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, 9 when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, 10 when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, 11 when I said ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt?’”

[God speaking] “Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook or tie down its tongue with a rope? 2 Can you put a cord through its nose or pierce its jaw with a hook?”

### BIBLE READING 2: JOB 42:1-6

1 Then Job replied to the Lord: 2 “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. 3 You asked ‘Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. 4 You said ‘Listen now and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’ 5 My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. 6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes”.

### BIBLE READING 3: JOB 42:7-9

7 After the Lord had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.” 8 So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has’. 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the Lord told them; and the Lord accepted Job’s prayer.

## SESSION 4: RESOLUTION



### BIBLE READING 4: JOB 42:10-16

10 After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before. 11 All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought upon him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring.

12 The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. 13 And he also had seven sons and three daughters. 14 The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-Happuch. 15 Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers.

16 After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. 17 And so he died, old and full of years.



### QUESTIONS

1. What caught your attention in what you just read?
2. What questions do you have?

## SESSION 4: RESOLUTION



### NOTES

God makes it clear that he is the one who is in absolute control. He even has Satan on a leash! Nothing – not even the very source of evil itself – is above or beyond the control of God.

The word “repent” is usually used in the context of wrongdoing. What has Job done wrong? While Job did not do any wrong to cause his suffering (otherwise Job’s friends would have been right in their assessment) what he does need to repent of is his attitude towards God.

In declaring himself innocent and wanting to call God to account for his suffering (session 3) he is implicitly accusing God of wrongdoing. Job’s repentance is seen in the way he shuts his mouth and questions God no further.

Satan’s original accusation (session 1) was that Job only follows God for what he can get. Job’s repentance shows quite clearly that he’s not in it for what he can get from God – in other words, he does love God for nothing!

Satan’s accusation is false. Job is even prepared to stick with God when God doesn’t give him the answers to his suffering that he had been asking for. It was only when all the blessings were stripped away, and he understood who it was that he was dealing with, that this became clear.

It's interesting that all the characters (Job and his four friends) get something wrong about God and the way God works. What Job does differently to all the others is that he takes his issues with God to God. So while Job doesn’t get everything right, he is willing for God to teach him. The four friends have their neat little theory that sin is the cause and suffering is the effect (session 2). In holding on to this theory, they dishonour God by offering their own (incorrect) solution to Job’s suffering.

## SESSION 4: RESOLUTION



### NOTES

In what sense has Job spoken rightly of God? He gets it right at the beginning “the Lord, gives, the Lord takes away, may the name of the Lord be praised” (session 1). But then so much happens in the intervening 40 plus chapters... What Job has maintained rightly throughout the whole book is that God is in control, and that it is God who will provide the resolution, rather than relying on what human beings themselves can work out.

Interestingly friend number four, Elihu, isn't mentioned. Why? That's difficult to answer. It could be because what he says overlaps with the other three friends (suffering is a result of wrongdoing) or because he cares about God's honour (which is more than what could be said for the other three).

Is this a story of “happily ever after” where God buys Job off by giving him even more than before? Notice that Job repents before he is blessed again. Is this cause and effect in the sense that blessing follows repentance? There's nothing in the text to suggest so.

By repenting Job has demonstrated that he loves God for nothing...without even the promise of something good in the future. So it seems that the blessing here comes out of God's own initiative – from the nature of his character rather than as a reward for good behaviour.

# SESSION 4: RESOLUTION



## QUESTIONS

1. Job says about God: “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted...Surely I spoke of things I did not understand”. Job never gets an answer to why he is suffering.

2 How do you feel about that as the conclusion to the story?  
What is your reaction to this powerful yet mysterious God?



## TAKEAWAYS

What will you think/feel/do differently based on what you have learned today?





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