

# JOB AND THE JUST GOD

DEVOTIONAL READING: Job 42:1-11

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Job 42

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE: Job 42:1-6, 10-17

## I. God's Plans

### Job 42:1-2

1 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,

2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

1-2. After hearing God's blistering reply, *Job* responded. By saying *I know*, Job's answer mirrored God's previous line of questioning (see Job 38:5, 18, 21, etc.). Elsewhere, Job used the same sentiment to speak of his confidence in God's redemption: "For I know that my redeemer liveth" (19:25).

The object of Job's knowledge is the expanse of God's sovereign power and work. Job notes that *no thought* takes place outside of the purview of God's divine wisdom. Throughout Scripture, other individuals have reflected on the extent of God's wisdom, power, and work in the world (see 2 Chronicles 20:6; Isaiah 14:27; Acts 4:30).

As a finite human, Job realized that nothing takes place beyond God's wisdom and knowledge, even the events that caused Job to experience suffering.

## II. God's Words

### Job 42:3-4

3 Who is he that hideth counsel with-

out knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

3a. Job restates God's accusation (see Job 38:2) and, therefore, introduces his own self-judgment. God's original question served as an indictment against Job for speaking of things he did not understand. Job's friend Elihu also recognized the folly of Job's words, saying, "Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom" (34:35) and "doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words *without knowledge*" (35:16). Because of God's indictment and Elihu's sharp rebuke, Job realized that the *counsel* and purpose of God would not be thwarted.

3b. Job admitted he spoke in ignorance. Previously, Job showed remorse for his words toward God (see Job 40:3-5). Now, after the Lord's further challenge, Job woefully expressed that he misspoke of *things he understood not*.

God had shown Job the extent of His power over creation (see Job 38:4-39:30; 40:15-24; 41:1-34). God's ways, including His justice, would not be called into question (40:8). Job now realized that God's justice and providence were *too wonderful!*

4. God's previous imperatives to Job are repeated (see Job 38:3; 40:7). Job was to listen as God would *speak* to and *demand answers* of Job. Initially, Job declined to respond to the demands of God. However, Job's repetition of these imperatives signals his coming confession, repentance, and new perspective.

### III. God's Presence

#### Job 42:5-6

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

**6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**

5. One's faith in God grows by encountering Him, often in peculiar ways. Whether in times of hardship or celebration, hearing the message and seeing the work of God can bolster our faith.

Job's description of his experience with God can be understood as a theophany, a specific appearance or manifestation of God to humanity. Such instances are temporary and often accompanied by great physical indication, such as a fire or cloud.

When Moses asked to see the glory of the Lord, God replied, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exodus 33:20). However, others testified to seeing what seemed to be a direct appearance of God in human form. Jacob stated that he saw God "face to face" (Genesis 32:30). Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the elders of Israel "saw the God of Israel" (Exodus 24:10).

The Lord appeared to Abraham to confirm the promise of offspring (Genesis 12:7). Moses experienced the direct voice of God in the desert in the form of a fire in the midst of a bush (Exodus 3:2-4) and on Mt. Sinai in the midst of thunder, lightning, and smoke (19:18; 24:15-18). God appeared to King Solomon in a dream (1 Kings 3:5). The prophet Elijah

heard the voice of God after intense winds, an earthquake, and fire (19:11-13). These disclosures of God provided confidence of God's work in the lives of His people.

How might Job *have heard* and seen the Lord and His deeds? As a "perfect and upright" man who "feared God and "eschewed evil" (Job 1:1), Job might have attended religious ceremonies or heard the teachings of God from elders. In his holiness, Job longed to see God with his own eyes (19:26-27). Now he heard directly from the voice of God.

6a. Job's vision of God was both overwhelming and humbling. The Hebrew word translated *abhor* is used elsewhere to speak of God's judgment (Jeremiah 6:30) and an individual's rejection of the word of the Lord (1 Samuel 15:23).

6b. Both modern and Hebrew usage of the word *repent* indicates the notion of feeling remorse and contrition. It is important to note that Job is not repenting as his friends had prescribed; he was not repenting for any unknown wrongdoing that was supposed to have prompted his suffering and misfortune. Instead, Job repented of and grieved over the ways he had misconstrued and misrepresented the just and all-powerful God.

6c. There is a play on words to describe the location of Job's act of remorse and contrition. Sitting in or covering one's self with *ashes* was a common occurrence for situations of lament and sorrow. Additionally, the mention of *dust* alludes to the creation of humans and the tenuous nature of life. Job may very well have been lamenting *in* dust and ashes.

Abraham echoed a similar sentiment. Upon hearing of the Lord's impending destruction of the city of Sodom, Abraham advocated to the Lord for the city on behalf of the righteous (Genesis 18:23-25). In doing so, Abraham acknowledged his human finitude, saying that he was

nothing but “dust and ashes” (18:27). When confronted with the plans of the all-powerful God of the universe, Abraham and Job recognized their finitude.

#### IV. God’s Blessings Job 42:10-17

**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.**

**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.**

**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.**

**13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.**

**14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.**

**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.**

**16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons’ sons, even four generations.**

**17 So Job died, being old and full of days.**

10. Before God restored *Job*, He addressed Job’s friends and ordered them to sacrifice offerings. Job’s friends followed God’s directives, after which Job *prayed* for them.

11a. The Lord’s blessing (Job 42:10) is given further detail, this time through Job’s restored relationships. Previously, Job lamented that *his brethren* had been alienated from him, and *all they that had been of his acquaintance* were “estranged” (19:13). Those closest to Job had turned against him, believing that he had sinned greatly against God. In light of Job’s vindication and reward, they returned *to eat bread with him* to signify a renewed fellowship.

11b. Gifts of *money* and *gold* could have been seen as an act of honor and respect toward a restored Job. Additionally, these gifts could have been the means through which God chose to restore Job’s fortunes.

12. *The Lord* doubled the amount of livestock owned by *Job*. God’s act highlights the generous nature of His grace.

13. Notably, the number of Job’s children remains the same (compare Job 1:2).

14-15. Much has been made over the fact that the names of Job’s daughters are explicitly given. It is not uncommon in ancient epics, however, for heroic or successful women to be named and granted a place of prominence.

That *the daughters* and *their brethren* received an *inheritance* might provide evidence for why the text of Job is thought to be one of the oldest in the Old Testament. Old Testament law stipulated that daughters only received an inheritance if their father had no son (see Numbers 27:5-8). One might conjecture that Job’s act of providing an inheritance for both his daughters and sons makes sense in a historical context apart from Israel’s law.

16-17. Some debate exists as to whether *Job* died at the age of one *hundred and forty years* or lived for another 140 years. Regardless, his long life further illustrates his commitment to righteousness. Job’s epitaph parallels Abraham’s, Isaac’s, David’s, and Jehoiada’s.

# INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

## JOB AND THE JUST GOD

### Into the Lesson

What's the name of your favorite novel or movie? Why do you like the ending of that book or movie?

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Today's lesson describes one man's experience of gaining greater perspective about God's work in his life.

### Into the Word

Read Job 42:10-17, then compare the new riches Job received with what he lost in Job 1:3.

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Consider other ways Job was blessed beyond what is specifically listed.

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Choose one of Job's blessing that stands out as especially valuable. Why does it strike you in this regard?

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### Into Life

Remember a personal story about going through a difficult trial and learning to trust God in the midst of it. How did you see God's mercy and redemption through it?

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Write a letter to God regarding a perceived injustice. Don't question God's justice, but rather seek guidance to help correct the injustice.

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### THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

Instead of asking *why*, ask, "What's next?"