

# 18 – Job: Science and Suffering

- The book of Job is very highly developed poetry about man and the mystery of suffering. It is a **dramatic poem and an epic story** that reads like a play in well-defined acts and scenes. It is a book containing information vital for us to know about **suffering, which is a way of life on this fallen planet**. Beyond this, however, it is a book filled with remarkable and factual statements about our natural world AND about the nature of Almighty God.
- Oldest book of the Bible, from about 2000 BC or earlier (before or during time of Abraham)
- Job is the first book in the **Poetry** division of the Old Testament (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs)
- A literary masterpiece, highly developed poetry (**“The greatest masterpiece of the human mind”** --Victor Hugo). May have been preserved as a play.



THEME	CHPTR	CONTENT
Prologue	1,2	Satan’s challenge
Dialogues	3-37	Job and “Friends” ( <i>Eliphaz, the Temanite; Bildad, the Shuhite; Zophar, the Naamathite; Elihu, the Buzite</i> )
Divine Response	38-42	Science Quiz, Epilogue

## PROLOGUE: Chapters 1 and 2

Lots of information here. Job is wealthy and prosperous, called “blameless” and full of integrity and feared God, also called the greatest of all men of the east. He had 7 sons and 3 daughters, many servants, 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 oxen, 500 she-asses, and so on. The richest person around. We are also given information that Job didn’t have knowledge of. Satan challenged God about Job, but what is very interesting is that God was the one to bring up Job. Satan, the Accuser, had been roaming the earth and God asked him if he noticed his servant, this man of integrity, Job. Satan agreed he was a God-fearing man, but that he had good reason to, with his wealth, position and many blessings. So, we first see Job as righteous and pious in a place of prosperity. Satan challenges God about Job, and God **ALLOWS** Satan to test Job. This is an important fact. **GOD ALLOWS OUR TESTING for His purpose**. Satan has **NO** authority. **NONE**. But he is the “god of this age,” he is **REAL**, and he means us harm. He is malevolent.

The rest of chapter 1 tells how Satan tested Job, but only within God’s limits (only his possessions could be taken, Job himself could not be harmed). It is remarkable to see Job’s response after everything he owns, including his children, is taken from him: **“I came naked from my mother’s womb, and I will be stripped of everything when I die. The LORD gave me everything I had, and the LORD has taken it away. Praise the name of the LORD!...In all this, Job did not sin by blaming God.”** (Job 1:21-22)

Chapter 2 begins with the angels coming again to present themselves to God, and Satan comes too, challenging God to take Job’s health from him. So again, as God Himself said, Job is harmed **“without cause.”** This time it is horrible boils, a very painful condition. Even Job’s wife tells him to give up, curse God and die. Job’s response is incredible: **“...’Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?’ So in all this, Job said nothing wrong.”** (Job 2:10)

There is a great deal to learn for our practical application in these first two chapters. Poor Job is afflicted “without cause.” God allows it. Our trials, tribulations, sufferings and dark times are not always a result of our own making. God allows it for His purpose. It is difficult to understand, but we also learn some other very important facts: 1) The Enemy is accountable to God, 2) his dark mind is an open book to God, 3) he is behind the evils that curse the earth, 4) he is neither omnipresent nor omniscient, 5) he can do nothing without God’s permission, 6) God’s eyes are ever on His own

## THE DIALOGUES: Chapters 4-37

Now his 3 “friends” show up and the dialogues begin. They stay quiet for a whole week, but when they began talking, they really let it roll. Each of them takes turns telling Job why he is suffering. They hold very rigid and legalistic views of God. They speak in “triads” with Job responding to each of them, and then making his own pleas to God. Job delivers 10 speeches or responses in this book. These 3 friends are types for people, then and now, who try to explain God. **Eliphaz** bases all his assumptions and comments on his own experience of God. Job must have sinned. That’s all there is to it. **Bildad** has an arrogant understanding of tradition, rather than God Himself. He is much like a Pharisee. **Zophar** makes his arguments based on a rigid interpretation of laws, and the fact that God would never vary in his ways, especially manner of punishment, therefore Job must be guilty and deserving of all this. **All three hold too narrow and rigid a view of God**. Although they say many things that are true of God, their “knowledge” here is misapplied to this situation and to Job. Now comes mysterious Elihu: a new approach: a brother rather than a judge; a respectful intercessor with a higher view: Suffering may have a superior purpose: moral rather than penal; restore/chasten rather than require/chastise...sets the stage for God’s response.

### Job’s 10 Speeches (Responses TO God, his “friends”)

#	CH	CONTENT
1	3	Curses day of birth
2	6	Asks God to crush him, wants a reasonable answer, tells Eliphaz he isn’t lying
	7	“Why won’t you leave me alone?” (to God)
3	9	Response to Bildad, pleads innocence, wants a mediator, does not have own strength
	10	Pleads to God again, complains freely, questions God
4	12	Response to Zophar, put down, true wisdom belongs to God
	13	Pleads to God again, wants to argue his case, tells friends to BE QUIET! Asks God how he has sinned
	14	Life is full of trouble
5	16	Response to Eliphaz, “miserable comforters,” my witness is in heaven
	17	Defends his innocence, gives up hope
6	19	Response to Bildad, “quit torturing me with your words!”
7	21	Response to Zophar, “You’re not listening to me!” getting more cynical, but still does not malign God
8	23	Response to Eliphaz, wants to talk directly with God, He controls man’s destiny, complains more
	24	Job asks why the wicked aren’t punished more
9	26	Response to Bildad, “How you have enlightened my stupidity!” Who can understand God?
	27	Begins Job’s final speech, “I will defend my innocence to the death!” his friends are “useless” to him
	28	Man doesn’t know how to find wisdom, more valuable than all riches of the earth, “the fear of the LORD is true wisdom...”
	29	Job talks about the good old days
	30	Job’s heart is broken, cries out to God, but God seems not to answer, “I walk in gloom, without sunlight...”
	31	Job’s final protest of his innocence, lists the ways he has not sinned,...end of chapter “Job’s words are ended.”

Job’s 10<sup>th</sup> speech is reserved for his reply to God at the end of the book.

### Mysterious Elihu

Job and his three friends stop their dialogue and Elihu begins and goes on for 6 chapters. He takes a different tack from the others. He sat through this whole tangled mess of talking without getting any answers. He is younger, perhaps out of respect he listened first. Lots of speculation about his identity. Is he a type for someone else? Jesus? Holy Spirit? Elihu may be a type for the words of wisdom that only God can provide. He is actual person, but also a type. Elihu’s whole problem is based on fact that Job did not justify God, but tried to justify himself and kept pleading his own innocence. Younger....perhaps the old friends could be types for prophets, old interpretation of law, Jesus changes all that into grace, something they can’t fathom because they’ve only paid attention to the rigors of the law. Who knows? Interesting speculation. His speech sets the stage for God’s dramatic response from the whirlwind.

## GOD'S RESPONSE: Chapter 38-42

God finally responds to Job, and His words take Job's breath away. These chapters 38 - 42 are awesome. If you have not read them recently, do it! Take note of the majestic nature of our living God. Not only is this a masterful detailing of our natural God-created and sustained world, but it is a beautiful rendering of His eternal and breath-taking nature. In this book are found some of the most amazing insights into the world around us. God begins to address Job with these words: *"Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know!..."* (38:2-5a) God shows His impatience with Job's complaining and the incorrect assumptions made by his friends. This is a remarkable "put them in their place" speech by God. Can you imagine being there and hearing this?

**Job's response to all of God's questions?** *"Then Job answered the LORD and said: "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."* (42:1-6) Job confesses, agrees with God's opening statement to him, and repents of complaining. God rebukes the 3 friends of Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, but not Elihu: *"My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoke of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."* (Job 42:7) God demanded a large, costly sacrifice for their sin before Him. The Enemy has dangerous tools disguised as false piety, religious orthodoxy and "tradition" rather than true understanding of God and His Word, incorrect impressions of God, and false comfort in the world.

**After his trial, God restores Job double.** 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, 1,000 she-asses Children listed [7 sons, 3 daughters] are **equal to the originals; but NOT double** (not 14 sons and 6 daughters) WHY? Many have asked about this. In the eternal sense, they are not lost. They are with God, and Job will have even these restored to him one day. There was no need to restore his children double. By giving him 7 more sons and 3 more daughters, added to the first set, God has effectively doubled Job's portion already.

## Highlights (about Suffering and Science and other insights)

**About Suffering:** 1) It is a fact of life, should expect it; 2) it is comparatively light; 3) it is temporary; 4) it can hold joy; 5) it ends in joy, and blessings; 6) it will often come from our profession of faith; 7) God's love and faithfulness are seen in it

<b>WHY (Purpose)</b>	Our humility, obedience, test faith, comfort others, correction, to see God's power, His faithfulness, draw people to Himself, to realize this is not our home – sojourners in fallen world, We will rarely know the reasons, initially.
<b>OUR RESPONSE</b>	Rejoice, pray, cast out fear, find peace with God, Listen (God will speak), Resist temptation, pray for deliverance/exposure
<b>OUR REWARD</b>	Humility, happiness, crown of life, obedience, submission, ultimate freedom God's deliverance and intended purpose
<b>THE SOURCE</b>	Sin, God's testing/sanctifying, the fallen world
<b>SCOPE</b>	God's People: Light, regulated by God, temporary, less than deserved, given with mercy
<b>OUR RESOURCES</b>	God Himself, the Holy Spirit's guidance and abilities to resist, Jesus' comfort, assistance and intercession

One of the **most startling statements in scripture** is in Job 19:25-27: *"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"* Job knew early on what the entire Bible leads up to: the grand appearing of our Redeemer at the end of time, with all His saints.

**Scientific Insights in the Book of Job**

We won't go into all of them, but this book holds more than 15 basic scientific facts whose truths could not be known, and were not proven until recently when science caught up with God's words. One of the most amazing is the proving of the **ANTHROPIC PRINCIPLE** – that is that this planet is so delicately balanced that any one thing out of even the slightest parameters of current measurement would not allow earth to sustain life. All the ratios, elements, and laws of the universe are uniquely tuned to support life. This includes such things as the tilt and axis and speed of rotation of the earth, gravitational pulls, atmospheric conditions, water levels, and over 100 other uniquely balanced items.

We are also given information about the **HYDROLOGICAL CYCLE** (the fact that water evaporates, circulates, and then precipitates, or rains back to earth). We take all that for granted. The entire process is described in Job. There are also details about our universe that are amazing.

**Space/Time/Mass universe**

*“He stretches out the north over empty space, He hangs the earth on nothing.”* (26:7)

*“He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters, at the boundary of light and darkness.”* (26:10)

**LIGHT:** *“Where is the way to the dwelling of light?”* (38:19) Light is dynamic; darkness is static

**GRAVITATIONAL PULL:** *“Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the belt of Orion?”* (38:31)

These are the only visible eye constellations in direct gravitational bondage

**SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS:** *“Can you bring out Mazzaroth in its season? Or can you guide the Great Bear with its cubs?”* Mazzeroth are signs in the stars of God's plan of redemption. (38:32)

**DINOSAURS?**

1) Land-based **Behemoth** Job 40

*“Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you, he eats grass like an ox. See now, his strength is in his hips, and his power is in his stomach muscles. He moves his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are tightly knit. His bones are like beams of bronze, his ribs like bars of iron....”* (40:15-18)

Some versions translate this as **HIPPOPOTAMUS**???? This is more likely an Apatasaurus, or Diplodocus

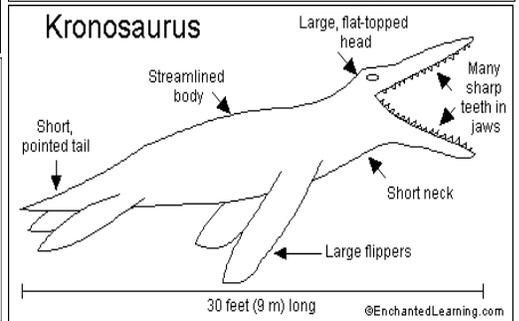
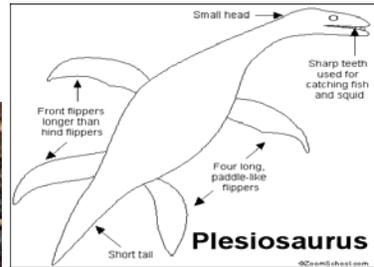
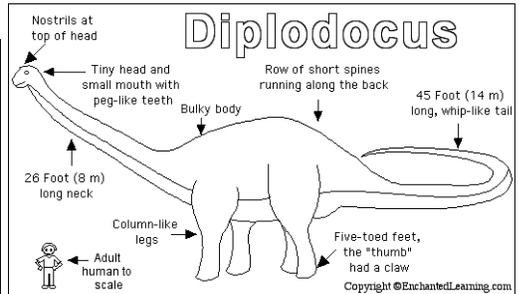
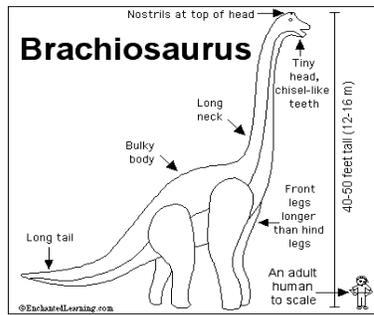


2) Sea-based **Leviathan** Job 41

*“Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, or snare his tongue with a line which you lower?....His sneezings flash forth light, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lights; sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke goes out of his nostrils, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. His breath kindles coals, and a flame goes out of his mouth...”* (41:1, 18-21)

Translated as **Crocodile**???

More likely **Kronosaurus**, sea going, teeth, about 30 feet long, or **Plesiosaurus**, longer, sharp teeth.



Perhaps **Brachiosaurus**, land and marshes, very big, nostrils at top of head that suggest possible smoke emitting, some believe it did in fact breathe fire.