



## Job - Chapter Forty Two

### **II Job 3:1-42:6 - Dialogue: Job, His Suffering, and His Standing before God (continues/concludes)**

#### **II.e Job 38:1-42:6 - Challenge: the Lord answers Job (continues/concludes)**

#### **Summary of Chapter Forty Two**

This final chapter is in three parts: Job's humility, the rebuke and restoration of the three friends, and the re-establishment of Job's family and his place in the community.

Following the questioning by the Lord, Job humbles himself before God (vv.1-6). God accepts his humble submission, censures the three friends for their treatment of Job and commands Job to offer sacrifices for them, that the Lord might pardon and accept them also, as they had not spoken what was right concerning their maker (vv.7-9).

The Lord turns Job's situation from spiritual captivity to freedom. His friends visit him, bringing him gifts (vv.10-11). Job's affluence and wealth are not just restored but become double to what they were before (v.12). His family is also increased (vv.13-15). Having lived one hundred and forty years after his trial, Job dies in peace (vv.16-17).

#### **II.e.iv Job 42:1-6 - Job Is Humbled and Satisfied**

In response to the Lord's reproof, Job confesses that the Lord's power and purposes will not fail (v.2) and that he spoke of things beyond Job's knowledge (v.3). In the presence of the Lord who is speaking and appearing to him, Job repents of what in the dialogue he was wildly blurting out (vv.4-6).

<sup>1</sup> Then Job answered the Lord:

<sup>2</sup> 'I know that you can do all things,  
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

<sup>3</sup> "Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?"

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,  
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

### Job 42:1-3

I know that you can do all things. This wonderful statement from Job was obviously connected to the impressive display of the power and might of God over creation; but it was also connected to the comfort that the sense of the presence of God brought to Job. God indeed could do all things, including bring comfort and assurance to Job even when Job still did not understanding the origin or meaning of his crisis.

And that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. The God who can master Behemoth and Leviathan (Chapters 40 and 41) can also accomplish every purpose in Job's life, including the mysterious meaning behind the twists and turns.

Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Job is quoting the Lord's own question to him earlier in Job 38:2.

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Job said many sad and imprudent things, both in his agonised cry of Job Chapter 3 and in the bitter and contentious debate with his friends. At times he doubted the goodness of God and his righteous judgement in the world; at times he doubted if there was any good in this life or in the life beyond. Now Job has come full circle, back to a state of humble contentment with not knowing the answers to the questions occasioned by his crisis and his companions.

**Paul puts this into context within his own time of suffering and persecution:**  
<<*Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong*>> (2 Corinthians 12:10), <<*Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have*>> (Philippians 4:11), and:  
<<*Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these*>> (1 Timothy 6:6-8).

Charles Spurgeon commented, “Job felt that what he had spoken concerning the Lord was in the main true; and the Lord himself said to Job’s three friends, ‘You have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job has’; but under a sense of the divine presence Job felt that even when he had spoken aright, he had spoken beyond his own proper knowledge, uttering speech whose depths of meaning he could not himself fathom.”

Job’s thinking here is well expressed by one of the shortest psalms: <<O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvellous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me. O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time on and for evermore>> (Psalm 131).

<sup>4</sup> “Hear, and I will speak;

I will question you, and you declare to me.”

<sup>5</sup> I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,  
but now my eye sees you;

<sup>6</sup> therefore I despise myself,  
and repent in dust and ashes.’

#### Job 42:4-6

Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you declare to me. Again, Job is quoting the Lord’s own question to him earlier in Job 38:3b. Before, Job seemed to want to challenge God in a confrontational way; refer to Job 31:35-40. Now, after his wonderful revelation of God, he respectfully asked God for the right to speak.

I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you. This is a reminder that the most powerful aspect of Job’s encounter with God. It was not primarily what God said; but God’s simple, loving, powerful presence with Job that changed him most profoundly. Seeing God - not with his literal eye but in a way literally real - gave Job what he so wanted: to know that God was with him in his crisis. This wonderful presence of God has humbled Job. It should not be assumed that what Job knew of God was necessarily false; yet each fresh and deeper revelation of God has a brightness that makes previous experience of God seem rather pale. What he had just experienced was so real it made his previous experiences seem unreal.

Therefore I despise myself. The verb translated I despise myself could be rendered ‘I reject what I said,’ or ‘I recognise the ignorance behind my own words.’ The Lord has already embodied his mercy to Job in the way he graciously reproved and questioned Job for his good. It is important to understand each

phrase of this statement of Job's. This would seem to be the normal conviction of sin that even a saint like Job senses in the presence of God; yet there is good evidence that Job, with this statement, was really formally retracting his previous statements made in ignorance forming part of his repentance.

And repent in dust and ashes. It was right for Job to repent. He had done nothing to invite the crisis that came into his life; the reasons for that crisis were rooted in the contention between God and Satan as recorded in Chapters 1 and 2. Yet he did have to repent of his poor choice of words and his bad attitude after the crisis; both for excessively giving into despair in Chapter 3 and for his unwise and intemperate speech as he contended with his companions. It is important to note that Job did not give into his friends and admit that they had been right all along. That simply was not true. The sins Job repented of here were both general sins, common to everyone: <<*since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*>> (Romans 3:23), which seemed all the darker in the presence of God yet were not the cause of the catastrophe that came into his life; and they were sins committed after the catastrophe came.

God's mercy is pictured further in the humble posture of Job, who in dust and ashes finally enjoys the comfort of relational peace that had been withheld from him by his friends: repent translates a form from the same root used of the friends' intention to comfort him in Job 2:11. The translation of the ESV footnote <<*I despise myself and am comforted in dust and ashes*>> finds support in the way it corresponds to Job's search for comfort that runs through the book and is consistent with God's declaration that what Job has spoken of him is right (v.7).

What did Job have to repent of? In his sermon, 'Job Among the Ashes', Charles Spurgeon suggested several things:

- Job repented of the terrible curse he had pronounced upon the day of his birth.
- Job repented of his desire to die.
- Job repented of his complaints against and challenges to God.
- Job repented of his despair.
- Job repented that his statements had been a 'darkening of wisdom by words without knowledge'; that he spoke beyond his knowledge and ability to know.

One might say that these words of Job - words of humble repentance and submission before God, for sins that were greatly provoked, sins that come from the godly and not from the wicked - these words that contain no curse of God whatsoever - these words ended the contest between God and Satan and demonstrated that the victory belonged to God and to Job.

### III Job 42:7-17 - Epilogue: The Vindication, Intercession, and Restoration of Job

The final section of the book brings to light on earth what the prologue had described to be true before God: Job's suffering was not a consequence of sin; refer to 1:1-2:13. The narrative of this section describes two aspects of the conclusion to the dialogue: the Lord charges Eliphaz and the other friends with speaking incorrectly about him; he calls upon them to offer sacrifices to him and seek intercession from Job (vv.7-9), and the Lord restores Job's fortunes (vv.10-17).

#### III.a Job 42:7-9 - Job's Friends Are Humiliated

In God's presence Job finds the arbiter for whom he had longed, as the Lord assigns a sacrifice to the three friends and requires them to seek Job's intercession. Notably, Elihu is absent from this final scene. Neither do Job's wife and Satan – both so prominent in the prologue – feature in the close of the book.

<sup>7</sup> After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: 'My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.' <sup>8</sup> Now therefore take seven bulls 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 I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has done.' <sup>9</sup> So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the Lord had told them; and the Lord accepted Job's prayer.

#### Job 42:7-9

My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends. The Lord's anger is directed against Eliphaz the Temanite and the other two friends Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite. This contrasts with Elihu who had presumed to speak, although harshly, on God's behalf in Job 36:2 and whose anger had burned against Job as well as his friends; refer to Job 32:2-3. God rebuked Job's three companions, addressing Eliphaz as their head, perhaps because he had been the first of the three to speak. Curiously, Elihu is not addressed by God in this final chapter. Some people think this is because Elihu was correct in what he had said and was indeed God's messenger to Job. Taking into account exactly what Elihu had said, it is better to think that God did not answer him perhaps as a way of dismissing him altogether.

You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. The friends of Job spoke many general principles that, in their setting, have great wisdom. The problem was that in Job's circumstance their principles of wisdom did not apply. They presented God as angry and judgemental against Job when he was not. This displeased God. It displeased God so much that he specifically repeated the charge (v.8); he commanded them to sacrifice a burnt-offering to make atonement for their sin; and he commanded them to humble themselves and ask Job to pray for them rather than for them to ask God's forgiveness directly.

Job's words certainly expressed deep anguish and frustration; but God does not count these words as being sinful. This is probably because Job never lost his earnest desire to appear before God and his words are testimony to that.

God's rebuke of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar was at the same time an explicit vindication of Job. It was true that in his frustration, stubbornness and misery Job said things that he had to repent of. Yet God could still say of him, as my servant Job has, putting forth Job as an example of one who spoke what is right.

For I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly. What is revealed to the friends is tragically ironic for them: they had been so sure they were defending wisdom against Job's folly, only to find out they were totally mistaken. This conclusion is also a picture of God's mercy and Job's faithfulness: Job has the chance to intercede on behalf of the people who had brought him further suffering rather than the comfort he needed and should have received from them. By interceding for his friends, Job images the character of the Lord (e.g. slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and mercy) and embodies the very mercy he himself had received. By doing so, he also continues the intercessory role he had faithfully performed for his family: *<<And when the feast days had run their course, Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt-offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, 'It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.' This is what Job always did>>* (Job 1:5).

So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the Lord had told them; and the Lord accepted Job's prayer. The friends of Job were accepted for Job's sake because the Lord had accepted Job. God made Job a mediator to his friends. This must have been a humbling and instructive experience for the friends, and a happy and healing experience for Job.

Charles Spurgeon again comments, "Job was permitted to take a noble revenge, I am sure the only one he desired, when he became the means of bringing them back to God. God would not hear them, he said, for they had spoken so wrongly of his servant Job, and now Job is set to be a mediator, or

intercessor on their behalf: thus was the contempt poured upon the patriarch turned into honour.”

### III.b Job 42:10-17 - Job's Fortunes Are Restored Twofold

It is of utmost significance to note that Job's restoration occurs only at this point, when he has capitulated to God and has been reconciled with his friends – still in his broken and bereaved state. Precisely at this point, community is re-established (vv.10-11) and Job himself restored (vv.12-15). As the restoration proceeds, his previous possessions of livestock are doubled and a further ten children born to him.

<sup>10</sup> And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. <sup>11</sup> Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring.

#### Job 42:10-11

And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends. God was good enough to restore Job's wealth to him, even though Job never asked for this. Job's agony was always more rooted in the more spiritual aspects of his crisis, much more than the material. Yet once the spiritual was resolved, God restored the material.

As the margin in the NKJV notes, this can also be translated: <<*and the Lord turned the captivity of Job*>>. This is a suggestive phrase; that the act of praying for his friends and restoring his relationship with them in a sense freed Job from captivity. It does not say that God turned the poverty of Job, nor the health of Job, nor his friendships; rather, literally, he turned the captivity of Job. A man may be poor, sick, and friendless without being captive. Yet until Job had a revelation of God; until he humbled himself before God; until he brought atonement to his friends and prayed for them, he was still in captivity. This happened after Job's relationship with his friends was restored, i.e. when he prayed for his friends. It would have been a weak restoration if Job's relationship with Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar remained as contentious and bitter as it was during their debate.

Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house. After he was restored, Job's siblings and other friends came to him and showed him sympathy and comforted him, which restored a loss that Job had earlier lamented in Job 19:13-19. This was

the original intention of the three friends, but Job ends up receiving comfort primarily through his matured relationship with the Lord (v.6) and also through being vindicated by the Lord before those from whom he previously, and rightly, received respect. Job was once an outcast even from his own family (as described in Job 19:13-14). Now these relationships were restored.

It is interesting to notice that they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him and this was even after his losses were restored and his captivity was released. It is worth dwelling on the fact that, even when everything is set right, Job still feels the hurt of his losses and needs human comfort for them.

A piece of money is Hebrew *qesitah*. Although its precise meaning is uncertain it is generally accepted as either unit value or a coin. It is also used in: <<*And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for one hundred pieces of money the plot of land on which he had pitched his tent*>> (Genesis 33:19), and: <<*The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem, in the portion of ground that Jacob had bought from the children of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for one hundred pieces of money; it became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph*>> (Joshua 24:32).

<sup>12</sup> The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. <sup>13</sup> He also had seven sons and three daughters. <sup>14</sup> He named the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. <sup>15</sup> In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. <sup>16</sup> After this Job lived for one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. <sup>17</sup> And Job died, old and full of days.

### Job 42:12-17

The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. In the beginning of the story of Job readers find a blessed and godly man; at the end of the Book of Job they find a man even more blessed and godly. In the end, all the attack of Satan served to make Job a more blessed and godly man than he was before Satan got to work on him. Such was the power and influence of God in his life and is the model for the Christian life.

Again Spurgeon comments, "Our sorrows shall have an end when God has gotten his end in them. The ends in the case of Job were these, that Satan might be defeated, foiled with his own weapons, blasted in his hopes when he had everything his own way."

He also had seven sons and three daughters. Nothing could replace the children Job so tragically lost in Chapter 1; yet these ten children were of true consolation. It also is some evidence that Job's relationship with his wife was restored to goodness as before.

The restoration of Job in this way gives additional weight to those who argue that the whole account is an allegory. Job's children were adults when they died and there is no mention that Job's wife had these children in later life or that Job took another, younger wife. For Job's original wife to have another child in her later years would not seem unnatural but to have a further ten would be perhaps even more miraculous that Sarah giving birth to Isaac at the age of ninety!

Job's daughters were also uniquely blessed, noted as being beautiful and having an inheritance along with their brothers. There was, no doubt, some connection between Job's godly conduct as a family man (Job 31:1-4 and 31:9-12) and this blessing on his daughters. The names of the daughters of Job are of some interest:

- Jemimah: 'Turtledove' or 'Day-bright.'
- Keziah: 'Cinnamon' or 'Cinnamon,' a fragrant scent.
- Keren-happuch: 'A Jar of Eye Paint' or 'Horn of Beauty'; the idea was that she was so beautiful that she needed no cosmetics.

After this Job lived for one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. Job's life ended long and blessed. He was well rewarded as a warrior who had won a great battle for God's glory.

Job died, old and full of days. A better epitaph could not be wished for.

One final comment from Spurgeon, "We are not all like Job, but we all have Job's God. Though we have neither risen to Job's wealth, nor will, probably, ever sink to Job's poverty, yet there is the same God above us if we be high, and the same God with his everlasting arms beneath us if we be brought low; and what the Lord did for Job he will do for us, not precisely in the same form, but in the same spirit, and with like design."