

# Job

## Overview

- **In a word:** Foundation
- **In a sentence:** Job lays the theological foundation to build a wise life upon- the fear of Yahweh.

## Thematic Comments

- Job is considered a part of wisdom literature and **the core idea to wisdom literature is - learning how to master the world- it is a manual to take dominion in a cracked world.** Wisdom means basically skill (1st use Ex 28:1-3), and wisdom literature is teaching skill to fulfill our role- to take dominion.
- Job is like a prologue to Scripture (it is the oldest book in terms of composition) that shows a few things
  - God runs the universe rightly and is worth following in and of himself (Job 1)
  - No humanistic theory can explain this life apart from divine revelation (ch.28 & 1-2)
  - The ultimate hope is resurrection- we are meant to defeat death, but we can't-- and so we need one who can defeat death and then bring us along with him. (ch.19)
  - The foundation of a wise life is loving trust and fear of Yahweh. (28)
- **Bringing the first two points together we can summarize Job's role as the foundation wisdom is built on.** And that foundation is laid by answering this question, "*Is the way God runs the universe right(eous)?*" (The word right is the word for upright, justice, or righteousness in many texts.)
- A helpful quote from Steve Dempster, Job shows that, "*despite the evidence, God rules the world, and this rule is of a different order than one might expect.*"
- **The debates all circle around three assertions- God is righteous, Job is innocent, God rewards the upright and punishes the wicked.** None of the friends or Job can hold all three of these in tension so they end up rejecting one or the other. Job begins to doubt that God is righteous. The friends doubt God's innocence. God reveals that life is much more complex than simple punishment for evil and reward for good. **Sin always causes suffering, but not all suffering is caused by sin.**

## Structure

- 1-2 Scene 1- The Board is Set
- 3-37- Scene 2- The Debates and Legal Proceedings
- 38-41- Scene 3- The Defendant's Response
- 42- Scene 4- Job Restored

## Exegetical Notes

- **The Board is Set (1-2)**

- 1:1 "Job" means something like "enemy" or "attacked one"
- 1:1 Note that Job is not an Israelite- he is pre-Israelite. Between the name and the timing we can conclude- This is a human problem dealing with theological issues prior to the storyline of Abraham and Israel- *these are issues that touch upon all humanity.*
- 1:1- he is "whole" and "straight" the ideas being not perfection in any sense but that there are not areas of his life that he hides from God- he serves him wholeheartedly, and he lives with integrity- uprightly, not in crooked or hypocritical ways.
- 1:1 the final description of Job gives two parallel lines to express the core of his godliness- he feared Yahweh (the idea is that it was his habit- he was a fearer of Yahweh), and he turned away from evil (same idea here- he was a turner away from evil). These are two sides of one coin expressed positively and negatively- positively he feared God and this meant that negatively he turned away from what was evil.
- 1:1 This is not the description of a perfect man- but of a man who gives his whole heart to acknowledging Yahweh as king and God and living in line with his will. "Job later says he confessed sin openly when necessary (31:33-34)"
- "Job is the same on the inside as he is on the outside. Job shows every quality needed for a wonderful relationship with God." (Christopher Ash)
- 1:2 The children and the numbers of them would have been seen as "the perfect family" in the Ancient Near East. Basically the author is drawing a picture of the perfect family with a white picket fence and two kids, a boy and a girl. This would have been the picture of a "charmed" family in the ANE.
- 1:3 Note the parallel between 7 sons, 7,000 sheep, 3 daughters, 3,000 camels. The idea again is showing that this man is living the charmed life at home and in business. This man would have been seen as absolutely blessed by God and in that world **the blessing would have been assumed as a reward for his righteous living.**
- 1:4 Note only is he blessed spiritually, at home, and in his business, but he is blessed in that his children have good relationships with one another. The brothers don't mistreat the sisters and they all care for one another and spend time together- every mother's dream.
- 1:5 The idea of this verse is to paint a blanket over the entire situation and a final exclamation point that everything is perfect, even so much so that Job acts like a true leader-priest of his family so that even if sin is present it would be quickly dealt with.
- 1:5 It is crucial to note here we have to first use of a wordplay that will continue throughout the book- the word translated "curse" is actually the word "bless" in Hebrew and it's used sarcastically, but when you know that it comes out a bit more punchy.
- 1:5 and Job was this type of loving leader all the time, not just when it was convenient for him.

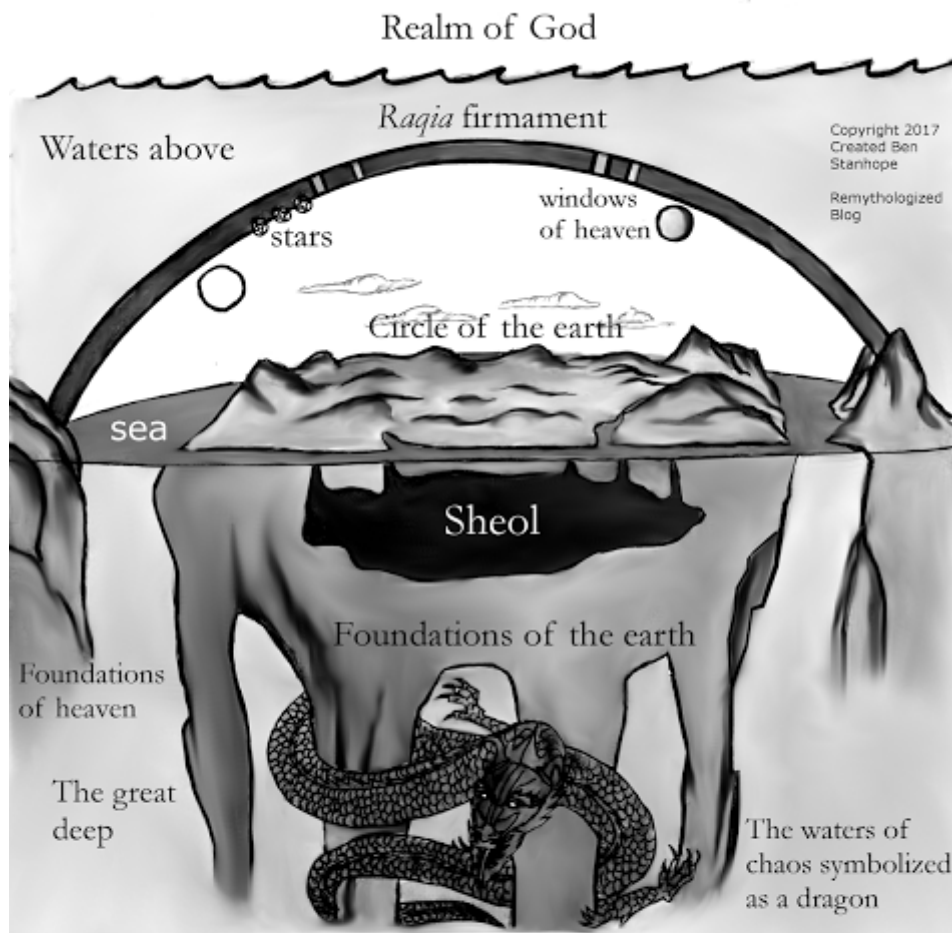
- **Mini-Scene- Heaven Opens**

- 1:6 the spiritual entities are here summoned to Yahweh's throne room, not of their own accord but his.
- 1:6 the name Satan means basically "accuser"
- 1:7 This verse is almost certainly what Peter has in mind when he wrote, "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion." The verb for "going to and fro" is the idea of prowling around or walking back and forth with intent.
- 1:8 this reads literally "have you set your heart on my servant, Job?"- the language here is certainly meant to be ominous- you don't want Satan to "set his heart" on you. Yahweh is picking a fight.
- 1:8 Yahweh is the one who points out Job and who draws out all his good characteristics for Satan's consideration- it is absolutely a taunt, he is saying, "Hey Satan, check out Job, he is something isn't he."
- 1:8 Note Yahweh's joy in his children when they walk with him. This is the perfect setup to essentially put God (and Job) on trial in the rest of the book.
- 1:9 implication- Job fears you because you give him nice stuff (which was exactly the ANE thought process on the Gods- you serve them so that they will bless you)
- 1:10 Satan draws on a true implication, Yahweh does indeed protect his people, but Satan turns this against Yahweh and Job- the attack is, "He only serves you because you protect him from harm." (which was true thus far)
- 1:10 Yahweh had indeed blessed the work of his hands and the fruitfulness of his livestock (by the way, this is a theology of productivity in a verse, Job worked hard but what mattered was the blessing of Yahweh on his work).
- 1:10 worth noting this is the next instance of "bless." Job fears his children might "bless" Yahweh in their heart, and Satan says that Yahweh has "blessed" Job (here used non-sarcastically).
- 1:11 worth noting, Satan has to ask and the Hebrew particle often translated "please" is included here.
- 1:11 this literally reads, "he will bless you to your face" - and it is again the sarcastic use of bless, and it really carries the same idea as the English "in your face!"- the test seems to be primarily of Job, but **Satan's ultimate accusation is that Yahweh runs the universe by bribery- "Your beloved 'images' that you love so much, they don't love you, they just love the stuff you give them. Take it away and they will curse you to your face you bribe giver."**
- 1:12 this verse gives a very interesting peek into how evil and suffering work. Satan is the initiator of asking for evil to come upon Job and he asks in verse 10 that Yahweh stretch out his hand against Job, however here now Yahweh says that Satan may stretch out his hand against Job. So we get a tiny glimpse into this way in which God is the ultimate one in control (Satan must get permission)

and yet God is not the one inflicting the evil directly, but is allowing Satan to carry out his wicked desires.

- 1:12 all things outside of Job's physical person are handed into Satan's realm of influence.
- 1:12 *The heavenly scene closes*
- 1:13 Note: the verbs are meant to present the scene as if you are watching it unfold, they are eating and drinking in the house.
- 1:13 The fact that the children are mentioned here is a beautiful literary technique-
  - with all that's about to happen, we are going to forget them, until the end, and then it will hit even harder.
  - They also form what's called an inclusio to this section that brackets it off.
  - We also see that all this happens on the peak day (not the eldest's house) and so it was likely the final day of feasting and was the pinnacle of joy and blessing.
- Before we go on it will helpful to have this picture in mind--

## ANCIENT ISRAELITE COSMOLOGY



<b>THE FIRMAMENT</b> Gen 1:7-8; Job 37:18; Ex 24:10; Ezk 1:22-26	<b>WATERS ABOVE</b> Gen 1:7-8; Ps 148:4-6	<b>REALM OF GOD</b> Ps 104:2-3; 29:10; Job 22:12-14	<b>WINDOWS OF HEAVEN</b> Gen 7:11; 8:2; Is 24:18
<b>CIRCLE OF EARTH</b> Isa 40:22; Job 26:10; Prov 8:27	<b>FOUNDATIONS OF EARTH</b> Job 9:6; Ps 75:3; 102:25	<b>FOUNDATIONS OF HEAVEN</b> Job 26:11; 2 Sam 22:8	<b>THE CHAOS DRAGON</b> Ps 74:13-15; Job 7:12; 9:13; 26:12-13

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- The reason I include the picture here is that **what is about to be presented is heaven and earth collapsing around Job.**
- Note that what holds the world up are the "foundations of the earth" and "foundations of heaven." The idea was that the sky and the earth were supported by pillars that kept the world in the ordered realm of Yahweh and that outside of that ordered realm was chaos where the symbolic dragon Leviathan roamed.
- 1:14 again its a scene with movement and activity "the oxen were plowing, and the donkeys eating"
- 1:15 note: "fell"
- 1:15 Note the Sabeans most likely came from the South
- Note this would have been associated with the Earth (land animals plowing etc.)
- 1:16 the first guy is still in the middle of talking to Job as the second runs up
- 1:16 Note again "fell" and this time the location is made explicit, not just from heaven, but from God himself. This is the importance of "fell" which is going to be used every time something bad happens and the repeated drumbeat of this section is that **Satan orchestrates it in a way to make it seem like Yahweh is against Job.** (remember Job hasn't has the glimpse into the scene in heaven)
- 1:16 This "plague" would have been associated with the sky (fell from heaven)
- "mouth of the sword" "eaten up" "the mouth of the sword"
- 1:17 once again the guy is still speaking as the other runs up
- 1:17 the Chaldeans came from the North- so you can see the picture now, **the sky and the earth are collapsing around Job.**
- 1:18 once again the next one comes while the other is still speaking
- 1:18- the guys sentence breaks normal sentence structure in Hebrew and you can almost hear him out of breath running up and the word just falls out "your sons and your daughters!" and it's as if a lightening bolt hits Job because he knows exactly what is coming and we as the reader and reminded of the opening to this mini-section, "On the day when the sons and daughters were feasting" and the ominous note it struck is now about to be driven home...
- 1:18 there is no main verb in 18, it holds it off in this terrible tension.. "they were eating and drinking..
- 1:19 this great "spirit" (same word for wind and spirit in Hebrew) came and would have been associated with the sky (wind), **thus we can now see we have two "plagues" associated with the foundations of the earth and two with the foundations of the heavens (they alternate, earth, sky, earth, sky) and also the peoples come on Job from North and South and each of these things seems to "fall" on him directly from Yahweh himself.**
- 1:19 The word we translate "struck" is actually "touch" the exact word Satan says to Yahweh- "if you would touch him"

- 1:19 the word for corners of the house is used again in 38:6 and says "who laid the cornerstones of the world" and I think there is some play here with the four corners of the world (think of the common phrase in the bible "the four corners of the earth") falling on Job and then in microcosm the four corners of the house falling on the children. **Job's world has collapsed from the inside out.**
- 1:19 the not-quite-final "fell"
- "It is crucial to emphasize at this juncture that within the theological framework of the Old Testament, the losses of verses 14–19 would have looked like God's cursing Job for sin (Deut. 28; Prov. 3:33), punishing Job for secret and terrible transgressions, even though the reader has already been assured that the reasons for Job's tragedy are entirely different. Job's response is as poignant as it is noble. Without suppressing his grief (v. 20), Job worships in a way that shows he unambiguously passes the Accuser's test (v. 21): every blessing Job received in life was only a gift ('the Lord gave') that he knew he would not enjoy past the grave. Furthermore, God is to be praised no less when he takes away than when he gives – no less. Clearly, Job's love and loyalty to God are in no way tied to ancillary blessings: every secondary blessing from God remains secondary for Job, pure gift and subordinate to God himself. Although the narrator does not draw attention to it, it is worth noting that the opposite of what Satan predicted has happened: instead of God's suffering the humiliation of one of his favourite servants openly hating him, Job is blessing God more deeply as a result of his suffering. Instead of God being cursed, he is being blessed in a costly, painful and deeply beautiful way. In God's sovereign guidance, the Accuser's hostility and the evil he inflicts has the opposite effect of what it intended. The trauma intended to pry Job away from God has driven him deeper into worship." (Eric Ortlund. *Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job*. IVP Academic, 2021.)
- 1:20 this verse is full of stilted verbs that are meant to bring you step by step up to the pinnacle of his response in the final word of the verse- he rose (note the contrast with everything falling- he stands), he tore his robe, and he shaved his head, **and he fell** ..... and he **worshipped**.
- Job passes the test. Yahweh passes the test. Job doesn't love Yahweh for the stuff. Yahweh doesn't bribe Job to love him. Job is upright, Yahweh is righteous.
- **This is the entire book in microcosm-** the entire book is this, 'You cannot see into heaven, you cannot understand the depths of God's plans and wisdom, and so the only right response to him is to fear him which means that you love him for him and not what he gives and you worship him no matter what comes.' This is beyond and above and deeper and better than any other thing you can possibly get about how to live your life- no physical fitness or longevity hacks, no diet or beauty routine, no relational skills, no job satisfaction, no work life balance, no productivity tips, no material stuff, no people, nothing can get you the deep level of okay-ness in life that you need beyond this type of relationship with Yahweh- a trust that says, take it all and you have

done ZERO wrong, I was never in this for the stuff or the people or the comfort or anything- I want you.

- And this exact longing is the real thing that torments Job for the rest of the book- **his entire issue is not so much that he is innocent and can't understand "why" but it is that he can't handle the fact that Yahweh seems to be against him**, and he simply wants to be reconciled to him.
- 1:21 Note the beautiful closing of the line with the word "blessed." (in Hebrew it's the final word) Satan says Job will "bless" you to your face, and now Job has indeed "blessed" Yahweh to his face.
- "1:21 reveals a crucial difference between Job's theology and that of his friends: **while Job thinks of blessing as pure gift, the friends tend to speak of divine blessing as reward for services rendered.**" (Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.)
- 1:22 Job exits the trial unscathed, and don't forget why, he doesn't accuse God of wrong...that won't remain true for the entire book.
- "Paradoxically, the only way to prove the honesty of the relationship is to allow 'a local suspension of justice'<sup>13</sup> in which Job is treated as an unrepentant sinner, even though he clearly is not. **\*\*God temporarily 'breaches his own justice' to make unconditional loyalty possible. 'Inexplicable suffering has a role in the divine economy, for it makes true piety possible.'\*\***<sup>14</sup> We are only nine verses into this long and complex book, but already we are near its heart. Do God's people love and fear him for his sake, as an end in himself? Or is God used a means to some other earthly end, such as having enjoyable lives? Will we enter into a relationship with God in which all we ultimately gain is God? Can we keep the secondary blessings we accrue in that relationship truly secondary and dispensable? Or are we too selfish? The question is a very great one, for a relationship with God for God's sake only is surely the only kind of relationship that will save us. '[I]f we love God for something less than himself, we cherish a desire that can fail us. We run the risk of hating Him if we do not get what we hope for.'<sup>15</sup> Even more frightening is the possibility that Christians will insult God by treating a person of infinite worth as a means to some other end – all without realizing it. (Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.)
- "As Christopher Ash writes: the Satan, for all his malice, is doing something necessary to the glory of God. In some deep way it is necessary for it to be publicly seen by the whole universe that God is worthy of the worship of a man and that God's worship is in no way dependent on God's gifts."
- Chapter 2
  - 2:1-8- "As was the case in chapter 1, **this second wave of suffering would have been interpreted by Job and his friends not just as misfortune, but as punishment for sin. This is the case because the word for the boils on Job's skin (šĕḥîṅ, v. 7) is**

**relatively rare, but is found in Deuteronomy 28:27, 35 for the sicknesses faithless**

**Israelites will suffer.**<sup>24</sup> Job's sickness is thus, from his perspective and that of his friends, evidence of divine anger. In fact, from their perspective it probably looked as if God was about to take Job's life. It is unclear whether Job's scraping himself with a potsherd (v. 8) is an ancient medical practice or an act of grief or both, but sitting on the ash heap does represent a place of humiliation and anguish (2 Sam. 13:19; Esth. 4:1; Ps. 102:10; Isa. 61:3). Tragically, just when Job is at his lowest, his wife betrays him by asking why he maintains integrity with God when it is costing him everything (v. 9). Why keep loving God, she asks, if he keeps hurting you? The echo in verse 9 to 2:3 – Job still 'holds fast' his integrity – shows the opposite intent behind the same phrase: while yhwah commends Job for holding on to his integrity, Job's wife criticizes him for the same reason. She stumbles over the test Job has already passed." (Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.)

- 2:9 Uses the "bless" phrasing sarcastically again.
- 2:10 the theology behind this phrase doesn't get as much highlighting as the other spots in chapter 1 but this is especially insightful from Job- he acknowledges that ultimately what has happened to him is indeed evil and has indeed come from Yahweh but this isn't a reason to indict Yahweh. This is often not the logic we use.
- 2:11-13 "Their silence – which surely must have become uncomfortable after a while – is due to Job's obvious, but thus far unspoken, pain (v. 13). It is a little surprising to read this after Job's apparently serene submission to the loss of his family and health: **Job seems entirely at peace with his losses in 1:21 and 2:10, so what is the source of this other pain? As we read further into the book, however, and listen as Job obsessively talks about God, without ever asking for the return of the blessings of chapters 1–2, we infer that while Job is resigned to the loss of his blessed life, the God who (from Job's perspective) caused this tragedy for no reason has become problematic. Job is at peace with his losses, but not with the God who is (apparently) punishing him without just cause.** This 'very great pain' will dominate Job's speeches." (Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.)

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- **The Debates and Legal Proceedings (3-37)**

- Big Overview
  - *Round 1*
    - **Job:** Why did this have to happen? I wish I had never been born. (3:1-26)  
**Eliphaz:** If you're really innocent, or if you just admit you sinned, history shows us it will all work out in the end for you. (4:1-5:27) **Job's Response:** You are no help, you are accusing me but I'm telling you I didn't do anything wrong! I wish God would just kill me now or forgive me for whatever I did wrong. (6:1-7:21)



- **Bildad:** This is simple cause and effect. You or your family sinned. Admit and you'll get your life back. (8:1-22) **Job's Response:** It isn't that simple! And I can't argue with him. I need someone who can mediate between us. (9:1-35) **Job Addresses God:** Why??? (10:1-22)
- **Zophar:** God is powerful, complex, and isn't even punishing you as bad as you deserve so just admit you sinned and repent and you'll have a good life again. (11:1-20) **Job's Response:** Duh! Of course this is from God and he does whatever he wishes, *but I just wish I could present my case before him.* (12:1-13:19) **Job Addresses God:** Just tell me what I did wrong! (13:20-28) But I know that I couldn't possibly win an argument with you. But if only you would kill me, get rid of my sin and then resurrect me in purity. (14:1-22)
- *Round 2*
  - **Eliphaz:** You are a fool and a wicked man Job (15:1-35) **Job's Response:** Anyone can accuse me of hidden sin, but I am innocent, you are miserable comforters. God must hate me for some unknown reason even though I am innocent. But I know there is one in heaven who will argue my case, that's my only hope. (16:1-17:16) **Bildad:** Stop trying to defend yourself, just admit you sinned. It's simple cause and effect. (18:1-21) **Job's Response:** You don't care about me at all, but I know God will redeem me in the end. (19:1-29)
  - **Zophar:** Sooner or later justice will come for the righteous and the unrighteous, count on it. (20:1-29) **Job's Response:** But that can't be true because the wicked prosper their whole life! You guys don't get it, it isn't simple cause and effect, my suffering doesn't mean I am a wicked man. You have no comfort for me because even if I am righteous I still might suffer. (21:1-34)
- *Round 3*
  - **Eliphaz:** You really think God would be after you if you were righteous? No, you are actually wicked, just admit it. (22:1-30) **Job's Response:** He knows I'm innocent, but this is still his will for some reason. I just wish he would just the wicked, why does he run the world this way??? (23:1-24:25) **Bildad:** No one is perfect compared to God, you sinned Job. (25:1-6) **Job's Response:** The real issue is that God is so much higher/smarter/ more powerful we just can't know why. **But I know I'm innocent and the wicked will ultimately not prosper. Man has searched out many treasures but can't find true wisdom, only God can give man insight into how this world works. Revelation is necessary to make sense of this world.** (26:1- 28:28) **Job's Final Defense:** I remember what it was like before but now I am destroyed. I've been righteous in every way, God why? You've

been unrighteous in how you've treated me! (29:1-31:40) **Elihu**: Final attempt at human wisdom. God is in the right, Job, you can't understand him. You must have done something wrong, it really is cause and effect. (32-37)

- **3- Job's Attack on Creation**

- 3:4 is a direct reversal of "Let there be light" - keep this in mind all the way until 38- "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?"
- 3:1-26 Instead of wishing only for death, Job wishes he had never been born in the first place – and even implies he wishes there had never been any light or space for any human life at all. (Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.)
- 3:1-26- "It is also important to remember that the word 'wish' is probably too weak, for curses and blessings in the Old Testament express not just wishes but count as ritually effective speech, helping to bring about what they describe. Although Job perhaps did not literally expect creation to dissolve into chaos around him as he spoke, his first poem does count as a verbal assault on God's world. To appreciate the gravity and magnitude of this curse, it should be remembered that an ancient Semite like Job would have viewed creation significantly differently from modern Westerners. Job is verbally assaulting not just impersonal matter obeying scientific laws, but that beautiful, complex, dependent environment God made for us for the sake of significant relationship and satisfying work (Gen. 1; Ps. 104). But the goodness and grandeur of God's world in no way restrains Job's pain (2:13). Job's curse encompasses not just himself, but all of existence." (Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.)
- **At this point Job is essentially saying that the way Yahweh operates the universe is wrong because he punishes the innocent and therefore it would be better if he simply never existed, nor anything else for that matter.**
- "The reason for Job's curse occupies the rest of the chapter, stated in two plaintive questions (vv. 11, 20). **Why is Job alive at all (vv. 11–12), when he could have been resting in Sheol as a stillborn** (v. 13)? The four successive verbs in verse 13 imply an eagerness on Job's part, but his euphemism is chilling, because elsewhere Sheol is a place to be avoided at all costs (Pss 6:6; 30:4; 116:3; Prov. 5:5; 9:18; Isa. 14:9, 11, 15). Job can, however, think of no other path to peace (vv. 14–19): as he imaginatively surveys both great and small there, from kings to prisoners, he portrays all their earthly accomplishments as being of no significance – whatever kings built has now crumbled (v. 14), and there the wicked cease from turmoil (v. 17). Although the implication remains unstated, Job appears to be longing for a place where his own life would be reduced to nothing as well, and all the agony of chapters 1–2 would be of no significance and no

longer trouble him. This is the only redemption poor Job can hope for.<sup>30</sup> Verse 17 repeats 'there' twice, as if he cannot turn his mind away from death as his only hope."

- "Job asks the same question from a different perspective in verse 20, implicitly probing why God would punish him so severely only to stop just before his death (vv. 20–22). **Since death is the final punishment for sin, if Job is being punished, why is he not granted this release?** Why is Job's way hidden from God's care (v. 23a), while God 'hedges' Job in in hostility (23b)? When considering Job's limited perspective on his situation, one sympathizes with his question. At the same time, it is impossible to miss how verse 23 repeats the rare verb *šûk* (to hedge), first used in 1:10 (found elsewhere in the OT only in Job 38:8; 40:22; Hos. 2:8). The first time this verb is used, it expresses how God hedged Job about in blessing, not pain. The repetition of the unusual word is not accidental. The narrator is implying (and not for the last time) that Job is eerily close to the truth of his situation without being able to understand it fully. Job will later learn that God does 'hedge in', but in a much happier sense than Job thinks (38:8)."
- Job finishes his opening lament by saying there is no reason for him to continue with life. He cannot participate in normal life (symbolized in v. 24 by eating) and finds no resolution or closure anywhere (v. 26; the triple negative is especially affecting).<sup>31</sup> The last word of the verse, usually translated 'trouble' or 'turmoil', is more troubling than either, for it often refers to the waters of chaos (Exod. 15:10; Pss 29:3; 93:4; Isa. 17:12–13; Hab. 3:2, 16). Chaos has entered Job, and he has entered a world of chaos, for no reason he can think of. Why is he still alive? Job 3 is a powerful poem. The poet will not let us keep a safe distance from Job's agony, but involves us in it as Job's imagery and urgency linger in our minds. 'The poetry catches the wild cries . . . Translators spoil the art by making it smooth.'<sup>32</sup> Christopher Ash appropriately writes that we 'need to learn to be shocked and shocked again by this story and never to let familiarity dull the sharpness of the pain'.<sup>33</sup> While letting this shock linger, however, we can return to the question that opened our discussion of this chapter. Why does Job go beyond wishing to die? Why imply that he wishes he never enjoyed a single day of the picture-perfect existence of 1:1–5? And why call on forces that would ensure no-one would have a chance to enjoy life? Has Job's bitterness distorted his perspective? Is malice towards everyone the only way he can articulate his pain? **Fortunately, when we take into account Job's probable perspective on the events of chapters 1–2, these questions become unnecessary. From his vantage point Job has lost God's favour and come under God's fiercest wrath, for no reason Job can think of. His curse on creation is tantamount to affirming that if he cannot live under God's favour and within his friendship, Job sees**

**no point ever to having lived in the first place. In other words, the blessed life of chapter 1 means nothing to him without God and God's friendship – in fact, without God's smile, Job cannot think of a reason for anything in creation to exist.** In the light of this, we see that, for all its vociferousness, Job's curse is something like the photographic negative of his worship from 1:21. It expresses the same high view of God, albeit in a negative way. *Job would not curse so terribly if he did not value God so deeply"*

- 3:23 Note that we saw in heaven that God has placed a hedge around Job that is protective and loving, but now Job interprets his life backwards, he says that God has hedged him in with evil things around him.
- 4-14 Debate Round 1
  - Eliphaz 4-5
  - 4:1-7 this is probably the worst counsel ever! Hey, don't bite my head off but you have helped people in your position and now you're whining when its your turn to suffer, besides don't forget if you were innocent this wouldn't have happened.
  - "Because innocent people never perish (v. 7 – remember that Job is close to death), repentance and a return to integrity with God is the way to regain God's favour and the blessings this brings (v. 6). After all, all reap what they sow (v. 8) – especially evildoers, who, though powerful as lions, are put to death quickly (vv. 9–11). Eliphaz has personally seen this happen (v. 8)."
    - MLA 9th Edition (Modern Language Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.
    - APA 7th Edition (American Psychological Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. (2021). Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job: Vol. [US & CA version]. IVP Academic.
  - 4:8-21 it gets worse! Hey, by the way, I had this crazy spiritual encounter and the being told me that absolutely everyone has some sin in his life so that's really just the issue here- you're somehow guilty so just confess.
  - "We quickly learn that **the friends do not have any room for innocent suffering** – their interpretation of the retribution principle is naive and mechanical, such that everyone suffers quickly and exactly proportionately for every sin. So when Job first opened his mouth, Eliphaz probably expected a confession of some dark misdeed that would explain Job's tragedy. Although the narrator does not say so, the real reason Job's friends come (2:11–13) is to help Job through his repentance. The only 'comfort' they have to give is blame. (This is not the last time the narrator will present Job's friends in a superficially attractive way, only to undermine them and their theology later.)"
    - MLA 9th Edition (Modern Language Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.

- APA 7th Edition (American Psychological Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. (2021). Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job: Vol. [US & CA version]. IVP Academic.
- "But when the attentive reader notices how the 'fear' (of God) and the 'integrity' Eliphaz recommends in verse 6 recall Job's spiritual qualities in 1:1, Eliphaz is immediately discredited: **it is not because Job lacks these qualities that he is suffering, but precisely because he shows them so deeply. For all his good intentions, Eliphaz has read Job's situation exactly wrongly.**"
  - MLA 9th Edition (Modern Language Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.
  - APA 7th Edition (American Psychological Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. (2021). Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job: Vol. [US & CA version]. IVP Academic.
- 5:1-7 Eliphaz basically tells Job to just accept God's judgment on him instead of fighting against it. He even says God will restore him if he simply repents (v10-12), but this is exactly what is frustrating to Job- he knows he is innocent of hidden sin.
- 5: 8-27 "All of this is a warm invitation for Job to return to the God he has abandoned. Eliphaz intends to make it as easy as possible to repent, finishing his first speech with an idyllic picture of restoration (vv. 19-26), all of which can be Job's if he only owns up to whatever he did to provoke God's anger. How could Job refuse such reasonable terms? (Multiple commentators point out, of course, that the friends' depiction of restoration does come true for Job, but not at all in way they anticipate.)" **NOTE: Eliphaz is primarily concerned with how Job can get his stuff back. But that's not what Job cares about, he wants God.**
  - MLA 9th Edition (Modern Language Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.
  - APA 7th Edition (American Psychological Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. (2021). Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job: Vol. [US & CA version]. IVP Academic.
- Job's First Answer (6-7)
  - 6:1-13 Essentially he says here- I just want to die- I won't ever again enjoy any of the aspects of life that you say I'll get back. It even seems in verse 10 that his wish for death isn't really about himself but that he could die knowing he never cursed God (!).
    - MLA 9th Edition (Modern Language Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.
    - APA 7th Edition (American Psychological Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. (2021). Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job: Vol. [US & CA version]. IVP Academic.

- 6:14-30 He now turns to his friends and the weakness of their "help" comparing them to treacherous waters and mirages.
- 7:1-21 In this chapter Job is basically turning to ask "Why did God come after me? And why so intensely? What did I do to him?"
  - "It cannot be because of anything in Job himself, for he is not nearly a big enough threat to God to provoke such an overwhelming attack (v. 17)."
  - "And if, for argument's sake, there were some sin in Job that provoked God's anger, why was God provoked beyond all measure (v. 20)? And why not forgive this hypothetical sin (v. 21) – especially since Job has been forgiven before (see 31:32–34)?"
  - "What sort of person would treat Job in this way? Job is at the very crux of his dilemma as he finishes his second speech with these questions. **So far as he knows, only he and God were involved in the horror of chapters 1–2, and Job cannot explain the depth of his tragedy in relation to himself. His only recourse is (as it were, unwillingly) to draw some terrifying new conclusions about the God he thought he knew.** These new conclusions will dominate chapters 9–10 and 16, but are rising to the surface at the end of chapter 7."
- Bildad's Brutal Response (8)
  - 8:1-4 if you thought Eliphaz was rough, look at this.... the argument is, if God killed your kids, it's because they sinned against him, so get over it. Yikes.
    - MLA 9th Edition (Modern Language Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job. IVP Academic, 2021.
    - APA 7th Edition (American Psychological Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. (2021). Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job: Vol. [US & CA version]. IVP Academic.
  - 8:6-7 He also is concerned with stuff!!!! That's not the issue for Job.
  - 8:8-10 he then basically says, "don't argue with me, history shows all this is true"
  - 8:1-22 "This is almost a point-by-point refutation of Job's second speech, made by repeating key words from chapters 6–7 with opposite intent: while Job accused his friends of treating his words like wind (6:26), Bildad fires back that Job's words are a mighty wind, too dangerous and destructive to go unanswered (v. 2);<sup>42</sup> while Job complains God will soon seek (šāḥar) Job but not find him, Bildad says Job should be the one seeking God (šāḥar, v. 5); while Job says he has no hope (7:6), Bildad points to the perishing hope of the godless (8:13); when Job rejects the life left to him (7:16), Bildad encourages Job that God rejects no-one with integrity (8:20)."
  - "Despite all of Bildad's attempts to destroy Job's argument against God, a final echo to an earlier chapter undermines all of Bildad's confident assurances: when he refers to the integrity Job must regain in 8:20, Bildad echoes one of the

spiritual qualities Job displayed in 1:1 that drew the Accuser's attention in the first place. **As with Eliphaz, Bildad has completely misread Job's situation; it is not a lack of integrity that has prompted Job's suffering but just the opposite.** His predictions are not worth much more, either, for his final promise that those hating Job will be clothed with shame (v. 22) does happen – but very much not in the way Bildad expects, for in 42:7–9 it is Bildad who is rebuked and demoted by God."

- (9–10) Job's 2nd Answer (Rock bottom–God must be evil)
  - 9:1– Job doesn't even really answer Bildad here but just turns his attention toward Yahweh (his real focus).
  - **9 This is the chapter where Job turns from simply holding to his integrity to now actually desiring to prove that he is right and that Yahweh is in the wrong.**
  - 9:1–15 he's too big and strong for me to ever really go against, even though I'm right all I can do is ask him for mercy– he's like a cosmic bully.
  - 9:16–35 "As one proceeds through the chapter, it becomes clear that **Job finds himself faced with a bizarre dilemma as he develops the idea of a legal case against God.** On the one hand, Job knows that the punishment of chapters 1–2 – or rather, what he mistakenly but understandably perceives as punishment – cannot be explained by any sin in him and so is unjust. Although Job is the first to admit he is not flawless, there is no secret pattern of disobedience that can explain his losses (1:1). Job thus finds himself driven to the unthinkable possibility that if he can somehow find an impartial court and somehow serve the Almighty with a court summons, that court will find in Job's favour so Job will win. But no sooner does this thought occur to Job than his mind recoils; he has such an exalted view of God, it is inconceivable to him that anyone can sue yhwh for damages and win. How on earth could it be possible for the Almighty to bow to humans and admit they were right and he was wrong? But, contrariwise, Job did not deserve what happened to him in the book's opening – God mistreated him. But this is God whom Job is arguing against! How can Job win an argument with the Almighty?"
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    - APA 7th Edition (American Psychological Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. (2021). Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job: Vol. [US & CA version]. IVP Academic.
  - "Job will twist in the contradiction between his sense of mistreatment by God and his fear and trembling before the Sovereign of the universe throughout chapters 9–10, see-sawing between the horns of this dilemma in a way that is sometimes difficult to follow. **These chapters are also difficult because Job will hit his**

**lowest point in the debate, making claims that can be described only as blasphemous – claims of which Job will later be heartily ashamed (42:1–6).**

Nevertheless, there is some progress. Job has already cursed creation (ch. 3) and lamented his own existence under an inscrutably hostile God (chs. 6–7). Now, for the first time, vindication before God comes to the forefront. Even if this vindication is stated in a way that means God loses, he will later express the same idea in terms of reconciliation with his long-lost friend, without any idea of God's needing to be in the wrong (19:26; 23:3–7)."

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- In chapter 10 Job enters a world where he begins to imagine that God is still all powerful but he is absolutely evil and enjoys punishing his children for no reason. This is a terrifying world.
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  - APA 7th Edition (American Psychological Assoc.) Eric Ortlund. (2021). Piercing Leviathan: God's Defeat of Evil in the Book of Job: Vol. [US & CA version]. IVP Academic.
- **9:33 We get the first wish of Job, for an "arbiter between us that might lay his hand on us both."**
- Zophar and the deep things of God (11)
  - "Zophar, of course, will have none of this, as he quickly shows in the next speech (ch. 11). All Zophar can hear in Job's desire for a trial against God is a long-winded attempt to avoid Job's obvious need for repentance. Talk of defeating God legally is not the way for a human being to be justified (v. 2); this amounts to mocking God (v. 3). Zophar will not let Job get away with this and takes upon himself the burden of shaming Job into silence (v. 3). Any trial with God will unfold very differently from how Job imagines: the transcendent God (vv. 7–9) will quickly shut Job up by showing him that he is even worse than Job realizes (vv. 5–6). According to Zophar, God should have punished Job even more severely! So if God imprisons defendants before bringing them to court because he sees their evil (vv. 11–12; contradicting 10:4, 7), who is Job to argue? The implication is that when God imprisons someone for no apparent reason, he has reasons of his own (human sinfulness).<sup>52</sup> Thus is Job's suffering and God's apparent silence to be explained. But God's terms are very reasonable, Zophar says: if Job abandons the agonized complexities of chapters 9–10 and prays (v. 13) in repentance (v. 14), then all his suffering will be gone like a bad dream



(v. 16) and, instead of darkness (10:21–22), a more-than-natural light will shine on Job – God’s favour and blessing (vv. 17–19).

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- Job starts to want reconciliation (12–14)
  - **"Job closes the first round of the debate in a way that crystallizes his complaint against God while showing incremental progress in his desire to meet with his long-lost divine friend and possibly reconcile."**
  - 12:1–6 "All Job can hear in his friends’ advice is mockery of his predicament, a just man suffering unjustly (v. 4). It is easy to hold suffering as insignificant when your own life is peaceful (v. 5). But Job’s complete lack of peace has given him a new insight into the true nature of the world: there is no justice in how God orders and administers creation (v. 6). **Life is never fair**. All creation reflects this truth (vv. 7–9), as does the bitter wisdom Job has gained in his old age (vv. 11–12).
  - 12:13–35– "Job then launches into an ‘anti-doxology’ in verses 13–25 in order to demonstrate the truth of God’s injustice from verse 6. Most of the description shows God directly upending social structures and roles meant to create and protect order and shalom in society: according to Job, God ‘de-royalizes’ kings by stripping them of royal robes (v. 18), and priests lose their ministries (v. 19), as do wise elders (v. 20). All the leaders of the world wander, lost (v. 24)."
  - "Job’s frustration is palpable as he repeatedly puts God’s action at the front of almost every line in verses 13–25: God directly and intentionally thwarts human desire for a just and moral world (or so Job claims). Even more upsetting is how Job begins his ‘anti-doxology’ with an invocation of divine attributes that, in almost any other context, would be comforting: God’s wisdom and power, his complete understanding of every situation and limitless ability to achieve his purposes (v. 13).<sup>57</sup> But God’s wisdom and power are no comfort to Job. They mean only that God is extremely effective at ruining innocent lives (9:22–24). Job naturally expects that his friends will quickly dismiss his new theology, so he finishes his ‘anti-doxology’ with an assertion of his certainty about it (13:1–2). Because Job has personally experienced divine injustice (v. 1), his interpretation of creation should not be dismissed as inferior to that of the friends (v. 2) – especially friends who lie on God’s behalf and make excuses for him (vv. 4–12)."
  - "Indeed, Job wants reconciliation so much he will speak in full recognition of the danger of arguing with a God who can cause such horrible suffering (v. 13). This longing to speak with the God who is responsible for all Job’s loss and misery (of this Job has no doubt) is very remarkable. It is a sign of faith that Job in his heart

of hearts so loves this God that he must speak with him. And this is a faith so strong that Job will continue to hope in God even if God treats him worse than he already has by enacting that final punishment and killing Job (v. 15) Job's only hope in such a nerve-wracking encounter is that his total lack of hypocrisy will guarantee him a hearing (v. 16)."

- "The next chapter is dominated by the image of 13:28: since God has inexplicably made life 'few of days and full of trouble', the best Job can hope for is that the divine tyrant ignore him (14:1–6). Job's brief hope from chapter 13 seems entirely gone; while other parts of nature may enjoy renewal (vv. 7–9), God will not allow this for humans (vv. 10–12). The best possible outcome Job can imagine is that God will somehow grant him asylum in the underworld until God's irrational anger blows itself out (v. 13); then, hypothetically speaking, God will not guard Job's sins so neurotically (v. 16), but forgive them (v. 17) in a change of heart towards Job (v. 15; even in his gloomiest moments, the deepest desire of Job's heart is to be right with God). But this impossible hypothetical will never obtain: God sends humanity in anger to Sheol, never to return or see its posterity (vv. 18–22). The vigour of the images impresses upon us Job's hopelessness: a falling mountain withers like a plant (v. 18), water rubs stones smooth and rain washes away soil (v. 19); everything is dissolving, losing consistency, dying. Job thus ends the first round of the debate on the same note on which all his speeches end: unbroken darkness and despair (3:26; 7:21; 10:21–22; 14:20–22)."
- Debate Round 2
  - Chapters 14-15
    - 14:1-35- "Eliphaz's next speech is split between a rebuke to Job (vv. 2–16) and a statement on the principle of retribution (vv. 17–35). He says almost nothing new in his second speech, and whatever is new in this chapter serves only to cast further suspicion on him and unintentionally undermine his theology.
    - **Because Eliphaz loves the gifts more than the giver, it secretly terrifies him to think he may lose the blessings of obedience for some inscrutable reason even if he stays perfectly well behaved.** As a result, he must insist that Job is getting what he deserves, and so smears Job as a terrible sinner (remember Job's intuition in 6:21 that Eliphaz speaks from fear; cf. his question in 16:3). This deeper mistake twists everything in Eliphaz's speech. He cannot allow that Job is, with many missteps, genuinely trying to meet with God; as far as Eliphaz is concerned, all Job's talk about a court date with the Almighty is a ridiculous attempt to hold on to whatever secret sins prompted Job's punishment in the first place (vv. 5–6). Horrifyingly, this leads Eliphaz to describe the death of Job's children as

a tender mercy and a gentle word spoken to Job that he should repent (v. 11).

- *Eliphaz's wild claims, strange as they are, reveal the ugliness and narrowness of the world view God's people can sometimes have, as well as the profound degree to which such a world view is unsettled by innocent suffering: **You mean all this might happen to me? Does all my good behaviour count for so little?*** It also reveals the nearly Pelagian power Eliphaz must attribute to human repentance. For in order to be consistent, Eliphaz must grant to human beings the power to reform their own lives and make themselves clean before God, thus satisfying the conditions of verse 14 and allowing God to bless them. All this runs contrary to the rest of the Old Testament.
- Chapters 16-17 Job wants a heavenly witness
  - "A sense of dizzying violence pervades Job's description of God's unprovoked attack on him in 16:7-17: God has torn Job open in hatred, glaring at him with 'sharpened' eyes (v. 9); God broke the unsuspecting Job, seized him by the neck and shattered him (v. 12), slashed open his kidneys (v. 13), ran at him like a soldier and broke Job breach upon breach (v. 14)."
  - "Then, seemingly from nowhere, hope surfaces in verses 18-22, and much more strongly than in 13:20-24. Job expects to die soon (v. 22), but does not want the injustice done to him forgotten (v. 18; Job's blood in this verse is a synecdoche for the violence committed against him [cf. Gen. 4:10; Isa. 26:21]). But in contrast to his scornful friends (v. 20), Job's witness is arguing in heaven on his behalf (vv. 19, 21). This is no mere wish on Job's part – this witness speaks 'even now' (v. 19). This witness will do what Job cannot as he makes the case with the Almighty that Job was treated unjustly and thus bridges the terrible distance and silence between Job and God. Furthermore, it is no mere human being making Job's case, for the witness is 'in heaven', a place no mortal can reach (14:20-22), and one able to argue with God in the same way one human argues with a neighbour (v. 21), which Job knows he himself cannot do (9:15-16). Even more encouraging is the way Job suggests in verse 21 that he expects the witness's activity on his behalf to be successful, so that God and Job will be able to be friends again. However despairing Job is at different points, a simultaneous and contradictory hope is flourishing within him that someone is working for him to resolve this dispute. Ironically, of course, Job speaks here better than he knows, since God is a witness for Job against Satan – but Job, in his ignorance, puts God in the role of accuser."
- Chapter 18

- "As one would expect, all this is lost on Bildad. Deeply offended by Job's burgeoning hope (v. 3), he can ask only why Job insists on hurting himself (v. 4a) and unravelling the moral order of God's universe (4b) just so an exception can be granted him and Job can hold on to whatever unconfessed sin is causing his suffering. A long description of retribution follows in verses 5–21, from which God is almost entirely absent (he appears only in the last verse). The poetry of the speech is vigorous and vivid as Bildad describes the spiritual terrors of the wicked, but the whole of it is as unconvincing and unhelpful as that given by Eliphaz in chapter 15."
- Chapter 19 Job's Redeemer
  - "Job names his false friends' tortures in his next speech (19:2) and insists the suffering they invoke as a witness to his wickedness instead casts doubt on God's character (v. 6). Job is hemmed in and humiliated (vv. 8–9), both torn down and uprooted (v. 10); everything a sinner and rebel should experience has somehow fallen on him (vv. 11–12). As a result, he is completely isolated, a stranger and a nobody to everyone else (vv. 13–19; the root for 'stranger' [zûr] repeats in vv. 13, 15, 17). **Then, hope reappears in verses 23–27.** As in that earlier passage, Job expects to die very soon, and so wants a permanent record of his protest of the injustice done him (vv. 23–24). His reason for wanting this permanent record is the action of his redeemer (gô'êl, v. 25). **The implication is that this redeemer will work as a legal advocate on Job's behalf.**"
  - 19:23–27 Job seems to think that the only way he will have justice against what God has done against him is to have his words inscribed in rock, but he then transitions and realizes he needs a redeemer who can mediate between him and Yahweh.
- Chapters 20–21 Zophar vs. Job
  - "Zophar predictably insists on an unrealistically quick and neat version of the retribution principle in the next chapter in order to prove that Job must deserve his suffering (ch. 20). This, of course, is completely untrue; but Job's response in chapter 21 is unfortunately not much better. Apparently goaded into arguing on Zophar's own terms, Job spends an entire chapter insisting that retribution never happens at all; but his description of the perfect blessings of wicked lives (see vv. 7–13) is as unbelievable as the ironclad, mechanistic system of sin and punishment envisaged by Zophar in chapter 20. One wishes Job had stuck to his desire to meet with God and his hope in a redeemer rather than trying to beat Zophar at his own game."
- Round 3 of the Debates (22–27)
  - "The dominant impression of these chapters is that the debate is breaking down: Bildad's speech is unusually short (ch. 25) and Zophar does not speak in the third

round at all. **The human participants of the debate seem to be running out of things to say** while the point at issue – the moral coherence of God's universe – remains unresolved. When Eliphaz does speak (ch. 22), the only part of his speech that is not repetitive serves to discredit him even further. Eliphaz invents an entire catalogue of heinous sins Job has committed (vv. 5–11), in complete contradiction of the narrator's (1:1) and the Almighty's (1:8) assessment of Job. The possibility that a righteous person might not be blessed for good behaviour is so deeply threatening to Eliphaz's theology that it drives him to make wildly outrageous claims."

- "For his part, Bildad uses his turn to speak in chapter 25 only to repeat that everything in creation is dirty (see 15:14–16), the implication being that all suffering is deserved. As above, this is both false and irrelevant to Job. Job, in contrast, continues to mix harsh criticism of God's injustice with laudable confessions of faith in that same God. He begins superbly in chapter 23 by expressing his desire to meet with God and imagining a positive outcome to such a meeting (23:1–7). The reader is again reminded that although Job does think God is in the wrong, the deeper desire driving Job's criticisms is a desire to be right with God and receive vindication from him (v. 7), which is very admirable. But this is soon spoiled by Job's frustration over God's elusiveness (vv. 8–9) and his terror at how God destroyed his life in full knowledge that Job had done nothing to deserve it (vv. 10–17). This leads to another generalization from his experience as Job spends chapter 24 describing how God's failure as judge (vv. 1, 12c) produces moral and social chaos (vv. 1–17). Because judgment never comes, Job says, everyone does what is right in his or her own eyes (see esp. vv. 2–4). The chapter's final section (vv. 18–25) is confusing because of its description of the judgment of the wicked, something Job has just denied; it is usually taken either as an unmarked quotation of Job's friends (see esv) or as Job's curse on the wicked.<sup>79</sup> But just as Job cannot seem to maintain his confidence in God for long, so his hope (17:15–16) continually disrupts his complaint. This is nowhere more evident than in chapter 26. Bildad has just spoken, weakly and haltingly, about majesty and fear in high places (25:2). Job takes up the same theme and far outdoes him, describing God's victory against cosmic chaos and supernatural evil in truly impressive fashion. Part of the chapter's difficulty, however, is that Job describes the stages of this victory out of chronological order: the naked trembling of the underworld in verses 5–6 is best taken as a result of yhwh's warfare described at the chapter's end (vv. 11–13; cosmic shaking is elsewhere the result of God's warfare against chaos, not an anticipation [e.g. Joel 3:16; Hab. 3:3–6]). Job thus shows us God's creation of all things (vv. 7–10), his defeat of the supernatural chaos that threatens his creation (vv. 11–13), and the totality and permanence of this defeat – Abaddon will never

again resist God but remains trembling and vulnerable in submission (vv. 5–6). The results of the battle are, however, described first, in order to assure us of its certainty and allow us to enjoy this victory even before battle is joined. The description of the battle itself is quite lovely: the serpent does nothing but flee (is there even a fight?), and the heavens are made fair as a result (v. 13). After the storm, the sun shines again. Truly nothing can stand before this God, not even the most securely founded parts of creation (v. 11). The implications Job draws from this victory are even more striking. The first is found as the chapter opens (vv. 2–4), where Job dismisses mere religious theorizing, however eloquent and superficially impressive it may be, if it cannot help someone in deep pain who is sincerely seeking God. Job articulates this dismissal by asking Bildad in verse 2 whether he has ‘saved’ (hiphil of *yšc*) the ‘arm’ (*zērôa*) without strength. Although these two words are not repeated in verses 11–13, they elsewhere describe God’s divine warfare against chaos and evil, which is described in the chapter’s final passage (see Pss 44:4; 98:1; Isa. 51:5; 59:16; 63:5). The implication is that God’s victory over evil and the peace it gives to creation (vv. 11–13) should be reflected in human wisdom (vv. 2–4) and should have the same effect: it should save people who have no other help. Because Bildad’s wisdom has neither, it is worthless. According to Job, God’s cosmic victory over chaos is reflected in wise pastoral counselling – a very striking connection! Job reflects on the implications of God’s victory in a different but equally significant way in the chapter’s final verse (v. 14), where he claims that God’s victory against chaos is but the outskirts of his ways, only the very edge – ‘how small a whisper do we hear of him’ (v. 14)! This is surprising because God’s battle against the raging waters and the monsters in it is often touted in the Old Testament as a central victory for all creation and his people (cf. Pss 18; 65; 74; 89; 93; 144; Isa. 51; Hab. 3; etc.). But Job’s view of God is so exalted, his theological imagination so capacious, that he sees an action of God hailed as central to God’s whole programme in the Old Testament as only the beginning. How profoundly God must outstrip all our thoughts of him! It has been mentioned above how Job occasionally says something that ironically illuminates his true situation before God far better than Job himself realizes. This is nowhere more apparent than in chapter 26, for there really is a serpentine power God will defeat, and this great victory can make a huge difference in wise counsel to those suffering. But Job does not apply the truths he has confessed in this chapter to his own predicament. Instead of comforting himself that God, far from being the great Destroyer (9:5–7), will one day root out all evil from his creation, and the suffering it brings, Job moves on to criticize his friends in chapter 27 (see vv. 7–23; ‘my enemy’ in verse 7 refers to his three tormentors). Given the inexcusable things they have said, this is understandable. But while foolish speech like that of the friends is a serious

matter in Old Testament wisdom literature (see e.g. Prov. 10:8, 31; 12:19; 19:5, 9), one cannot help but notice that God, despite his anger at the three friends, treats them much better than Job predicts in chapter 27: God's ultimate intention is to restore even them (42:8–9). However plausible the pattern of Job's thought in chapters 26–27 might be, one cannot help but wish that Job had taken the next chapter to apply his vision of God's greatness from chapter 26 to himself instead of letting his justifiable anger at his tormentors dominate his speech. Job believes God is a victorious warrior, but cannot affirm that God is fighting on his own behalf."

- **28- Without divine revelation (ability to see into heaven) they impugn either Yahweh or Job.**
  - "In order to discern what comment this chapter makes on the debate, it is important to follow the basic argument of the poem: human beings show amazing ingenuity in finding all kinds of precious, hidden materials from the earth (vv. 1–11), but wisdom – that understanding of the complexities of creation and how to live well in the light of them – simply escapes us (vv. 12–19). We do not even know where to begin looking (vv. 12–13), and none of the normal methods by which humans acquire precious things from the earth can gain that most precious jewel of all (vv. 15–19). **Only God has wisdom (vv. 20–28); only he sees that orderliness in creation that humans need in order to live successfully** (v. 27). In this chapter, wisdom is not so much one 'place' within creation as much as a characteristic of the whole, and only God has the comprehensive view of all reality necessary to gain that insight into the nature of wisdom."
- Chapters 29–31 Job's Final Complaints
  - "When Job takes up his discourse again (29:1), it is to make one final speech in which he surveys the blessed life he lost (ch. 29) and his present misery (ch. 30), and makes a solemn oath that he has done nothing to deserve the tragic change from the one to the other (ch. 31). This is Job's final protest, a final assertion that his punishment from God is undeserved; nothing remains to be said after this (31:40). Since chapter 31 is an ancient Semitic way of saying, 'God damn me if I committed this sin,' the assumption in this last speech is that 'silence implies consent'; if God did nothing in response to Job's self-imprecation, it would be assumed that Job was in fact innocent and God was wrong to punish him.<sup>83</sup> Job is thus forcing the issue of God's apparent silence and distance (remember 23:8–9). As elsewhere, Job's integrity is apparent in a number of ways in this final speech. For instance, in remembering his past, Job speaks first about his lost friendship with God (29:1–6), as if that loss hurt him most. This is echoed in 31:6, where we are reminded that, however harshly or lopsidedly

he might state it, Job's constant desire is to enjoy relational rightness with God again. It is also significant that Job never once asks for his blessed life back; his losses are enlisted as evidence only of his innocence, not some secret desire to wrangle a comfortable life from God.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, a significant part of his lament is Job's lost opportunity to do justice to others (29:11–17). So far from producing any selfishness in Job, God's blessing on his life meant Job could be generous to the widow and orphan in a way he cannot be now. 'The words of Job are ended' (31:40). Job's desire to be cleared of all false charges and to have his integrity with God publicly demonstrated is entirely justifiable. Nevertheless, the way Job has framed things may make us a little uncomfortable: the only two possible responses to chapter 31 seem to be the Almighty's producing evidence of some sin of which Job was unaware, which would explain Job's suffering, or apologizing to Job for treating Job like a wicked sinner when he is not one. It is thus perhaps somewhat fortunate that before God appears, a young man rises to speak."

- **Look at Job's Three Wishes**

- Job first wishes for **forgiveness**. Here is what he says in Job 7:20-21: "Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, So that I am a burden to myself? Why then do You not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now I will lie down in the dust; And You will seek me, but I will not be."
- Job has a second wish. He hopes for a **mediator** in Job 9:32-33: "For He is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, That we may go to court together. There is no umpire between us, Who may lay his hand upon us both?"
- Job's third and final wish is for **resurrection** in Job 14:13-15: "Oh that You would hide me in Sheol, That You would conceal me until Your wrath returns to You, That You would set a limit for me and remember me! If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my struggle I will wait Until my change comes. You will call, and I will answer You; You will long for the work of Your hands."
- This is the gospel offer. *Forgiveness through a mediator that can lay his hand on both Yahweh and us leading to eternal resurrection.*
- **Elihu's Speeches (32-37)**
  - "I find myself unconvinced by the positive interpretation of Elihu because I cannot find the new insight into Job's problem Elihu promises in 32:14. It is especially glaring on this score to read Elihu's statement of the retribution principle in 34:10–12, which seems identical to the definition of this principle given by Job's friends. Other suspicions accumulate when one surveys the broader trajectory of Elihu's argument. For instance, Elihu's answer to Job's complaint about God's silence (33:13) is to point to dreams that expose hidden pride and sin (vv. 15–18)



or sickness that brings sinners to their senses (vv. 19–22). True as this may be in a general sense, one wonders how this is supposed to help Job or prepare him for his encounter with God when it was no sin of Job's that brought the suffering of chapters 1–2. Furthermore, how different is this explanation from that of the friends? Both make sin central in the explanation of pain. Some commentators detect a difference in that Elihu thinks of pain as preventing future sin instead of standing as punishment for past misdeeds.<sup>89</sup> But even if this is the case, it is hard to see how telling Job that God allowed the deaths of all of his children in order to prevent future pride in him is any less cruel than telling him that God is punishing him for something he has already done. Besides, Job's dreams and physical pain do not reveal any sin, only terror (7:4–6, 14). Even if God can communicate this way, he has not chosen to do so with Job.<sup>90</sup> Elihu never seems to be able to transcend the suffering-as-punishment framework the friends have already insisted on at such tiresome length. For example, in 35:9–13, divine silence is explained because people either ignore God (vv. 9–11) or ask with wrong motives (vv. 12–13); either way, humans are at fault. In chapter 36, God exalts the righteous (v. 7); but if they lose their privileges (v. 8), God reveals the sin that caused their downfall (v. 9) and calls them to repent (v. 10). If they listen, they are restored (v. 11), but if not, they die in their sin (vv. 12–14). Even the final poem about the storm (36:22 – 37:24) uses the common Semitic theme of the deity's power in thunder and lightning to speak again about God's inviolable justice and judgment (36:31; 37:13, 23). The rhetorical questions Elihu puts to Job as part of this speech (36:22–23; 37:15–20) are intended to make Elihu's overall conclusion about Job unavoidable: Job is under God's judgment (34:7–8, 17; 35:16; 36:17). Rhetorical questions are, of course, prominent in God's speech in chapters 38–39 as well. This prompts some to see a positive connection between Elihu's last speech and God's first, such that Elihu's questions help to prepare Job for the questions God puts to him. A different intention informs God's rhetorical questions, however. As will be seen, God's purpose in asking Job questions is not to win a confession of sin from him; although he does confront the false claims Job has made, he is far gentler with Job than are any of the friends, including Elihu. Furthermore, the intention of the divine speeches is not to insist on Job's ignorance about divine matters, or at least not in the same way, for while Elihu imagines that human beings will simply have nothing to say to God (37:19–20), all the questions God asks Job turn out to be very easy to answer: Who made the earth? Who feeds lions? Who orders the world? Even if the subject of God's question is beyond Job's knowledge, the question God asks about it is not.<sup>91</sup> This suggests that Job does not need any preparation before the encounter with God and removes one important argument in favour of reading Elihu's speeches positively. Suspicions also accumulate around Elihu when we

compare his introduction to his speeches with those of the other participants in the debate. Whereas Job and his friends typically take three to four verses to call on the others to listen, Elihu speaks for almost thirty verses before making his first point (32:7 – 33:7). Not only that, but his self-introduction shows **Elihu's referring to himself four times in a single verse, literally saying, 'I, I myself, will answer you, I will impart knowledge, I myself' (32:17, my tr.)**. Norman Habel also points out that his self-description in 36:4 as one 'perfect in knowledge' is the same phrase he uses to describe God's knowledge in 37:16.<sup>92</sup> **It is difficult to avoid the sense that Elihu thinks too highly of himself. His self-importance does not generate much confidence in his theology."**

- *Summary of the debates*
  - "The discussion at the human level has exhausted itself. **If God stays silent, no resolution is possible.**"
  - "The narrator has used both Job and the friends to test different theological stances, but all of them are found wanting. **It is deeply and tragically ironic that Job sees suffering as unjust punishment when it is exactly his integrity that has caused it, and that he thinks of himself as so small when he rates very highly with God.**"
  - "In Derek Kidner's words, the friends 'overestimate their grasp of truth, misapply the truth they know, and close their minds to any facts that contradict what they assume'.
  - **"The book of Job thus persistently raises the issue of how much of what we see we ignore or distort because of hidden assumptions and 'how unwise it is to extrapolate from our elementary grasp of truth'."**
- 38-42
  - 38:1-39- The rhetorical questions are probably not meant to be taken as humiliating to Job but as instructive and awe-inspiring. The cultural distance makes this tough but as we begin to examine the nuances of much of what God says, the ANE mindset would see him describing himself as lovingly ordering the world, and especially controlling the chaotic and evil aspects within that creation. God does mean to humble Job, but in a fatherly way- **he still loves Job and wants to restore their relationship- he is reminding Job of what Job should have known.**
  - The end of the book basically establishes that Job cannot understand nor wisely rule even the creatures God has made, and especially the chaotic elements of creation- and so instead of revealing the exact why to Job **he simply asks him to bow before him in fear and worship of his ultimately righteous rule of the world and thus he confirms that he is righteous and he is worth following for himself and not because of what he gives- and most importantly- he will deal with evil but for now it is within his wisdom as creator to limit, but not eliminate evil.**
  - 38:8-11 The sea was a terrifying symbol of the chaos that was always threatened to undo the well ordered world and this is exactly what stands behind Yahweh's

statement that he controls the sea and this would have been both awe inspiring and wonderful to Job.

- 38- "if God nurtures even the chaos and evil present in his creation, and if he does so even as it (unsuccessfully) strikes out against him, then his goodness truly knows no bounds.<sup>35</sup> This is God's 'ēṣâ, his plan or counsel or strategy, for how he administers his realm, a plan Job has obscured.
- "The world is not some kind of perfect paradise where nothing is ever allowed to go wrong; one aspect of **the order God imposes on his world is to allow for some contained disorder**.<sup>36</sup> But this in no way means that God's world is the violent inner-city ghetto Job has decried, or that the one ruling over it is at best indifferent to injustice and wrongdoing. God both keeps this chaos within strict limits and is far kinder with it than Job has imagined – even to the point of caring for and nurturing it. In fact, since darkness is another image for chaos and death in the Old Testament, the fact that 'thick darkness' is used by God for the ocean's swaddling clothes may imply that God even puts aspects of chaos to use in limiting the power and influence of chaos.<sup>37</sup> As it turns out, God has a much happier purpose for darkness than the one Job called for in chapter 3."
- 38:16ff- "After the sunrise, God turns to the outer boundaries of creation: the depths of the sea, the underworld and the vast expanse of the earth (vv. 16–18). Job has never traversed these depths or comprehended their expanse; as a result, his claim that the 'order' of creation teaches God's unjust rule (e.g. 12:5–9) is disqualified. There may also be a hint that even if 'the gates of death' (v. 17) are the 'deepest, the darkest, and the worst extremity in creation', the darkness of this place 'is no threat to the goodness of his creation or the ultimate triumph' of God's purposes.<sup>41</sup> Nor does Job understand where light and darkness dwell (vv. 19–21, 24). This does not mean that ancient Semites would literally have imagined light to have a home; Job is only being reminded of the one person who perfectly understands the nature and working of both light and darkness."
- 38:39–41- "The second half of God's speech transitions from different parts of his creation to the animals living in it. God's care for lions and ravens is presented first (38:39–41), the point being much the same as above: Job cannot provide or care for these animals, but God both can and does. Divine sovereignty is clearly emphasized in this short passage. But more importantly, the goodness of God's sovereignty over everything he has created is in view. The same creation both Job and Job's friends pointed to in order to substantiate their theological claims (e.g. 4:10–11) takes on a happier meaning when interpreted by its creator."
- 39:1–12- "God's goodness is rather so broad that he provides even for the helpless young of the raven. The same is true for the other animals described: although Job is completely unaware of the schedule by which mountain goats propagate (39:1–4), God both knows and cares for this species so that it does not die out. Similarly, even if the

wild donkey lives completely independently of human society, it does so because God sends it to live in the most inhospitable regions (v. 6) and provides for it exactly in that place (v. 6). Another animal existing completely outside human society is the wild ox (vv. 9–12), which will not serve Job (v. 9) and does not depend on him to flourish (v. 11) – but, it is implied, the ox does trust God, who does care for this creature (cf. the same idea in Ps. 104:21). God’s care and goodness are not limited to those creatures most familiar to human life and concerns; they encompass every creature, even those totally outside ordered human existence."

- "Three main implications are unstated but evident in chapters 38–39
  - The first is that **God’s world is much vaster, more complex and more mysterious than Job has recognized.**
  - Second, Job is meant to conclude from chapters 38–39 that **there is a great deal of order and goodness in God’s world and how it is administered.**
  - A third implication from God’s first speech is that **his plan for creation does allow some evil and chaos within certain limits – but that this allowance does not mean God is an amoral, uncaring tyrant.** The decision God has made about how his world will be governed is to allow pockets of disorder to exist within a much larger order, without immediately annihilating every threatening or violent aspect of creation.
- "Job’s accusation against God’s unjust administration of creation is invalid because it has been made without sufficient warrant (there is too much Job does not understand), in the face of the massive goodness of creation and God’s care for everything he has made, and in contradiction of the way God both contains and cares for the pockets of chaos and violence he does allow to continue to exist."
- "God does not say that all things, even evil, work out for good (Rom. 8:28), or that the sufferings of this present age will be outbalanced and resolved in the eschaton (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17). Nor is Job given some mystical or ineffable experience that resolves his trauma. Job has been criticizing God’s plan for creation (38:2), and **God demonstrates that his care for his world is very different from Job’s portrayal of it – and that is all.**"
- "Job’s admission that he is insignificant (qal of qll) is psychologically realistic after his guided tour of the farthest reaches of creation and the strange animals inhabiting it. Job’s smallness and insignificance were, however, never in doubt in the debate (e.g. 9:3, 19). As a result, this admission does not have as much force as his self-abasement in 42:1–6. All this is to say that, without in any way detracting from the relevance of yhwh’s first speech to the main issues of the debate in chapters 3–37, it is good that the book does not end here. God has more to say to Job, and Job has a more profound breakthrough awaiting him in new knowledge of God (42:5)."
- **Second Speech**
  - **40:9-14 The divine warrior gets ready to kill the chaos monsters**

- 40:9-14- The central point in the first part of God's second speech is that the references to his arm, voice and radiant majesty are an Old Testament way of describing his preparation for battle (vv. 9–10) against his enemies (vv. 11–13).
- **40:15-24 The defeat of Behemoth (note: sword of 40:19)**
  - "What is Job supposed to think after having this creature's power and watery dwelling place narrated? Four clues in verses 15 and 19 will be introduced into the discussion here and explored further below. The first is the name 'Behemoth' itself. This is not the name of any species, but rather the Anglicization of the feminine plural of the Hebrew word *bēhēmâ*, which refers either to animals in general or livestock in particular (HALOT 112). Hebrew avails itself of the plural in situations English does not, sometimes as an honorific, and this is the most common explanation of the form here: not 'an animal', but 'The Beast' or 'Superbeast'. Although the description seems most closely to resemble a hippo (with the exception of the difficult v. 17), the name does not seem to point to any one species of animal."
  - Second, Job is told God made Behemoth along with Job (v. 15). It is significant that we are told this first, because everything else in the description sets Behemoth apart as unlike any other animal. The intention of almost every line describing the creature is to distinguish the creature from normal animals. This juxtaposition creates a striking effect: on the one hand, Behemoth is no sooner named than his status as a creature of God along with Job is emphasized (v. 15); but on the other hand, no other animal is treated as a king by the others (v. 20). Is Superbeast being presented as a creature, but more than an ordinary one? If this is on the right track, it suggests a finesse in the presentation of Behemoth that would have been very important in an ancient Semitic context. This is the case because ancient Canaanites, Mesopotamians and Egyptians frequently portrayed their gods in animal form (including, as we will see, the hippopotamus). The implication seems to be that Superbeast is no ordinary animal, but this suggestion is no sooner registered than it is made explicit that Behemoth is as much a part of God's creation as Job is, and is thus no dualistic competitor with the Creator.
  - A third clue about Behemoth is found in verse 19, where the creature is called 'the first of the works of God' (v. 19a; esv's 'works' correctly interprets the word 'ways'). The word 'first' can refer either to temporal priority (Gen. 1:1; Mic. 1:13) or the most important part of something (Jer. 49:35; Dan. 11:14; Amos 6:1, 6). Either nuance may be in play here. On the one hand, the reference to Behemoth's creation in verse 15 may point to Behemoth's being the first animal created by God. However, this does not square with either creation account in Genesis 1 or 2, for land animals are not created first in either account; and if Behemoth represents supernatural chaos, no mention is made in Old Testament creation

accounts of God's creating chaos. The distance between the reference to Behemoth's creation in verse 15 and verse 19, together with the next verse's portrayal of Behemoth's superiority to every other animal (v. 20), suggests that Behemoth is 'first' in God's ways in terms of importance. This fits more generally with the emphasis in verses 16–24 on the creature's uniqueness. In what way Behemoth carries such a significant place in God's plans is, of course, not at all easy to see and will require further reflection. For now, we can imaginatively continue to put ourselves in Job's position, seeing this massive, muscular creature moving through the water, a creature that has a prime place in God's plans – whatever that exactly means.

- Fourth and finally, it is striking that we are no sooner told of Behemoth's prime place before God than that the very God who created the beast is bringing his sword near (v. 19b).
- Collectively, these aspects of Behemoth's description suggest a creature of immense strength but entirely under the rule of God; a beast no less a creation than Job, but not fitting into the normal categories the Old Testament uses to describe animals. Behemoth has a rank of first place in God's plans for his world, but God is also going to destroy him. What is Job supposed to think? Before answering, let us attend to the description of Leviathan, which is similarly suggestive without being explicit.
- **41:1–34 The defeat of Leviathan (note: spear, harpoons and battle of 41:7–8)**
  - "The description of Leviathan falls broadly into two parts: a series of rhetorical questions concerning Job's powerlessness before the monster (vv. 1–11) and God's praise of the creature's fearsome attributes and prowess (vv. 12–34)."
  - "God implies to Job that Job did not know what he was asking for when he called for the chaos monster to be stirred up, but God makes this claim in relation to himself, not Leviathan alone. This surely must have been a sobering reproof to Job the arguer from chapters 3–31 – but it was probably very hopeful as well, for reasons to be seen below. God also seems to find a kind of unique joy in his opponent: 'Under all the heavens, he is mine!' (v. 11).<sup>32</sup> One of the ways in which God leverages his unique power and sovereignty in relation to Leviathan is to refuse to give the job of defeating Leviathan to anyone else. Not only is God the only one who can draw out Leviathan with a hook (v. 1), fill his side with spears (v. 7), lay his hand on him in battle (v. 8) – God absolutely will not delegate this task to anyone else. Just let someone try to stop him!"
  - "The point to Leviathan's mimicry of divine warfare in Job 41:18–21 is to make inescapably clear that Job cannot even approach a monster with such an arsenal at its disposal, much less oppose it; but doing so is an easy matter for God."
  - "Yhwh next describes for Job the creature's unbending neck, its impenetrable hide, its immovable strength (vv. 22–24). Terror dances before it (v. 22)! Even the

gods<sup>37</sup> are overwhelmed, flummoxed, beside themselves when Leviathan rouses himself (v. 25), and with good reason: weapons are useless against the monster (v. 26) and Leviathan would not even flinch before them (vv. 27–29). Leviathan's description then moves towards a conclusion with the scaly, sharp underside of the beast (v. 30), which makes the deep boil like a pot and the water turn white as the creature swims away (vv. 32–33)."

- "Terrible as this creature would be to Job, Leviathan is only a creature along with Job in relation to God.
- "It will be argued that, where evidence is available from outside the book of Job (whether from the ANE or other OT books), it consistently supports the conclusion that Behemoth and Leviathan are symbols of supernatural evil.
- **"One important factor in favour of a supernatural reading of Behemoth and Leviathan is that doing so fits best with other references to creatures of this type from the ANE.** An appeal of this kind does not imply that the Old Testament is completely identical to ANE texts, or that the Joban poet is specifically quoting or alluding to or dependent on any of the texts or glyphs surveyed here. All that is claimed is that there is significant evidence for supernatural chaos monsters outside the Old Testament that look very much like Behemoth and Leviathan – and, in the case of the latter, even share the same name. This suggests it would have been natural for Job and ancient Israelite readers to draw a similar conclusion about the two creatures described at the end of Job, unless it were signalled clearly otherwise.
- "The evidence is much stronger when it comes to Leviathan, since the monster is mentioned (with a different spelling) in the Baal Epic and serpentine sea monsters are common elsewhere in ANE literature.
- **"All of this is to say that there is significant evidence from the ANE that ancient Semites, when hearing about a serpentine, sea-dwelling creature of the name 'Leviathan', would have understood it as a symbol for cosmic chaos.** Modern Westerners do not think about evil and chaos this way, of course, but ancient Semites did not turn to abstract or analytical categories when addressing the problem of evil, and yhwh is addressing one such Semite in the book of Job. Although not decisive for how we read the end of the book, ancient Israelites would arguably have understood Behemoth and Leviathan in the same way they are presented elsewhere in the ANE unless it were clearly signalled that these creatures were only ordinary animals.
- "Job has already retracted his criticism of God's administration of the universe. If God seconds his description of the animals of chapter 39 with two more animals, what else is Job supposed to say? What other response is God hoping for? It also preserves the rhetorical force of the questions and imperatives in 40:9–14 and 41:1–8. Since ancient Egyptians can and did capture and kill hippos and

crocodiles, it makes sense for yhwh to ask if Job can pierce Behemoth's nose with a hook (40:24) or draw out Leviathan with a fishhook (41:1) only if Behemoth and Leviathan represent a more-than-natural evil. Finally, this reading explains the preparation of the divine warrior in 40:9–14. Two ordinary animals would not require God to prepare for battle in this way, but the defeat of supernatural evil in his world would.

- "Christopher Ash expresses this superbly: Even the mystery of evil is his [God's] mystery. Even Satan, the Leviathan, is God's Satan, God's pet, if we dare to put it like this. This means that as we suffer . . . we may with absolute confidence bow down to this sovereign God, knowing that while evil may be terrible, it cannot and will not ever go one tiny fraction beyond the leash on which God has put it. And it will not go on forever.
- "It is important to emphasize that God's praise of Leviathan in no way implies that the evil at loose in his creation is somehow good from a higher perspective. Leviathan is 'nothing but violence and turmoil'<sup>136</sup> and remains utterly terrifying to Job and later readers of the book.
- "perhaps we could hear yhwh saying to Job, who is staring wide-eyed at the huge creature thrashing around in the sea, 'Look at that, Job! Those scales, those huge sharp teeth, the bursting flames from his mouth – what an opponent! I cannot wait for the day when I draw my sword and finally destroy him for ever!' In other words, the question in chapters 40–41 is not only whether Job will trust God's present administration of the cosmos (allowing evil limited but terrible agency), but whether he will also rejoice with God in God's world, before the redemption of all things. This is the new perspective Job receives on the defeat of Leviathan.
- Chapter 42
  - Job finally bows in worship as he realizes that Yahweh indeed rules the world well, will deal with evil but allows it in a limited sense for now and Job and Yahweh's relationship is restored. The book does not resolve every single issue related to evil and God's relation to it, but what it does give is a way to live with skill- fear of Yahweh and loving trust that he runs the universe well and because we have seen his goodness and the overwhelming complexity of his world we simply trust, love and walk with him- **he really is as good as he says and is worth serving apart from the gifts he gives.**