

## #32: Job

Monte F. Shelley, 29 Aug 2010

### Quotes

- Be grateful for tests in life. If you are not tested, it means you are not worth testing. — Theodore M Burton
- This life is a test. It is only a test. Had it been an actual life, you would have received further instructions on where to go and what to do.

### 1. “Who can find a \*virtuous woman?”

\* capable, strong, noble character (NIV)

**JWOT 241: “a capable woman” or “a woman of strength”**

The poem is both **acrostic** (each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet) and **chiastic**:

A: High value of a good wife (v.10)

B: Husband benefited by wife (vv. 11-12)

C: Wife works hard (vv. 13-19)

D: Wife gives to poor (v. 20)

E: No fear of snow (v. 21a)

F: Children clothed in scarlet (v. 21b)

G: Coverings for bed, wife wears linen (v.22)

H: Public respect for husband (v.23)

G': Sells garments and sashes (v. 24)

F': Wife clothed in dignity (v.25a)

E': No fear of future (v. 25b)

D': Wife speaks wisdom (v.26)

C': Wife works hard (v.27)

B': Husband and children praise wife (vv. 28-19)

A': High value of a good wife (vv. 30-31)

The center point establishes the central message: *this is the kind of wife a man needs to be successful*. The intended audience was not young women (“*this is what kind of wife you should be*”) but young men (“*this is what kind of wife you should get*”). (DBlog 7 Jan 2010)

### 2. Comments about the Book of Job

Victor Hugo (author of *Les Misérables*): “The book of Job is perhaps the greatest masterpiece of the human mind.” (OT-I)

Thomas Carlyle (historian): I call [the book of Job]...one of the grandest things ever written. Our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem—Man’s Destiny, and God’s ways with him on the earth. There is nothing written, I think, of equal literary merit. (OT-I)

### 3. Fiction, non-fiction, or historical fiction?

There is evidence that the story of Job is true. There is also evidence that the book of Job is a play. *Les Misérable* is a great novel and a popular musical. It is historical fiction because it contains factual and historical events. Shakespeare wrote many historical plays that focus on a small part of the character’s lives and often omit significant events for dramatic effect. In *The Work and the Glory*, Gerald Lund uses the fictional Steed family to tell about actual people and events. Many movies are based on true stories. *Forever Strong* puts parts of 33 years of Highland rugby stories into one season. *Chariots of Fire* added conflict to a true story for dramatic effect. *A Man for All Seasons* and *The Sound of Music* are also historical fiction.

The book of Job is likely to be historical fiction. Several verses refer to Job (Ezek 14:4; James 5:10–11; D&C 121:7–10).

However, all but the first two chapters and the last 10 verses are written in Hebrew poetry. Nibley said: “It has long been generally accepted that the book of Job is authentic theater” (Nibley, ATD).

### 4. Patience or endurance of Job

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job. (James 5:11)

SOED [L. suffering] 1a. Suffering or enduring with calmness

**JWOT 244: The Greek word *hypomene*, translated as ‘patient’ in the KJV, is better understood as ‘endurance’ (NRSV) or ‘perseverance’ (NIV). [The Greek words for *endure* and *patience* come from the same Greek root.]**

SOED *patience* [L. *pati* suffer] 1. The suffering or enduring (of pain, trouble, or evil) with calmness and composure. ... 1b. Forbearance under provocation of any kind; especially bearing with others, their faults, limitations, etc. ... 1c. The calm abiding of the issue of time, processes, etc.

**Dieter F. Uchtdorf: Patience was far more than simply waiting for something to happen—patience required actively working toward worthwhile goals and not getting discouraged when results didn’t appear instantly or without effort. ... Patience is not passive resignation, nor is it failing to act because of our fears. Patience means active waiting and enduring. It means staying with something and doing all that we can—working, hoping, and exercising faith; bearing hardship with fortitude, even when the desires of our hearts are delayed. Patience is not simply enduring; it is enduring well! (“Continue in Patience,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 56–59)**

### 5. Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month (Sept–Oct). “... It is a day when all mankind is judged. ... Three books are opened on Rosh Ha-Shanah, one for the completely righteous, one for the completely wicked and one for the average persons. The completely righteous are immediately inscribed in the book of life. The completely wicked are immediately inscribed in the book of death. The average persons are kept in suspension from Rosh Ha-Shanah to the Day of Atonement [10<sup>th</sup> day]. If they deserve well, they are inscribed in the book of life, if they do not deserve well, they are inscribed in the book of death. ... On the first night of Rosh Ha-Shanah it is customary to greet one’s friends with: ‘May you be inscribed (in the book of life) for a good year.’” (EJ- Rosh Ha-Shanah)

The 10 days of repentance between Rosh Ha-Shanah and the Day of Atonement are “man’s last chance, through his actions, to influence God to reconsider an unfavorable decision.” (WHY, 238)

“The *shofar* [ram’s horn] heralds the beginning of the penitential season (from Rosh Ha-Shanah to the Day of Atonement).” For many Jews, Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the creation of the world. (EJ)

1: Rosh Hashanah, 10: Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement; fast day); 15–21: Sukkoth (Feast of Tabernacles)

Jews fast on Yom Kippur because it says “ye shall afflict your souls” which means to abstain from food. (WHY 241)

The 10 Days of Awe are the time in the Jewish liturgical year when human beings are called to repentance. They begin with the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah and they end 10 days later with the Day of Atonement. On Rosh Hashanah, God is said to pass judgment on humankind in heaven. Human beings are given 10 days to repent of their sins and amend their ways. On the Day of Atonement, God forgives those who repent. These two annual judgments foreshadow the one and Final Judgment to occur at the end of time. (PGT #2)

## 6. Prologue: Eden on Earth (Job 1; scene 1)

<sup>1</sup> There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect [blameless] and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed [shunned] evil.

*A man there was:* Starts like a parable (2 Sam 12:1; 2 Kgs 14:9)

Uz → Not an Israelite

*Perfect* BDB complete, morally innocent

*Feared God* BDB reverence, stand in awe

Like Adam, Job enjoys health, peace, and prosperity. Job's family has many feasts and their lives are filled with joy and celebration. There is little or no opposition.

The author places some emphasis on this point because the Hebrew text begins with the word for man "ish", "a man there was". This is a significant change in the normal Hebrew word order of verb-subject-object. Here the order is object-subject-verb. The significance is found in the fact that there are only two genuine parallels to this inverted syntax and they are found in the opening lines of Nathan's parable (2 Sam 12:1) and Joash's fable (2 Kgs 14:9). This syntax is an introductory Hebrew formula or idiom for the parable that follows, akin to the modern introductory phrase "once upon a time". Thus, the author The Book of Job is telling the reader from the start that this book is and should be read as a myth or parable about humankind. (PGT #2)

## 7. Council in Heaven (Day 1; Job 1; scene 2)

### God puts Job on Trial

<sup>6</sup> Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. ...

<sup>8</sup> The LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

An ancient Jewish Targum of Job says "And it happened on the day of judgment at the beginning of the year, that the sons of the angels came to stand in judgment before the Lord. And Satan also came ... before the Lord" (PGT #2)

In God's judgment, Job is "blameless and upright, one who fears God and turns from evil" at every juncture. ... Because Job is sinless, the evil that will befall him is not punishment for sin. Because Job has no character flaw, the evil that will befall him is not for correction or character development.

### Satan puts God on Trial (HEB *Satan*: Adversary or Accuser)

<sup>9</sup> Then Satan answered ..., Doth Job fear God for nought? <sup>10</sup> ... Thou made an hedge about him ...? thou hast blessed [his] work. ... <sup>11</sup> Touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

**In the preexistence Satan and the sons of God did appear before God. Satan found fault with God's plan and proposed his own. God put Satan on earth to tempt and try us just as God gave Satan permission to try Job.**

Satan challenges God's judgment: (1) God is wrong about Job. Job may intend good, but he serves God only for what he can get. Satan claims he can prove it and get Job to curse God. Satan's challenge is a claim to the soul of Job.

(2) God has lost his authority to judge. God has passed false judgment. He is no longer a perfect being and should step down. Satan's challenge is a claim to the throne of heaven.

(3) God is wrong about his plan for mankind. Human beings ... do not love God. They seek only to manipulate him to get what they can from him. ... Humanity should be destroyed. Satan's challenge is a claim to destroy the earth and all in it. (PGT #1)

With this challenge, there is silence in the heavenly court. Satan has put God himself on trial. God picks up the gauntlet and elects trial by ordeal. He chooses Job as his personal champion to settle the issue of whether love for God can be completely disinterested. God directs Satan as his personal agent to inflict undeserved and unremitted evil upon his beloved servant Job. God's hands are tied. He cannot tell Job what has transpired. He cannot give Job the reason for his suffering, lest that give Job a selfish motive to continue his love for God. (PGT #1)

The Zohar, a medieval work of Kabbalah, lays stress on the universal observance of the two days of Rosh Hashanah. It interprets two passages in the Book of Job which speak of "when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord" (Job 1:6; 2:1) as referring to the first and second days of Rosh Hashanah, observed by the Heavenly Court before the Almighty. ([www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Rosh\\_Hashanah](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Rosh_Hashanah))

The **targums** arose subsequent to the Babylonian conquest of Israel in the early 6th century BC. The Babylonians sought to destroy Jewish culture. They deported many of political, religious and intellectual elites to Babylon. They launched a program of cultural and linguistic assimilation in occupied Israel. They succeeded to extent Aramaic not Hebrew became the language of the common man. When Persia conquered Babylon in the late 6th century BC, the Jews were allowed to return to their homeland and their religious practices. Scribes such as Ezra wrote Aramaic paraphrases of the Biblical books called targums to help the faithful understand their lost language. Every Sabbath, the Hebrew originals and the Aramaic targums were read side by side in the synagogues. The Targum of Job was one such targum. Although the actual date of composition is unknown, it represents a very early Jewish understanding of The Book of Job. (PGT #2, n. 25)

## 8. Test 1 = Loss of family, wealth (Day 2; Job 1; scene 3)

### Job enters testial world with nothing (death, opposition)

<sup>13</sup> There was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking: ... [Job's sons, daughters, and servants were killed. His animals were taken away. A servant reported.] <sup>20</sup> Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, <sup>21</sup> And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

## 9. Council in Heaven (Day 3; Job 2; scene 4)

<sup>1</sup> Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came. ... <sup>3</sup> And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job ...? still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou [incited] me against him, to destroy him without cause. <sup>4</sup> And Satan ... said, ... <sup>5</sup> Touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD said unto Satan, ... he *is* in thine hand; but save his life.

## 10. Test 2 = 'Leprosy,' pain, outcast (Day 3; Job 2; scene 5)

<sup>7</sup> So went Satan ... and smote Job with sore boils from ... his foot unto his crown. <sup>8</sup> And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself ... and he sat down among the ashes. <sup>9</sup> Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. <sup>10</sup> But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Job had a disease like 'leprosy' and sat on a dunghill outside the city (AB-Job p. 21)

## 11. Job's friends arrive (Days 3–9; Job 2)

<sup>11</sup> When Job's three friends heard of all this evil ..., they came ... to mourn with him and to comfort him. <sup>12</sup> And when they ... [saw him] and knew him not, they ... wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads. ... <sup>13</sup> So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

Job's friends heard of losses on day 2 and arrived on day 3.

## 12. Job the IMPATIENT speaks (Day 10; NIV Job 3)

Job 3:1–42:6 is a poem (EJ- Job)

**WHY I AM USING NIV. Easier to see legal words and parallelisms; two translations → questions**

It is now the morning of the Day of Atonement, Day 10 of the Days of Awe. Job's time of reflection is over. It is now the time for a final judgment. (PGT #3)

<sup>1</sup> Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. He said:...

<sup>11</sup> "Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb? ...

<sup>13</sup> For now I would be lying down in peace; I would be asleep and at rest ...

<sup>25</sup> What I feared has come upon me;

what I dreaded has happened to me.

<sup>26</sup> I have no peace, no quietness;

I have no rest, but only turmoil." (NIV 3:1–26)

During the 10 Days of Awe, Job is stripped of everything. God casts Job out his Eden into the wasteland that is the world as we know it. Unlike Adam, Job is expelled from his garden not for his sin but for his righteousness. ... Job struggles to keep faith with a loving God in the midst of this world of undeserved and unremitted suffering. He longs to know the reason behind evil in the world. (PGT #1)

## 13. Test 3: Job's friends accuse him (Day 10; Job 4–37)

### Friends put Job on Trial

Job and his three friends ... vigorously debate the issue of human suffering. (Job 3–28). The general point of view of Job's friends is that (a) God is just, (b) Job is suffering, and (c) therefore Job must be a sinner. ... Job vigorously defends his innocence, calling into question the justice of God who would allow a righteous man like himself to suffer. (JWOT 242)

a. Eliphaz: man has free will and is justly rewarded and punished for his actions. "Is not your evil great" (22:5).

b. Bildad : people are justly punished and unwarranted suffering in this world will be rewarded in the world to come (8:6–7).

c. Zophar: everything is determined by God's will and we shouldn't question it or seek reasons for what he wills (11:5–7)

Thou art not yet as Job; thy friends do not contend against thee, neither charge thee with transgression, as they did Job. (D&C 121:10)

**Joseph:** People who accuse are "placing themselves in the seat of Satan." (TPJS 212)

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death. (Prov 14:12; 16:25)

I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all (16:2). **They did not know how to succor or help Job.**

<sup>11</sup> [Christ] will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. <sup>12</sup> ... that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities. (Al 7:11–12)

Their pious advice—accept your suffering, Job, as punishment for your sins—not only provide him cold comfort but, if accepted, would have perverted Job's absolutely honest relationship with the Almighty. To follow their counsel would have forced Job to live a lie by confessing to the Lord that he felt he deserved his affliction—which he did not, and *should* not feel. ... Such easy explanations for suffering have continued to be foisted on believers by overly simplistic doctrines of retributive justice and depravity. In consequence, many innocent victims have been pressured to confess to the lie that they merit their misfortune—that whatever evil befalls them is less punishment than they deserve. (Tanner)

We can learn ... from Job's "friends" ... that it is not enough to have all the right answers. We must also speak the truth in love. We learn that we risk divine condemnation when we cease to comfort and start to accuse. Joseph Smith taught that those who accuse place "themselves in the seat of Satan." Truly, the very word "devil" derives from "diabolos," meaning "accuser, calumniator, slanderer, traducer." Further, we learn that the only abiding comfort must come from the Comforter. The solution to a sense of godforsakenness is, obviously, the revelation that God has not forsaken us. ... 'For those who experience godforsakenness there can be no answer except the stammeringly uttered truth that God himself keeps company with those who are oppressed.' ... Job never does receive an answer as to why he suffered; nor, often, do we. ... That the Lord responds at all assures us that He is ... a God who condescends to reveal Himself to mankind in its darkest hours of need. ... Job ... is a book that refuses to offer us ready answers to the so-called problem of evil, for it acknowledges how inexplicably cruel life can be. At the same time it points to a way of enduring. ... [It] throws us back, just as it does Job, upon the necessity of seeking understanding through personal revelation from a ... living and loving God. (Tanner)

The Jewish philosopher, Maimonides, correlates the various philosophical positions regarding providence ...

- Job: Aristotle's affirmation of only general providence attaching to the species and denial that divine providence extends to individual humans. Job concludes that there is no difference in God's eyes between the righteous and the wicked: "It is all one; therefore, I have said: He destroys the innocent and the wicked" (9:22).
- Eliphaz: the view of the Torah, that man has free will and is, therefore, justly rewarded and punished for his actions. Job ... deserved his punishment, on account of his sins: "Is not your evil great, and your transgressions without end?" (22:5).
- Bildad: people are justly punished and that God can compensate for people's unwarranted suffering in this world with reward in the world to come: "If you are pure and upright, [God] will ... reward the habitation of your righteousness. Although your beginning was small, your end will increase greatly" (8:6–7).
- Zophar: everything is determined exclusively by God's will, and we should neither question it nor seek reasons for what he wills: "But would that God would speak and open his lips against you; and tell you the secrets of wisdom. ... Can you find out the purpose of the Almighty?" (11:5–7) (Josep)

#### 14. Job's defense against accusations of his friends

**Job wishes for a mediator** (NIV Job 9)

<sup>2</sup> But how can a mortal be righteous before God? ...

<sup>22</sup> It is all the same; that is why I say,

'He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.' ...

<sup>32</sup> "He is not a man like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court.

<sup>33</sup> If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both,

<sup>34</sup> someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more.

<sup>35</sup> Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot.

**Job desires a trial before God** (NIV Job 13)

<sup>3</sup> But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God.

<sup>4</sup> You, however, smear me with lies; you are worthless physicians, all of you! ...

<sup>12</sup> Your maxims are proverbs of ashes; your defenses are defenses of clay. ...

<sup>15</sup> Though he slay me, yet will I hope [KJV trust] in him;

I will surely defend my ways to his face. ...

<sup>18</sup> Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated. ...

<sup>20</sup> "Only grant me these two things, O God, and then I will not hide from you:

<sup>21</sup> Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors.

<sup>23</sup> Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply.

<sup>24</sup> How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin.

<sup>25</sup> Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy? ..."

#### Test 4: Job feels forsaken by God

**Job desires a witness or judge** (NIV Job 16)

<sup>18</sup> "O earth, do not cover my blood; may my cry never be laid to rest!

<sup>19</sup> Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high.

<sup>20</sup> My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God;

<sup>21</sup> on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend.

**Job trusts in his redeemer** (NIV Job 19)

<sup>1</sup> "How long will you torment me and crush me with words? ...

<sup>7</sup> "Though I cry, 'I've been wronged!' I get no response; ... though I call for help, there is no justice. ...

<sup>11</sup> His anger burns against me; he counts me among his enemies. ...

<sup>19</sup> All my intimate friends detest me; those I love have turned against me. ...

<sup>25</sup> I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

<sup>26</sup> And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;

Kinsman-redeemer has legal responsibility to redeem.

**Job desires to present his case to God** (Job 23)

<sup>2</sup> If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling!

<sup>3</sup> I would state my case before him

and fill my mouth with arguments.

<sup>4</sup> I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say.

<sup>5</sup> Would he oppose me with great power?

No, he would not press charges against me. ...

<sup>7</sup> There an upright man could present his case before him, and I would be delivered forever from my judge.

#### 15. Job's Oath of Innocence (Job 27–31)

If an accused man swore an oath of innocence, he would be found innocent. God would then find and punish the guilty. (Ex 22:11; 1 Kgs 8:31–32; 1 Chr 6:22–23; PGT #3)

Then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner ... shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good. (Ex 22:11)

"When a man wrongs his neighbor and is required to take an oath and he comes and swears the oath before your altar in this temple, <sup>32</sup> then hear from heaven and act. Judge between your servants, condemning the guilty and bringing down on his own head what he has done. Declare the innocent not guilty, and so establish his innocence." (NIV 1 Kgs 8:31–32)

<sup>31</sup> If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: <sup>32</sup> Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness. (1 Kgs 8:31–32)

<sup>22</sup> If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house; <sup>23</sup> Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness. (2 Chr 6:22–23)

<sup>27:2</sup> "As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice, ...

<sup>3</sup> as long as I have life within me, ...

<sup>6</sup> I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it

<sup>31:5</sup> "If I have walked in falsehood or my foot has hurried after deceit--

<sup>6</sup> let God weigh me in honest scales and he will know that I am blameless—

[If I have committed any sin listed, may I be cursed and receive a just punishment. If not, God is guilty of wrongfully punishing me. The list includes sins of deeds, words and thoughts.]

In Egyptian mythology, the Oath of Innocence is found in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. ... By this oath, the soul puts its eternal life on the line. If the oath is false in any respect, the person swearing the oath is eternally damned. Once the Oath of Innocence is sworn, the heart of the person is placed on the scales of justice and weighed against a feather of truth. In Egyptian thinking, the heart represents the person. (PGT #3)

When the actual wrongdoer, in this case God, did not show up and enter a defense to the Oath of Innocence, a two-fold summary default judgment would immediately issue. ... (1) The person swearing the Oath of Innocence (Job) would be immediately vindicated of any suspected wrongdoing and the actual wrongdoer (God) would be immediately convicted of the alleged wrongdoing. ... Job would be found innocent of any responsibility in the evil that befell him. God would be found responsible for the undeserved evil that befell Job. (2) The person swearing the Oath of Innocence (Job) was legally entitled to proceed further and condemn the actual wrongdoer

(God). ... If God fails to answer Job's claim, then Job can ... [speak] the curse. ... "Let the one who has wronged me be cursed now and forever." This was something Satan had prophesied Job would do; namely, curse God to his face. God would then execute that judgment by bringing that curse upon himself. And Job has put in place the legal machinery to activate that curse. (PGT #3)

[Job] longs to know the reason behind evil in the world. Through five speeches on the Day of Atonement, Job turns that request into a demand. Through an Oath of Innocence, he institutes formal legal proceedings against God to provoke that answer. Job's claim is two-fold. God is the author of undeserved evil in the world. Man has a right to know the reason why God has sent such evil into the world. And Job stakes the propriety of his challenge on the integrity of his ways. He puts his eternal salvation on the line and demands that God answer him. If God fails to appear or appears but fails to give the required answer, then Job is morally and legally entitled to condemn God. The condemnation is by way of a curse. God's trial has built to a feverish pitch. Satan has promised that Job would curse God. And now, Job has set in motion to legal machinery to do it. In the eyes of Job's friends, this Oath of Innocence is blasphemy. But in the eyes of God, this Oath of Innocence is the pinnacle of righteousness. (PGT #1)

## 16. God's Defense (Job 38–40)

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

<sup>2</sup> Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

<sup>3</sup> Gird up now thy loins like a man;

for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

<sup>4</sup> Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. ...

<sup>7</sup> while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? ...

<sup>12</sup> Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;

**Nibley:** We all know the challenge to Job when he was moping and wailing: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4, 7). We consistently ignore the words: "Answer thou me" (38:3) and "declare if thou knowest it all" (38:18). Job was there, and the Lord is reminding him that his sufferings and the defects of this world are for a purpose. In the *War Scroll* of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the same speech is addressed to the army of Israel when they are downcast after a defeat, saying in effect, "Remember how glad we were to come down here? Bad times were to be part of the picture." (ATD)

Job demanded that God explain his activity in the world ... [and] answer the question why is there evil in the world. ... God **reviews the physical world** through seven things: (1) foundations of the earth (38:4–7), (2) sea (38:8–11), (3) Sheol or spirit world (38:12–21), (4) storehouses of snow and hail (38:22–24), (5) rain (38:25–30), (6) heavens (38:31–33) and (7) lightning (38:34–38).

God then **reviews the animal world** through seven things: (1) wild lions (38:38–41), (2) wild goats (39:1–4), (3) wild ass (39:5–8), (4) wild ox (39:9–12), (5) wild ostrich (39:13–18), (6) war horse (39:13–18) and (7) birds of prey (39:26–30). (PGT #1)

To the surprise of all, God appears to Job. But, on the terms of his trial by Satan, God cannot give any direct answers to Job, lest those answers give Job a selfish motive to continue his love for God. Through two speeches, God reviews the natural and the mythological worlds, avoiding any discussion of the human world. God suggests the existence of a possible answer. But the suggestions are veiled. And God never broaches the subject of selfless love. God has been called to give a defense for his creation of this world. Instead, God rests his case having hinted at the existence of a defense, but having never presenting it. And with that act, God places before Job and all mankind a single question: will they condemn God that they themselves might be justified? (PGT #1)

"The underlying motif in the barrage of nature imagery is God's providential management of the world. ... If God is this completely in control of even the relatively insignificant aspects of nature—aspects about which Job knows almost nothing—he can surely be trusted to care for humans. And ... if Job cannot answer even the relatively insignificant questions God asks him about the ordinary creatures of nature, how can he expect to answer the ultimate philosophical questions? (DBI Job)

## 17. Job's first response to God's questions (NIV Job 40)

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Job:

<sup>2</sup> "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?

Let him who accuses God answer him!"

<sup>3</sup> Then Job answered the Lord:

<sup>4</sup> "I am unworthy—how can I reply to you?

I put my hand over my mouth.

<sup>5</sup> I spoke once, but I have no answer—twice, but I will say no more."

Job understands God's veiled suggestions and draws the proper inferences. Job chooses not to condemn God at this time but to continue to love him. He melts to his knees in worship. Yet Job refuses to retract his lawsuit. He refuses to withdraw his moral and legal claim to an explanation for evil in the world. He will neither prematurely acquit God nor prematurely condemn God. Job grants God the benefit of time to prepare a full and meaningful defense to the charges. Job gives God all of human history to work out his plan for evil in the world. The matter is adjourned to the Day of the Final Judgment for Job to hear from his Redeemer a third time. At that time, Job will pass his final judgment on God. If God fails to give a necessary and sufficient explanation for evil on the Day of the Final Judgment, then Job will condemn God. And he would be right in doing so. In a single moment, Job has become the perfect embodiment of the selfless love and moral integrity for which the world was created. (PGT #1)

## 18. God's second set of questions (NIV Job 40–41)

<sup>6</sup> Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm:

<sup>7</sup> "Brace yourself like a man;

I will question you, and you shall answer me.

<sup>8</sup> "Would you discredit my justice?

Would you condemn me to justify yourself? ...

<sup>41:1</sup> "Can you pull in the *leviathan* with a fishhook or tie down his tongue with a rope?

Leviathan is a sea monster or dragon described as the coiling and twisting serpent (Is 27:1). It represents all evil that threatens all life.

The myth of Leviathan finds in highest development in the writings of the Jewish prophet Isaiah. In the full myth, three

elements are consistently conjoined:

- (1) God's capture of the chaos dragon and his drawing it out of the water by hooks, snares or nets,
- (2) a Messianic feast, and
- (3) a symposium following the meal when God would answer all questions. ...

It was a poetic way of saying there will come a time when the evil around us, the evil within us will be finally purged and destroyed. The dragon represents that evil, all sorts of evil. ... The Isaian development of the myth of Leviathan into a Messianic feast was a poetic way for the ancients to say three things.

- (1) Evil is all around us, deep within us.
- (2) The time will come when that evil within us will be purged and destroyed.
- (3) Evil is not God's final purpose in creation. (PGT #4)

God as the Messiah will declare and justify his final purpose in the creation and control of evil. The execution and explanation of that purpose could be the finest demonstration of God's power: the power to bring good out of evil. (PGT #5)

### 19. Job's second response (NIV Job 42)

<sup>1</sup> Then Job replied to the Lord:

<sup>2</sup> "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. ...

<sup>3</sup> Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. ...

<sup>4</sup> My ears had heard of you

but now my eyes have seen you.

<sup>6</sup> Therefore I despise [JPS my words] and repent in dust and ashes."

Job has learned that (1) there will be an end to undeserved evil, and (2) that evil will be explained in the end.

### 20. God's judgment (Job 42)

<sup>7</sup> The LORD said to Eliphaz ..., My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. <sup>8</sup> Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks ... and go to my servant Job, and offer up ... a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you *after your folly*, in that ye have not spoken of me *the thing which is right*, like my servant Job.

### 21. God's restoration of Job (Job 42)

The LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. <sup>11</sup> Then came there unto him all his brethren ... and did eat bread with him in his house: and they ... comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him. ... <sup>16</sup> After this lived Job [140] years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even* four generations.

Hebrew law provided that if a person was wrongfully deprived of goods, both parties shall come before God; the one whom God condemns shall pay double to the other. (Ex 22:7-9) God has wrongfully deprived Job. ... God now repays the loss double. ... God has wrongfully deprived Job of the good life. God now repays that loss double, giving an extended good life. Job lives a further 140 years (Job 42:16), presumably double the 70 years he has already lived. He dies at the ripe old age of 210 years, a life-span typified by the patriarchs themselves. (PGT #4)

### 22. Testament of Job

In the "Testament of Job" God "instigates the antagonism between Job and Satan. An archangel tells Job that the Lord wishes him to destroy the popular shrine where the people

worshipped Satan's image. Job is forewarned that Satan will avenge the wrong ... but he is also promised that, if he endures Satan's trials, his final exaltation is assured." (EJ- Job, testament of)

<sup>1</sup> On the day he became sick and (he) knew that he would have to leave his bodily abode, he called his seven sons and his three daughters together and spoke to them as follows: <sup>2</sup> "Form a circle around me, children, and hear, and I shall relate to you what the Lord did for me and all that happened to me. <sup>3</sup> For I am Job your father. ... <sup>11</sup> And in that night as I lay asleep, a voice came and called: "Jobab! Jobab! rise up. ... I am the archangel of God." <sup>18</sup> And I said: "Whatever shall be told to his servant, I shall hear." <sup>19</sup> And the archangel, said to me: "In this manner speaks the Lord: If you undertake to destroy and take away the image of Satan, he will set himself with wrath to wage war against you, and he will display against you all his malice. <sup>21</sup> He will bring upon you many severe plagues, and take from you all that you have. He will take away your children, and will inflict many evils upon you. <sup>22</sup> Then you must wrestle like an athlete and resist pain, sure of your reward, overcome trials and afflictions. <sup>23</sup> But when you endure, I shall make your name renowned throughout all generations of the earth until to the end of the world. <sup>24</sup> And I shall restore you to all that you had, and the double part of what you will lose will be given to you in order that you may know that God does not consider the person but gives to each who deserves the good. <sup>25</sup> And also to you shall it be given, and you will put on a crown of tassel flowers. <sup>26</sup> And at the resurrection you will awaken for eternal life. Then you will know that the Lord is just, and true and mighty." <sup>27</sup> After that, my children, I replied: "From the love of God I shall endure until death all that will come upon me, and I shall not shrink back." <sup>28</sup> Then the angel put his seal upon me and left me. ([www.scribd.com/doc/1251114/Testament-of-Job-Revised-English](http://www.scribd.com/doc/1251114/Testament-of-Job-Revised-English))

**Nibley:** The round dance of the creation drama takes the form of the prayer circle in the temple. The *Testament of Job* brings it vividly to mind. ... The valuable apocryphal *Testament of Job*, discovered at the beginning of the century, lays special emphasis on temple ordinances. ... The texts go back to the fifth century. In the opening lines ..., Job tells his three virgin daughters and seven sons (see Job 1:2) to ... "Make a circle around me, and I will demonstrate to you the things which the Lord expounded to me, for I am your father Job who is faithful in all things." Job next tells the circle how the Lord, after healing him of his awful ailments, said, "Arise, gird up thy loins like a man!" "And the Lord spoke to me in power, showing me things past and future." He tells his daughters that they will have nothing to fear in this life from the adversary because the garments they wear are "a power and a protection from the Lord." Then he tells them to arise and gird themselves to prepare for heavenly visitors. "Thus it was that when one of the three daughters ... arose and clothed herself. ... She began to utter words of wisdom in the angelic language, and sent a hymn up to God, using the manner of praising of the angels. And as she recited the hymns, she let the Spirit make marks [*charagmata*, cuts or rents] on her garment." The next daughter girded herself likewise and recited "The Hymn of the Creation of the Heavens," speaking "in the dialect of the archons [cf. the council in heaven]." The third daughter "chanted verses in the dialect of those on high ... and she spoke in the tongue of the cherubim." (ATD)

### 23. Jewish Mourning

Jews “refrain from undue conversation when visiting a mourner during Shiva,” the first seven days of mourning. “One’s mere presence ... is most important. This is felt and appreciated more than words. The Bible, in describing Job ... tells us that when Job was visited by his three friends, they sat with him for seven days and no one uttered a word. The Talmud adds: ‘The greatest reward is bestowed upon all who know how to be silent in a house of mourning.’ ... Tradition advises that the visitor be prepared to respond rather than to initiate conversation.” (WHY 67–68)

“God suggests that ... for the readers of Job ... the abiding challenge is to learn how to speak and, better still, how to keep silence in the face of our friends and neighbors, who have a right to cry out in their physical and emotional pain. Indeed, all people can learn to simply nod their head in empathy (Heb. *lanud*). After all, even God listens and even answers with empathy.” (EJ Job)

### 24. Job is a type of Christ (Hidden 255, 219–226)

- Job was perfect and upright (1:8)
- Satan desired to destroy him (1:9–19; 2:4–7)
- Suffered immeasurably for no wrong of his own (1:12–2:8)
- He felt God had forsaken him (13:25)
- Was mocked and scorned by his ‘friends’ (16:20; 17:2)
- Remained absolutely steadfast (13:15)
- He didn’t want to drink his bitter cup but trusted God (2:10)
- He offered sacrifice for and prayed for his accusers so they did not have to suffer for their own sins (42:7–10)
- He gained everything after he endured sufferings (42:10–13)

<sup>3</sup> He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup> Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ... <sup>9</sup> He had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. <sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: (Isa 53:3–10)

### 25. Summary

Although the book is about Job’s suffering, it does not entirely answer the question of why Job (or any other person) might suffer pain and the loss of his family and goods. The book clarifies that having afflictions does not necessarily mean that a person has sinned. The Lord may use affliction for experience, discipline, and instruction as well as for punishment (D&C 122). ... The book of Job teaches that if a person has a correct knowledge of God and is living a life that is acceptable to God, he will be better able to endure the trials that come upon him. Job’s unflinching faith is characterized by such exclamations as, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). **Job is also mentioned in Ezek. 14:14; James 5:11; D&C 121:10.** (GTS: Job, The book of Job)

The book of Job makes several points: (Tanner)

- Suffering is not necessarily a sign of punishment. ...
- Sinfulness may result in suffering, but suffering does not necessarily imply sinfulness. Also, virtue may result in prosperity, but prosperity does not necessarily imply virtue.
- Neither prosperity nor suffering can be easily interpreted. It may be that *suffering* is the blessing and *prosperity* the trial.
- Individuals often live out personal tragedies quite apart from the general prosperity and happiness of the larger community.

## Conclusion

**Hagar: Why me? ... God: Why not?**

**Change “Why now?” into “What now?”**

**Why (because or to)?**

**Some of God’s greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.**

Job ... is a book that refuses to offer us ready answers to the so-called problem of evil, for it acknowledges how inexplicably cruel life can be. At the same time it points to a way of enduring. ... [It] throws us back, just as it does Job, upon the necessity of seeking understanding through personal revelation from a ... living and loving God. (Tanner)

### READ HAROLD B. LEE’S QUOTE (1<sup>st</sup>)

**Refer to the prayer of Elder Eyring’s father.**

**The gospel does not prevent pain and suffering ... It helps us through such times.**

**When God finally explains the purpose of evil, pain and suffering, we may recognize and appreciate an important aspect of His power: the power to bring good out of evil.**

## Quotes

**Harold B. Lee:** It is not the function of religion to answer all the questions about God's moral government of the universe, but to give one courage, through faith, to go on in the face of questions he never finds the answer to in his present status. ... You cannot go into tomorrow's uncertainty and dangers without faith. (TPC-HBL ch 23; OT-I)

**Spencer W. Kimball:** If joy and peace and rewards were instantaneously given the doer of good, there could be no evil—all would do good but not because of the rightness of doing good. There would be no test of strength, no development of character, no growth of powers, no free agency, only satanic controls. (FPM 97)

**Richard G. Scott:** When you face adversity, you can be led to ask many questions. Some serve a useful purpose; others do not. To ask, Why does this have to happen to me? Why do I have to suffer this now? What have I done to cause this? will lead you into blind alleys. It ... does no good to ask questions that reflect opposition to the will of God. Rather ask, What am I to do? What am I to learn from this experience? What am I to change? Whom am I to help? How can I remember my many blessings in times of trial? (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 17).

**Thomas S. Monson:** There is one phrase which should be erased from your thinking and from the words you speak aloud. It is the phrase, 'If only.' It is counterproductive and is not conducive to the spirit of healing and of peace. Rather, recall the words of Proverbs: 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' ("Think to Thank," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998)

**Henry B. Eyring:** [My father] was suffering through the end of a long struggle with bone cancer. ... I took some turns on the midnight to dawn shift. The effects of disease had removed the powers of reason he'd used to make a mark that is still visible in science. He seemed to me almost like a child as we talked through the night. Most of his memories were of riding across the range ... with his father. ... But sometimes even those happy pictures could not crowd from his mind the terrible pain. One night when I was not with him and the pain seemed more than he could bear, he somehow got out of bed and on his knees. ... He pled with God to know why he was suffering so. And the next morning he said, with quiet firmness, "I know why now. God needs brave sons." ... What he learned on his knees brought him peace and changed my life. ... You can only know that the way he did ... by the gentle voice of the Holy Ghost speaking to your heart. (BYU 11/18/86)

**Orson F. Whitney:** "No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God ... and it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire and which will make us more like our Father and Mother in heaven" (quoted in *FPM* 98).

**Joseph:** "It is an unhallowed principle to say that such and such have transgressed because they have been preyed upon by disease or death, for all flesh is subject to death, and the Savior has said, 'Judge not, lest ye be judged' [Matt. 7:1]." (HC 4:11)

**Spencer W. Kimball:** "Being human, we would expel from our lives physical pain and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort, but if we were to close the doors upon

such sorrow and distress, we might be excluding our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering and self-mastery. The sufferings of our Savior were part of his education." (TSWK 168)

**Spencer W. Kimball:** Could the Lord have prevented these tragedies? The answer is, Yes. The Lord ... [could] save us pain, prevent all accidents, drive all planes and cars, feed us, protect us, save us from labor, effort, sickness, even from death, if he will. But he will not. ... Is there not wisdom in his giving us trials that we might rise above them, responsibilities that we might achieve, work to harden our muscles, sorrows to try our souls? Are we not exposed to temptations to test our strength, sickness that we might learn patience, death that we might be immortalized and glorified? If all the sick for whom we pray were healed, if all the righteous were protected and the wicked destroyed, the whole program of the Father would be annulled and the basic principle of the gospel, free agency, would be ended. No man would have to live by faith. ... Should all prayers be immediately answered according to our selfish desires and our limited understanding, then there would be little or no suffering, sorrow, disappointment, or even death, and if these were not, there would also be no joy, success, resurrection, nor eternal life and godhood. (FPM 96–97)

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- AB = Anchor Bible: Job
- DBlog= Donna Nielsen Blog, [donna-connections.blogspot.com/](http://donna-connections.blogspot.com/)
- WHY = Alfred J. Kolatch, *Jewish Book of Why*.
- TPJS = *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*
- SOED = Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
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- S&S = Donald W. Parry and Jay A. Parry, *Symbols & Shadows*
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- DBI = *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*
- BDB = *Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
- KD = Keil-Delitzsch *Commentary on the Old Testament*
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- KJV King James Version of the Bible.
- NJPS = New Jewish Publication Society translation of the Bible
- NIV = New International Version of the Bible

**Harold B. Lee:** The more complicated our lives and world conditions become, the more important it is for us to keep clear the purposes and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not the function of religion to answer all the questions about God's moral government of the universe, but to give one courage, through faith, to go on in the face of questions he never finds the answer to in his present status. Therefore, take heed of yourselves, and as a wise world thinker once said, "If the time comes when you feel you can no longer hold to your faith, then hold to it anyway. You cannot go into tomorrow's uncertainty and dangers without faith. (TPC-HBL ch 23; OT-I)

**Robert D. Hales:** Remember, "a soft answer turneth away wrath" (Prov. 15:1). When my sweetheart and I were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple, **Elder Harold B. Lee** gave us wise counsel: "When you raise your voice in anger, the Spirit departs from your home." We must never, out of anger, lock the door of our home or our heart to our children. Like the prodigal son, our children need to know that when they come to themselves they can turn to us for love and counsel. ("Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty," *Ensign*, May 1999, 33)

**Joseph B. Wirthlin** once told of farmers in the hot desert of northwest Mexico who "grow varieties of corn and beans that are unusually hardy and drought resistant. These varieties survive and flourish in a harsh climate where other plants would wither and die. One of these plants is the white tepary bean. Its seed will sprout and the plant will grow even when very little rain falls. It sends its roots as deep as six feet into the rocky, sandy earth to find the moisture it needs. It can flower and fruit in the 115-degree (Fahrenheit) desert temperatures with only one yearly rainfall. Its foliage remains remarkably green, with little irrigation, even in the heat of mid-July. ... Perhaps members of the Church could emulate the example of these hardy, sturdy plants. We should send our roots deep into the soil of the gospel. We should grow, flourish, flower, and bear good fruit in abundance despite the evil, temptation, or criticism we might encounter. We should learn to thrive in the heat of adversity" (*Ensign*, May 1989, 7).

## 26. Why pain and suffering

"Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith." (Mosiah 23:21)

"...ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith." (Ether 12:6)

**Joseph Smith:** "If thou art called to pass through tribulation . . . know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good." (D&C 122:5-7)

**Spencer W. Kimball:** "Being human, we would expel from our lives physical pain and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort, but if we were to close the doors upon such sorrow and distress, we might be excluding our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering and self-mastery. The sufferings of our Savior were part of his education." (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p168)

**Spencer W. Kimball:** Could the Lord have prevented these tragedies? The answer is, Yes. The Lord is omnipotent, with all power to control our lives, save us pain, prevent all accidents, drive all planes and cars, feed us, protect us, save us from labor, effort, sickness, even from death, if he will. But he will not. ...

If we looked at mortality as the whole of existence, then pain, sorrow, failure, and short life would be calamity. But if we look

upon life as an eternal thing stretching far into the premortal past and on into the eternal post-death future, then all happenings may be put in proper perspective.

Is there not wisdom in his giving us trials that we might rise above them, responsibilities that we might achieve, work to harden our muscles, sorrows to try our souls? Are we not exposed to temptations to test our strength, sickness that we might learn patience, death that we might be immortalized and glorified?

If all the sick for whom we pray were healed, if all the righteous were protected and the wicked destroyed, the whole program of the Father would be annulled and the basic principle of the gospel, free agency, would be ended. No man would have to live by faith.

If joy and peace and rewards were instantaneously given the doer of good, there could be no evil—all would do good but not because of the rightness of doing good. There would be no test of strength, no development of character, no growth of powers, no free agency, only satanic controls."

Should all prayers be immediately answered according to our selfish desires and our limited understanding, then there would be little or no suffering, sorrow, disappointment, or even death, and if these were not, there would also be no joy, success, resurrection, nor eternal life and godhood. (FPM 96-97)

## 27. Our responses to pain and suffering

**Thomas S. Monson:** In August of this year, there occurred a tragedy in Salt Lake County. It was reported in the local and national press. Five beautiful little girls—so young, so vibrant, so loving—hiding away, as children often do in their games of hide-and-seek, entered the trunk of a parent's car. The trunk lid was pulled shut, they were unable to escape, and all perished from heat exhaustion. The entire community was so kind, so thoughtful, so caring in the passing of Alisha, Ashley, McKell, Audrey, and Jaesha. Flowers, food, calls, visits, and prayers were shared.

On the Sunday after the devastating event occurred, long lines of automobiles filled with grieving occupants drove ever so slowly past the Smith home—the scene of the accident. Sister Monson and I wished to be among those who expressed condolences in this way. As we drove by, we felt we were on holy ground. We literally crept along at a snail's pace along the street. It was as though we could visualize a traffic sign reading, "Please drive slowly; children at play." Tears filled our eyes and compassion flowed from our hearts.

At the funeral, as well as the evening prior, thousands passed by the caskets and expressed support for the grieving parents and grandparents. In two of the three families, the deceased children were all the children they had.

Frequently death comes as an intruder. It is an enemy that suddenly appears in the midst of life's feast, putting out its lights and gaiety. It visits the aged as they walk on faltering feet. Its summons is heard by those who have scarcely reached midway in life's journey, and often it hushes the laughter of little children.

At the funeral services for the five little angels, I counseled:

**"There is one phrase which should be erased from your thinking and from the words you speak aloud. It is the phrase, 'If only.' It is counterproductive and is not conducive to the spirit of healing and of peace. Rather, recall the words of Proverbs: 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.'"** ("Think to Thank," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 19-20)

**Thomas S. Monson:** In our lives, sickness comes to loved ones, accidents leave their cruel marks of remembrance, and tiny legs that once ran are imprisoned in a wheelchair.

Mothers and fathers who anxiously await the arrival of a precious child sometimes learn that all is not well with this tiny infant. A missing limb, sightless eyes, a damaged brain, or the term “Down’s syndrome” greets the parents, leaving them baffled, filled with sorrow, and reaching out for hope.

There follows the inevitable blaming of oneself, the condemnation of a careless action, and the perennial questions: “Why such a tragedy in our family?” “Why didn’t I keep her home?” “If only he hadn’t gone to that party.” “How did this happen?” “Where was God?” “Where was a protecting angel?” If, why, where, how—those recurring words—do not bring back the lost son, the perfect body, the plans of parents, or the dreams of youth. Self-pity, personal withdrawal, or deep despair will not bring the peace, the assurance, or help which are needed. Rather, we must go forward, look upward, move onward, and rise heavenward.

It is imperative that we recognize that whatever has happened to us has happened to others. They have coped and so must we. We are not alone. Heavenly Father’s help is near.

Perhaps no other has been so afflicted as the man Job, who was described as “perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” (Job 1:1.) He prospered by every measurement. In other words, he had it all made. Then came the loss of literally everything: his wealth, his family, his health. At one time the suggestion was made that he “curse God and die.” (Job 2:9.) Job’s summation of his faith, after ordeals demanded of few others, is a testimony of truth, a proclamation of courage, and a declaration of trust:

Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. (Job 19:23–27.) (“Miracles—Then and Now,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 68–69)

**Thomas S. Monson:** Life is a school of experience, a time of probation. We learn as we bear our afflictions and live through our heartaches.

As we ponder the events that can befall all of us—even sickness, accident, death, and a host of other challenges—we can say with Job of old: “Man is born unto trouble.” Job was a “perfect and upright” man who “feared God, and eschewed evil.” Pious in his conduct, prosperous in his fortune, Job was to face a test which could have destroyed anyone. Shorn of his possessions, scorned by his friends, afflicted by his suffering, shattered by the loss of his family, he was urged to “curse God, and die.” He resisted this temptation and declared from the depths of his noble soul: “Behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.”

“I know that my redeemer liveth.” Job kept the faith.

It may safely be assumed that no person has ever lived entirely free of suffering and tribulation, nor has there ever been a period in human history that did not have its full share of turmoil, ruin, and misery.

When the pathway of life takes a cruel turn, there is the temptation to ask the question “Why me?” Self-incrimination is a common practice, even when we may have had no control over our difficulty. At times there appears to be no light at the tunnel’s

end, no dawn to break the night’s darkness. We feel surrounded by the pain of broken hearts, the disappointment of shattered dreams, and the despair of vanished hopes. We join in uttering the biblical plea “Is there no balm in Gilead?” We feel abandoned, heartbroken, alone.

To all who so despair, may I offer the assurance found in the psalm “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

Whenever we are inclined to feel burdened down with the blows of life, let us remember that others have passed the same way, have endured, and then have overcome.

There seems to be an unending supply of trouble for one and all. Our problem is that we often expect instantaneous solutions, forgetting that frequently the heavenly virtue of patience is required. (“Look to God and Live,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 52)

## 28. The 16 Questions in the Book of Job

“the Book of Job contains altogether 16 questions introduced by the interrogative particles *lammah* (9), *maddu’a* (6), and *mah* (1). None of these 16 questions is, ‘Why do good people suffer?’” (EJ Job)

Why was I born? (3:11, 12, 30; 10:20)

Why are Job’s friends foolish? 18:3

Job asks friends ... 19:22; 21:4; 27:12

Elihu asks Job (33:13)

Job asks, “Why [*lammah*] do you make *me* your target?” (7:20)

Job asks, “Why [*mah*] do you not forgive my transgression and forgive my iniquity?” (7:21)

Why do the wicked prosper? (9:29; 21:7, 24:1) Asking the question is itself a challenge to the contention of Eliphaz (4:7), Bildad (8:12–22), and Zophar (20) that the wicked are punished and the just rewarded.

The first of these, 30:2, “What can I gain from the strength of their hands, from men whose vigor is spent?” is most assuredly not addressed to God. This leaves us with only 13:24 where Job asks God, “Why do you hide your face?”

God even responds directly to Job’s challenge in 9:19, 13:8, 31:35 that God please grant him a day in court to bring a veritable lawsuit against God. This response is stated in 40:2 in the form of a rhetorical question: “Will the reprover contend with Shaddai// Will He [God] provide an answer to one who seeks to reprove God?” (cf. Tur-Sinai 1967, p. 554) God’s question seems to mean, “Job, you summoned God into the courtroom. Are you certain that you want to go through with this lawsuit?” What could be a more appropriate response to Job’s having asked for a day in court? Moreover 42:5, in which Job says, in response to the last of the God speeches, “I have heard about you with my ears, but now I see you with my eyes,” Job acknowledges that God has indeed granted Job’s wish, expressed in 19:25–27 (in NJV): “But I know that my Vindicator lives; In the end He will testify on earth – This, after my skin will have been peeled off. But I would behold God while still in my flesh, I myself, not another, would behold Him; would see with my own eyes.”

God meets Job in court, and He confirms to Job’s friends and to all readers of the Book of Job (42:7) that indeed bad things do happen to good people and that victims should not be insulted by would-be comforters. (EJ Job)

## Tragedy or Destiny

“The daily newspaper screamed the headlines: ‘Plane Crash Kills 43. No Survivors of Mountain Tragedy,’ and thousands of voices joined in a chorus: ‘Why did the Lord let this terrible thing happen?’

“Two automobiles crashed when one went through a red light, and six people were killed. Why would God not prevent this?

“Why should the young mother die of cancer and leave her eight children motherless? Why did not the Lord heal her?

“A little child was drowned; another was run over. Why?

“A man died one day suddenly of a coronary occlusion as he climbed a stairway. His body was found slumped on the floor. His wife cried out in agony, ‘Why? Why would the Lord do this to me? Could he not have considered my three little children who still need a father?’

“A young man died in the mission field and people critically questioned: ‘Why did not the Lord protect this youth while he was doing proselyting work?’” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, p. 95.)

Why do the righteous, those who love and serve God, suffer? In Job 1:8 the Lord called Job a “perfect and an upright man.” Why then did the Lord permit Satan to afflict His righteous servant?

Who is responsible for man’s troubles? Was it the Lord who directed the plane into the mountainside? Did God cause the highway collision? Was it He who prompted the young child to toddle into the canal or the man to suffer the heart attack?

Responding to these questions, President Kimball said:

“Answer, if you can. I cannot, for though I know God has a major role in our lives, I do not know how much he causes to happen and how much he merely permits. Whatever the answer to this question, there is another I feel sure about.

## Miscellaneous

**The Book of Job Makes Three Main Points:** “. . .that there is no causal connection between earthly suffering and moral evil (that is, the good may suffer at least as much as the bad), that the vast beauty, power and complexity of Nature are a proof of an omnipotent order beyond human understanding, and that the gulf between man’s actual fate and what he thinks he deserves is a fact about which God prefers to remain silent.” (*EJ Jr.*) (Rona #32)

**Responsibility of Suffering:** “The rabbis of the Talmud and the medieval Jewish philosophers were also troubled about the problem of suffering. Some thinkers suggested that the innocent suffer in this world so that their share in the world to come will be greater, but other philosophers rejected this idea. Another solution suggested was that suffering comes on a man in order to warn him to mend his ways and that “when a man sees that he is suffering, let him examine his deeds.” The rabbis of the Talmud believed that it is a great religious virtue to bear one’s suffering “with love,” i.e., patiently and without becoming rebellious.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) (Rona #32)

**Judaism Absolutely Forbids Inflicting Suffering:** “. . . on other people and even on animals. Also, no man may ignore the suffering of others but must do everything in his power to help remedy the situation. This applies to physical suffering, to poverty and to psychological suffering. Furthermore, no man has the right to enjoy himself if the rest of the community is suffering.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) (Rona #32)

**Joseph Smith:** “I am like a huge, rough stone rolling down from a high mountain; and the only polishing I get is when some corner

gets rubbed off by coming in contact with something else, ... knocking off a corner here and a corner there. Thus I will become a smooth and polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty” (*TPJS*, 304).