

● When I see a picture like this of what the Land of Uz looks like today, on the western border of Jordan above Saudi Arabia, I see the arid desert — but also enough vegetation to imagine Job’s thousands of head of livestock successfully grazing.

Before we jump into this final lesson concluding the *Book of Job*, I wanted to thank you for your invitation to Emerald Heights again this year. I’ll admit I’ve been anxious since September about trying to cover 42 chapters of this difficult book in five weeks. But here we are.

● Back in September, I received the rite of “laying on of hands” by Elders of the National Association of Christian Ministers, a conservative ministerial association of over 36,000 ministers. Forty-two years earlier, I’d seriously considered pursuing a Master of Divinity degree, but being already a Lecturer at the University of Washington, it seemed to make more sense to pursue a doctorate.

Then twenty-five years ago a trusted pastor reminded me that I didn’t need to make an either/or choice. I could teach at the university and for the Church.

● A day after this ceremony down in Federal Way, it was back to ‘grandpa’ duty with our nearly monthly consolidated birthday party. Then the next week I had the happy duty of taking care of a two-year old grandson while his parents went off to the hospital to deliver yet another granddaughter for Nancy and me.

I can appreciate what Job lost when his wealth, children, and health all suddenly

collapsed with no rhyme or reason to explain his loss.

● But today, Job gets what he’s demanded. A hearing with his God. Unfortunately, he’ll find that he was absolutely right in something he said back in chapter 9.

But how can a man be in the right before God?

³ "If one wished to dispute with Him, He could not answer Him once in a thousand times.

After God reveals Himself to Job in a surprising way through four chapters, we’ll reach the epilogue — chapter 42, the conclusion and aftermath to this whole experience of suffering and confusion.

● As we jump back into the book, I’m reminded that the Apostle Paul wrote something that seems to say that all faithful believers go through trials — maybe not as severe as those experienced by Job — but trials nonetheless. ² Corinthians 4:16b-18

Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.

For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Let’s pray,

Our Heavenly Father,

Long life is one of Your cardinal blessings. For your saints, it is a sure sign of the garrison of protection You surround us with. For those You've preserved into senior years who have yet to place their trust in You, You show Your longsuffering and patience.

You proved Yourself worthy of your servant Job's trust. We, like him, trust in this promise made to the house of Jacob.

Isaiah 46:4 NIV

⁴ Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

Teach us this morning as we learn how you rescued righteous Job.

— Amen



We left off last week at the end of chapter 37. An enigmatic young man named Elihu, very likely the only Hebrew in this story, was finishing up his six-chapter rebuke of both Job and his three friends.

I assume he was a Hebrew, because while Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite were identified by their hometowns, Elihu had the classic Hebrew introduction — Job 32:2
... Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram.

The *Book of 1st Chronicles* is a real minefield for anyone trying to read the lists of Hebrew names there. The name Elihu appears there multiple times.

The last of Elihu's six chapters describes God as Master of the weather.

Lightning and thunder, snow and rain, cold and ice, are all His tools to bless or to discipline. God has His fingers on all the elements of weather and climate.

By the way, this is the main reason I don't get distraught about the social hysteria around the current issue of climate change. We have no business second-guessing how God manages our earthly environment. If we are anxious about anything, including the Earth's climate — as it says in Philippians 4, Phil 4:6b **...in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**

It's not surprising that Elihu ends in chapter 37 where God Himself begins in chapter 38.



¹ "At this also my heart trembles, And leaps from its place.

² "Listen closely to the thunder of His voice,

And the rumbling that goes out from His mouth.

³ "Under the whole heaven He lets it loose,

And His lightning to the ends of the earth.

⁴ "After it, a voice roars; He thunders with His majestic voice, And He does not restrain the lightnings when His voice is heard.

The first verse in chapter 38 reads,
Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,



I'm going to tread carefully and slowly for the first few verses now that we have come to the chapters attributed to God Himself.

With the exception of a single verse, chapter 12 verse 9 (^{= Is 41:20}), the *Book of Job* has not used the Hebrew national name for God, **Yahweh**, since its prologue in chapters 1 and 2.

This tells us the version of Job's story that has come down to us was written down at least during the time of the exodus from Egypt or later. The personal name God revealed to Moses would have been unknown in Job's homeland of Uz back before the time of the Patriarchs.

That God spoke, "**out of the whirlwind**" is consistent with what Elihu had just spoken about God's authority over the weather. And elsewhere, God's voice is often associated with natural and supernatural phenomenon from burning bushes to storms, and pillars of clouds and fire.

God knows how to make an entrance. Job is about to finally get his day in court, that he has long demanded, but he'll find the Judge is not pleased.

The *Book of Job* is not arranged as a legal trial. If it were, God would have spoken earlier. But our poet-author has organized Job's story so that God has the preeminent place — He gets the last word — the final say — as well He should.

God chooses the time and place of our every encounter with Him. We may find that God has already answered our prayers before we ask, or right when we ask, or at some future time of God's wise choosing.

It's time for this extreme testing of Job to come to its end. God has proven His point to Satan. Job has remained faithful. But God is about to lecture Job — and by way

of Job — He's teaching everyone who hears Job's story.

Job had accused God of unjust punishment. And as the accused in a legal dispute, God has the right to question Job. God's two options are to either prove Job wrong or to seek to prove him incompetent.

●
**² "Who is this that darkens counsel
By words without knowledge?"**

And there's God's answer. Job lacks the infinitely detailed knowledge that God employs in managing His creation. This is God's way of saying, "Job, you don't know what you're talking about." God charges him with ignorance and presumption.

●
**³ "Now gird up your loins like a man,
And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!"**

God prefaces his withering questioning of Job with a warning to Job for him to get ready for battle. The phrase "gird up your loins" is a command to prepare for conflict or a wrestling match. We'd say, "buckle up Job."

●
**⁴ "Where were you when I laid the
foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you
have understanding,**

God leads with this question which alone could have ended the debate. Consider, Job — you've claimed you wanted to challenge God as if he was your equal. The gulf in knowledge and power between Creator and creature is infinite.

God makes this point to all of us. Chapter 38 continues to press the point that God's infinite knowledge and power in creating our reality leaves no room for challenging Him.

●
**⁵ Who set its measurements?
Since you know.
Or who stretched the line on it?
⁶ "On what were its bases sunk?
Or who laid its cornerstone,
⁷ When the morning stars sang together
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?**

We get more details here about the Creation story of Genesis chapter one. — Beginning with asking about the creation of the world, God follows with questions about the creation of days,

●
**¹² "Have you ever in your life
commanded the morning,
And caused the dawn to know its place,**

And creation of the seas...

**¹⁶ "Have you entered into the springs of
the sea
Or walked in the recesses of the deep?**

●
Or of the of the place of waiting after death,

**¹⁷ "Have the gates of death been revealed
to you,
Or have you seen the gates of deep
darkness?**

●
Or of the basic physics of light and
darkness.

**¹⁹ "Where is the way to the dwelling of
light?
And darkness, where is its place,**

Chapter 38 has 41 verses of these and other similar questions.

**³¹ "Can you bind the chains of the
Pleiades,
Or loose the cords of Orion?
³² "Can you lead forth a constellation in
its season,
And guide the Bear with her satellites?
³³ "Do you know the ordinances of the
heavens,
Or fix their rule over the earth?**

With the Hubble telescope in 1990 and the James Webb space telescope in 2021, we can see deeper into the universe than previously imagined. But have you ever considered that God arranged the celestial bodies and the constellations we see from Earth for man's benefit? The Bear — or the Big Dipper as we know it, aids our navigation as it points toward the north star — and the design of the constellations coupled with the tilt of the Earth on its axis guided the work of agriculture for thousands of years.

Job, of course, had no answer for the 77 rapid fire questions God posed to him in chapter 38. In a sense, they were all rhetorical questions because God knew before He asked them that Job could have no answer to give — and that was His point.

Job, trust Me on this one, I know what I'm doing. In fact, that's all you have to do — just trust Me. (*And that may be the key point of this entire book.*)

If chapter 38 shows God as Creator, chapter 39 shows Him as Sustainer. This refutes those who might want to believe that God created the heavens and the earth and then went on a permanent vacation.



**¹ "Do you know the time the mountain goats give birth?
Do you observe the calving of the deer?
² "Can you count the months they fulfill,
Or do you know the time they give birth?"**

From the last few verses of chapter 38 to the end of chapter 39, God asks Job over a dozen more questions — this time about His work sustaining the natural order of life among the animals.

He selects for His examples, lions, ravens, mountain goats, deer, wild donkeys and oxen, ostriches, horses, hawks and eagles — all creatures with which Job would be very familiar.

By implication, God is opening Job's eyes to the immense magnitude of His work. Man has discovered over two-million distinct animal species — certainly far more than Job could ever imagine — and many millions of species are assumed to yet be undiscovered. But God knows and sustains them all. And each type of animal has characteristics unique to its species. Wild donkeys can live in salt lands, the ostrich lacks wisdom, and the horse laughs at fear, the eagle has amazing eyesight and so on.

Chapter 39 could have inspired the poem by Cecil Frances Alexander that begins...

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

And ends . . .

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell,
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.



Chapter 40 opens with a break in the stream of unanswerable questions and demands that Job answer one specific one.

**¹ Then the LORD said to Job,
² "Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty?
Let him who reproves God answer it."**

Job, for his part, knew when it was time to shut up.



**³ Then Job answered the LORD and said,
⁴ "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You?
I lay my hand on my mouth.
⁵ "Once I have spoken, and I will not answer;
Even twice, and I will add nothing more."**

The word Job uses, translated in the New American Standard Bible here as "insignificant" is the same word for light — the opposite of heavy. The word is a measure of honor. We use that idiom in English. Say, a heavy-weight in the finance industry would be a real mover and shaker. A light-weight in the political arena would indicate someone with little clout or sway in matters. Compared to God's immense weight of honor, Job indeed sees himself as insignificant.

It's like Job has been read his Miranda rights by the Judge and he knows that it's now best to heed that familiar warning, "You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law."

Job has been chastened by God's rhetoric, but he has yet to retract his claim that God has acted unjustly towards him. So — Round 2!

The LORD begins over again in chapters 40 and 41 to get Job to change his mind about his God — which is to say — to repent.

●
Round 2 — Yahweh’s second speech — starts with the same words as Round 1.

6 Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm and said,

7 "Now gird up your loins like a man; I will ask you, and you instruct Me.

—
8 "Will you really annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?

9 "Or do you have an arm like God, And can you thunder with a voice like His?

It’s interesting that God speaks in both the first person and the third person.

Job, if you can do what I can do, God says, well and good — then you’ll prove yourself your own Savior.

●
10 "Adorn yourself with eminence and dignity, And clothe yourself with honor and majesty.

11 "Pour out the overflowings of your anger, And look on everyone who is proud, and make him low.

12 "Look on everyone who is proud, and humble him, And tread down the wicked where they stand.

13 "Hide them in the dust together; Bind them in the hidden place. —

14 "Then I will also confess to you, That your own right hand can save you.

Job, if you can adorn yourself with honor and majesty like Me and then dispense

justice as I must do — then more power to you.

In chapter 39, God described a number of common mammals and birds with which Job would be familiar, but here in His second speech, Yahweh details two monstrous creatures, the Bě•hē’moth and the Leviathan.

Some Bible commentators identify these two creatures as the Hippopotamus and the Crocodile. But that interpretation should not be accepted without some skepticism. Taken literally, the Behemoth sounds like a dinosaur — some aquatic herbivore of enormous strength.

●
15 "Behold now, Behemoth, which I made as well as you;

He eats grass like an ox.

16 "Behold now, his strength in his loins And his power in the muscles of his belly.

17 "He bends his tail like a cedar; The sinews of his thighs are knit together.

18 "His bones are tubes of bronze; His limbs are like bars of iron.

I certainly can’t tell you what’s intended by the description of the Behemoth — except to remember God’s point in mentioning such a fabulous brute. If such a beast can be humbled by God — who is Job to think he can accuse the Almighty with being unjust?

There are enough mysterious phrases in the description of the Behemoth to rule out the Hippopotamus claim for me.

17 "He bends his tail like a cedar; — that’s not at all descriptive of a hippo. Not to be indelicate — but a hippo’s smallish tail is used to wipe itself — and to mark its territory with its dung. The males fling it in all directions as a show of dominance.

Now if someone over lunch asks what you learned in Bible class today — don't start with that one.

Verse 19 is even more mysterious.

●
**19 "He is the first of the ways of God;
Let his maker bring near his sword.**

There are ancient myths that propose some deity defeated some monster for supremacy over the Earth. But this confusing verse reminds us that the Behemoth, whatever it was, was yet another creature made by God and subject to His rule.

●
The Leviathan described in chapter 41 is even more problematic. While the safe claim is that the Leviathan is a crocodile — God's description of it reads more like the fire-breathing dragons of Tolkien's Middle-Earth or of ancient mythologies from around the world.

13 "Who can strip off his outer armor?

Who can come within his double mail?

14 "Who can open the doors of his face?

Around his teeth there is terror.

15 "His strong scales are his pride,

Shut up as with a tight seal.

16 "One is so near to another

That no air can come between them.

17 "They are joined one to another;

They clasp each other and cannot be separated.

18 "His sneezes flash forth light,

And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.

**19 "Out of his mouth go burning torches;
Sparks of fire leap forth.**

**20 "Out of his nostrils smoke goes forth
As from a boiling pot and burning rushes.**

**21 "His breath kindles coals,
And a flame goes forth from his mouth.**

When one reads the full description of the Leviathan in chapter 41, he sounds more like Godzilla than a Nile crocodile.

But God's point to Job seems clear. If you can't capture and tame this sea monster, what makes you think you have what it takes to contend with this beast's Maker and Master?

●
Buried within the account of the Leviathan is an important truth about God Himself.

8 "Lay your hand on him; Remember the battle; you will not do it again!

**9 "Behold, your expectation is false;
Will you be laid low even at the sight of him?**

10 "No one is so fierce that he dares to arouse him;

Then halfway through verse 10 we are surprised when God speaks about Himself.

Who then is he that can stand before Me?

11 "Who has given to Me that I should repay him?

Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.

The Apostle Paul makes the same point at the end of Romans 11 — even cribbing his idea from the *Book of Job*. Rom 11:35-36

35 "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things.

●
And finally, we've reached the epilogue — the final chapter.

If confession is good for the soul, as they say, Job's confession is great for his.

**Then Job answered the LORD and said,
2 "I know that You can do all things,
And that no purpose of Yours can be
thwarted.**

Job has been successfully schooled. God is not some distant heavenly Monarch — He's intimately involved in every detail of His creation — including everything that Job has endured and everything said by him and about him.

●
Job prefaces his responses to God with a restatement of God's charges against him.

3'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?'

To which Job answers:

"Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."

Job confessed his ignorance. He and his friends made any number of speculative pronouncements about their God — while lacking even the most basic understanding of His close and careful oversight of His creation.

●
4'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.'

And here is how Job answers his all-powerful, all-knowing God — as if Job could ever teach anything to Him.

5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You;

**6 Therefore I retract,
And I repent in dust and ashes."**

There is a world of difference between knowing about God to really knowing Him. Job, having now encountered God personally, retracts his charges against God.

And further, he admits that he's been the one in the wrong and sincerely repents.

With Job's retraction of his complaints against God and his repentance — the trial accusing God of acting unjustly toward Job has concluded. But God's dealings with Job and his three friends have just begun a new phase.

●
7 It came about after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has.

8 "Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."

9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job.

Has anything really changed as far as Job's relationship with God? Four times in these three verses, God refers to Job as His servant. But that's nothing new. Both in chapter 1 and chapter 2, Yahweh posed the same question to Satan. **"Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."**

Job — like all of us — may have been able to pinpoint a day or event earlier in his life when he first realized he'd placed his faith in God. But from God's point of view — Job was always His servant.

If you are a believer in Christ, then from God's point of view — as the apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 1, ^{Eph 1:4} **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.**

Job is not the only witness to this theophany — this physical appearance of God. Eliphaz, and presumably Bildad and Zophar are as well. And God has the last word on their debate which filled two-thirds of the book. God spoke to Eliphaz as the senior representative of Job's three friends. Job fulfilled his priestly role on behalf of his friends as he'd done earlier when he offered sacrifices on behalf of his children.

● But wait! There's more!

¹⁰ The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold.

¹¹ Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him, and they ate bread with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the LORD had brought on him. And each one gave him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold.

¹² The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys.

Twice before I've compared Job to George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*. And the closing scene of that movie mimics this

scene. Remember all of George Bailey's family, friends, and neighbors bringing their contributions to George who had sacrificed so much for all of them over his lifetime?

And while Job's relatives and neighbors helped Job get back on his feet financially, Yahweh did what only God can do — by increasing his livestock holdings by double what had earlier been taken from him.

And finally, God provided an expansive family for him and an ample lifespan in which to relish all of God's earthly blessings.

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

¹⁴ He named the first Jemimah, and the second Keziah, and the third Keren-hāppūch.

¹⁵ In all the land no women were found so fair as Job's daughters; and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers.

¹⁶ After this, Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations.

¹⁷ And Job died, an old man and full of days.

While Job's herds were restored two-fold — his children were replaced one for one — once again seven sons and three daughters.

I am no expert on Job's Daughters — I only dated one for almost two years in college. Alas, she was a Cougar, and I was a Husky. It was not to be. The Masonic organization for young women that takes its name from these three daughters of Job is not a Christian organization *per se*. They require belief in a Supreme Being but do not identify that Deity as the Triune God of the Bible — despite basing their organization

on verse 15 here. In that, they are not unlike the Boy Scouts who pledge on their honor to do their duty to “God” and conclude their 12-point Scout Law with, “A Scout is reverent.”

We were not told how old Job was before his trials, but he had ten grown children. Back in chapter 15, Eliphaz had stated that at least some of the assembled friends were older than Job’s father. But the key fact that he lived another 140 years gives us good reason to date the story of Job around the time of the Patriarchs or a few generations earlier since we read here that Job lived to see four of his own generations.

Genesis 11 tells us Terah the father of Abraham lived to be 205 years old. Genesis 25 gives Abraham’s years as 175. His son Isaac outlived Abraham by five years and Isaac’s son Jacob lived to be 147. Joseph, Jacob’s son, lived to be 110 — but 400 years later Moses made it to 120.

Whatever length of days God gives to each of us, those years amount to an infinitely insignificant span of years compared with the everlasting life Jesus promised. He said, as recorded in John 6:47, “**Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.**”

What are my main take-aways from this quick study through the *Book of Job*?

God is not unjust when He uses hardships of many kinds to discipline and often humble His chosen saints. The same trials that may break a faithless person, certainly may awaken a believer to repentance and obedience — and may, in fact, double their capacity for service. God called the hero of this story “My servant Job.” It will forever be the supreme accolade for the children of

God. ^{Matt 25:21} “**Well done, good and faithful servant!**”



It is no sin to pour out your troubles to God. He invites those who reciprocate His love to cast all their cares on Him. Maybe the Apostle Peter was imagining Job when he wrote, ^{1 Peter 5:6-7}

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

In light of Job’s account, I suggest I humble myself — and save God the trouble.

And finally, what we heard today — God is intimately involved in every aspect of our lives and those of every other creature of His invention.

He is never aloof. He cares and shepherds us far more than we imagine. And with the example of Job, if we take it to heart, God may not need to test our faith with the same severity.

John Newton, Anglican clergyman, abolitionist, author of *Amazing Grace*, and former captain of a slave ship and an investor in the slave trade, wrote the year he died at age 82, “I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.” “Although my memory's fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior.”

God blew up Mt. Saint Helens to get my attention. And we read in Job’s story that God spoke out of a whirlwind.

In 1748, during his return voyage to England aboard the ship *Greyhound*, John Newton had his Christian conversion. He awoke to find the ship caught in a severe storm off the coast of County Donegal, Ireland and about to sink. In response, he began praying for God's mercy, after which the storm began to die down.

As a closing prayer — let me share one of John Newton's hymns. It is titled *My Grace is Sufficient for Thee*. God's grace was sufficient for John Newton, and for ancient Job, and it still is for us.



My Grace is Sufficient for Thee

Oppressed with unbelief and sin,
Fightings without, and fears within;
While earth and hell, with force combined,
Assault and terrify my mind:

What strength have I against such foes,
Such hosts and legions to oppose?
Alas! I tremble, faint, and fall;
Lord, save me, or I give up all.

Thus sorely pressed, I sought the Lord,
To give me some sweet cheering word;
Again I sought, and yet again;
I waited long, but not in vain.

Oh! 'twas a cheering word indeed!
Exactly suited to my need;
**“Sufficient for you is my grace,
Your weakness my great power
displays.”**

Now I despair and mourn no more,
I welcome all I feared before;
Though weak, I'm strong; though troubled,
blessed;
For Christ's own power shall on me rest.

My grace would soon exhausted be,
But his is boundless as the sea;
Then let me boast, with holy Paul,
That I am nothing, Christ is all.