

## JOB'S SIN, GOD'S GRACE

### I Believe Job sinned



I was listening to various podcasts by [Dr. Hugh Ross](#) and [Wesley Huff](#) when I stumbled upon one by each of them, though on different topics, they both referenced the wisdom and age of the book of Job. This ignited a curiosity in me to begin a deep dive study on the book of Job in hopes to understand it better. I grew up in an evangelical church and I had learned that it was a book of wisdom, but all my life I had read and understood that Job was righteous, his friends were evil, and God set things straight. Now this understanding is more or less accurate, but not entirely the full picture. Before going further, I will preface that in no way am I looking to write something controversial for readership, or share some esoteric mystical knowledge. I came into the book of Job reading it as a child, very humbly, and wanting to learn and know what it says and what it does not. I am not looking to condemn Job as his friends did, nor am I looking to boast of my own righteousness. I genuinely want to know truth.

My main thesis for this blog is to give evidence for why I believe that Job sinned during his discourse with his friends, why I believe his friends drove him to sin, and how God intervened on Job's behalf reflecting the gospel narrative within his intervention. I will provide evidence for why I have taken this position, why I believe it is true, and I will leave it with you to decide if you agree.



### If Job sinned, why does scripture say he did not?

Before exploring why I believe Job sinned, we'll first look at those scriptures that explicitly say that he did not sin.

Prior to Job's suffering, chapter 1 gives an impression of Job's character. Job is labelled as, "...blameless, upright, fearing God, & turning away from evil." (Job 1:1). He is also called "...the greatest of all the men of the east." (Job 1:3).

Even God comments on Job's character, telling Satan  
*"For there is no one like him on the earth, a*

*blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."* (Job 1:8)

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Satan believes that Job only fears God and follows him because God has blessed Job with both protection and wealth. However, even after Satan is permitted to murder Job's servants (v.14 & 17), steal Job's oxen and camels (v.14 & 17), burn up Job's sheep (v. 16), and kill his sons and daughters (v. 18-19), Job is said to have retained his integrity and righteousness by responding in this way,

*"...The Lord gave & the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." 22  
Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God." (Job 1:21-22)*

Verse 22 clearly states that Job did not sin up until this point. So far so good.

Chapter 2 plays out very similarly. When Satan returns with the sons of God to enter God's presence, God once again repeats his characterization of Job,

*"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 2:3)*

And Satan once again believes that Job only fears God because he continues to protect Job from physical harm. God grants Satan the opportunity to smite Job with "...sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head." (v.7). Job is then tempted by his wife to "...curse God and die...". Her response seems likely out of her pain of having to witness Job suffer. Job's response is once again upright and blameless,

*"Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips." (Job 2:10)*

Verse 10 in the second chapter again clearly says that Job did not sin up until this point.

Scripture is telling us that Job until now has remained blameless and upright. What scripture is not telling us, is that Job continued to be sinless. The trap is to apply Job 1:22 and Job 2:10 to the remaining chapters, falsely believing that Job retains his uprightness.



### **If Job sinned, show us where!**

Job continues to remain upright throughout chapter 3 despite cursing the day he was born (v1 onward). It is incredibly sorrowful and Job does not commit any sin by crying out in this way. After Job finishes speaking in chapter 3, Eliphaz, the first of Job's friends, begins his address in chapter 4 and ends in chapter 5. Instead of using empathy, Eliphaz becomes

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impatient with Job's cries and ironically accuses Job of being impatient in his suffering (ch 4 v.2 & 5). He then brings in the retribution principle,

*"...whoever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed?"  
(Job 4:7)*

The retribution principle is the understanding that bad things only happen to bad people. (1) Eliphaz sees that bad things have come upon Job, therefore Job must have committed some bad thing to deserve it. Job responds to Eliphaz in chapter 6, and this where things begin to turn. In Luke 4:13 it says

*"13 And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him [Jesus] until an opportune time." (Luke 4:13)*

Satan spent his time watching Jesus to tempt Him when he was at his lowest, and who acted as Satan's eyes and mouth but no other than the Pharisees and other religious leaders who would test Jesus relentlessly. In this same way, Job's friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, were Satan's eyes and mouth who constantly put Job to the test. I'll explain.

Job admits in verse 3 that his words are "rash" but he goes onto say,

*"8 Oh, that my request might come to pass, And that God would grant my hope! Oh, 9 that God would decide to crush me, That He would let loose His hand and cut me off! 10 But it is still my comfort, And I rejoice in unsparing pain, That I have not denied the words of the Holy One. 11 What is my strength, that I should wait?" (Job 6:8-11)*

We see that Job is suffering a great deal, and he longs for some form of relief, but even in his great despair he is still rejoicing. This is truly incredible strength of character from Job. Job then very rightly tells his friends

*"14 For the despairing man there should be kindness from his friend; lest he forsake the fear of the Almighty. 15 My brothers have decided to act deceitfully... You see terror and are afraid" (Job 6:14-15, & 21)*

Job's friends, according to Job, have acted deceitfully and have wrongfully accused Job of sinning without any inquiry. They have witnessed Job's suffering and it scares them (v.21) into wanting to distance themselves from Job which is why they implore Job to repent so that God will alleviate Job's suffering. It's similar to how a person might give a homeless man or woman money, not necessarily out of goodness and generosity, but simply out of wanting the person to

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leave them alone, or out of a guilt for having to see someone suffer with less than themselves. Now here's the most important part to note in chapter 6, Job says,

*"24 Teach me, and I will be silent; And show me how I have done wrong.  
25 Honest words are not painful! But what does your argument prove?  
26 Do you intend to rebuke my words, When the words of one in despair  
belong to the wind...28 And now please look at me, And see if I am lying  
to your face. 29 Please turn away, let there be no injustice; Turn away,  
my righteousness is still in it." (Job 6:24-26 & 28-29)*

Did you catch what Job is pleading for from his friends? He rightly challenges his friends to first prove what wrong Job has committed, and then he goes on to say "...Please turn away...Turn away, my righteousness is still in it." Job is asking his friends to STOP before Job sins. Job is putting up a boundary and requesting his friends cease from criticizing him because they are not helping. Sadly however, we know that his so-called friends do not listen to Job's pleas. They push him to the brink. There's a lesson in there for all of us when supporting our fellow brothers and sisters, or even a neighbor in their suffering.

In none of this has Job sinned however, but we need to go chronologically through the chapters so that we can see the climate and how it builds into Job's sin in chapter 9.

Job continues his discourse with his friends and with God in chapter 7. In verses 20-21 we see Job's presupposition that leads him into trouble.

*"20 Have I sinned? What have I done to you O Watcher of men? Why  
have you set me as your target...21 Why then do you not pardon my  
transgression and take away my iniquity?" (Job 7:20-21)*

We notice that not only Eliphaz believes in the retribution principle, but Job does as well. He cries out to God asking if he has sinned, and if he has sinned why has God not forgiven him and taken away his sin? Job trusts in God's pardoning ability, and trusts in God's ability to make things right. What Job does not understand is why God has allowed this suffering to occur. This eventually leads Job to believe untrue things about God's character.

Bildad, Job's second friend, responds to Job in chapter 8 and very harshly I might add. Bildad says,

*"4 If your sons sinned against Him, Then He delivered them into the  
power of their transgression." (Job 8:4)*

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What a brutal response. We know that Job regularly offered sacrifices for his children after their days of feasting – Job 1:5, which even in this way Job is a type and shadow of Jesus himself, coming before the Father advocating (1 John 2:1), interceding (Rom 8:34), and taking on the role as high priest on his children's behalf (Heb 4:14-16). Bildad's response could not be further from the truth. But Bildad does not stop there.

*"5 If you would seek God And implore the compassion of the Almighty, 6 If you are pure and upright, Surely now He would rouse Himself for you And restore your righteous estate...20 Lo, God will not reject a man of integrity" (Job 8:5-6 & 20)*

Can you hear it? Every believer ever who asked the victim in their suffering, "have you prayed about it?" or "is there someone you need to forgive?" or "is there some sin you haven't repented of?" As if the suffering is the victim's fault. Sometimes it might be the victim's fault, but the object lesson here is to empathize with the person and get the facts straight before jumping to ridiculous conclusions and false accusations. Bildad also reveals that he too believes in the retribution principle, telling Job "If you are pure and upright, Surely now He would rouse Himself for you...". This kind of reasoning can lead nowhere good. Do not listen to all those prosperity gospel preachers out there who try to convince you that suffering only happens to those with "little faith" or those who "need to believe more, trust more, give more, do more, pray more" etc. The righteous will suffer; Jesus told us that.

Unfortunately, the damage from Eliphaz and Bildad was done. Job began to believe their words and agree with them as we see in chapter 7 verse 2 "In truth I know this is so...". Job agrees here with Bildad and the retribution principle. Job then argues,

*"...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." (Job 9:2-3)*

Job wishes to dispute with God, because Job's conclusion is that God made a mistake somewhere in his assessment of Job. Where Job saw God as a friend, he now feels at enmity with God. Job continues,

*"13 God will not turn back His anger...15 For though I were right, I could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge..." (Job 13 & 15)*

*"19 If it is a matter of power, behold, He is the strong one! And if it is a matter of justice, who can summon Him? 20 Though I am righteous, my*

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*mouth will condemn me; though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty..." (Job 9:19-20)*

*"...He destroys the guiltless and the wicked...He mocks the despair of the innocent. 24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, then who is it?" (Job 9:22-24)*

*"30 If I should wash myself with snow And cleanse my hands with lye, 31 Yet You would plunge me into the pit..." (Job 9:30-31)*

Job has revealed the flaw in his thinking and it has led to doubt in God's character and the condemning of God in what Job believes to be flawed judgement on God's part. Job states his case clearly in chapter 10.

*"2 I will say to God, Do not condemn me; Let me know why You contend with me. 3 Is it right for You indeed to oppress, to reject the labor of your hands, And to look favorably on the schemes of the wicked? 4 Have You eyes of flesh? Or do You see as a man sees? 5 Are Your days as the days of a mortal, Or Your years as man's years, 6 that You should seek for my guilt, And search for my sin? 7 According to Your knowledge I am indeed not guilty; Yet there is no deliverance from Your hand. (Job 10:2-7)*

Job believes that somehow, he has fallen into God's judgement because, according to Job and his friend's worldview, suffering only comes on the wicked. Job is now caught in a difficult position where he must condemn God in order to absolve and elevate himself. And this is where Job has erred and sinned. Like Moses who sinned at the waters of Meribah on the account of the Israelites (Num 20:13, Deut 1:37), Job was pushed by his friend's. But this is to God's glory as we'll see further on.

The majority of Job's words are sinless and deeply sorrowful; justifiably so. Job even makes beautiful heart cries to God with statements like these,

*"25 And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last He will take His stand on the earth. 26 Even after my skin is flayed, Yet without my flesh I shall see God; 27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes shall see and not another..." (Job 19:25-27)*

But then Job continues to agree with the three friends on the retribution principle in Job 12:3, Job 13:2, and Job 16:1. There are also other moments where Job's flawed worldview overshadows his understanding and he publicly ridicules God. Chapter 9 was the beginning; but as you can see there are others.

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*"...So You [God] destroy man's hope. 20 You forever overpower him and he departs; You change his appearance and send him away. 21 His sons achieve honor, but he does not know it; or they become insignificant, but he does not perceive it." (Job 14:19-21)*

Jumping to chapter 23, Job again makes his case against God,

*"No, surely He [God] would pay attention to me [Job]. 7 There the upright would reason with Him [God]; and I would be delivered forever from my Judge." (Job 23:6-7)*

The issue with this statement is that Job believes the "upright" would have to convince God of Job's righteousness, as if God is unrighteous and unable to know that for himself. This again implies that God is flawed in his judgement of Job. But we the reader know that it is Satan who has judged Job not God. Job then continues in chapter 24,

*"12 From the city men groan, And the souls of the wounded cry out; Yet God does not pay attention to folly." (Job 24:12)*

*"21 He [God] wrongs the barren woman, and does no good for the widow. 22 But He drags off the valiant by His power; He rises, but no one has assurance of life. 23 He provides them with security, and they are supported; and his eyes are on their ways. 24 They are exalted a little while, then they are gone; Moreover, they are brought low and like everything gathered up; Even like heads of grain they are cut off. 25 Now if it is not so, who can prove me a liar, and make my speech worthless?" (Job 24:21-25)*

Job becomes more brazen by the end of his discourse which culminates in chapter 24. Job has now fully accused God of wronging barren women and not doing good for the widow. Job has fully accused God of being unrighteous in order to prove his own righteousness. Rather than thinking outside the parameters of his worldview and considering that his suffering has another purpose, Job's worldview has corralled him into believing either he himself is righteous or God is righteous but it cannot be both. Job ultimately has prioritized his own righteousness above God's.

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### **That's your opinion, can you back it up?**

To add further evidence, we will consider the words of two additional witnesses (Deut 19:15) who corroborate my view on Job's sin. These witnesses are Elihu and God.

Both Elihu and God rebuke Job and Job's friends for their untrue statements. Elihu however, is the only one who is not rebuked by God when the Lord makes his appearance from chapters 38-42, which means we can trust Elihu's words. We'll explore Elihu's words first and then we'll look at how God responds.

Elihu begins addressing Job and his friends in chapter 32 and ends in chapter 37. Chapter 32 begins in verse 1 telling the reader

*"1 Then these three men [Eliphaz, Bildad, & Zophar] ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes." (Job 32:1)*

Notice how the writer points out that Job was "...righteous in his own eyes." Since we do not know who wrote the book of Job (2), and we can only speculate who the writer might be, we will not consider the writer an additional witness. However, from the writer's words, Job's attitude of being "...righteous in his own eyes..." is viewed as negative not positive.

The writer continues and gives us insight into Elihu's perception of Job and his three friends.

*"2 But the anger of Elihu burned; against Job his anger burned because he justified himself before God. 3 And his anger burned against his three friends because they had found no answer, and yet they condemned Job." (Job 32:2-3)*

Elihu then begins his assessment of Job,

*"8 Surely you have spoken in my hearing, And I have heard the sound of your words: 9 'I [Job] am pure, without transgression; I am innocent and there is no guilt in me. 10 'Behold, He [God] invents pretexts against me; He counts me as His enemy. 11 'He puts my feet in the stocks; He watches all my paths.' 12 "Behold, let me tell you, you [Job] are not right in this, For God is greater than man." (Job 33:8-12)*

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Here Elihu is stating that Job has claimed that God "...invents pretexts..." against him. Elihu says this is "...not right..." and he is accurate in saying so. If truly God has judged Job and found him guilty, and this goes for all of us, then we must humble ourselves and assume that God has found reason to judge us which we might not even be aware. Again, we know that God has not judged Job at all, but what Elihu is doing is pointing to Job's flawed logic, If God renders a judgement, it cannot be undone, and it cannot be unrighteous because God is righteousness. Job must rethink his logic. Either Job has sinned but is not aware of his sin, or God is not judging Job and the suffering has some other purpose. Either way, God cannot do anything unrighteously.

We can contrast Job's response with king David's response when Shimei began cursing David in 2 Samuel.

*5 As King David approached Bahurim, a man from the same clan as Saul's family came out from there. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and he cursed as he came out. 6 He pelted David and all the king's officials with stones, though all the troops and the special guard were on David's right and left. 7 As he cursed, Shimei said, "Get out, get out, you murderer, you scoundrel! 8 The Lord has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. The Lord has given the kingdom into the hands of your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a murderer!"*

*9 Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head."*

*10 But the king said, "What does this have to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the Lord said to him, 'Curse David,' who can ask, 'Why do you do this?'"*

*11 David then said to Abishai and all his officials, "My son, my own flesh and blood, is trying to kill me. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the Lord has told him to. 12 It may be that the Lord will look upon my misery and restore to me his covenant blessing instead of his curse today." (2 Samuel 16:5-12)*

David accepts that perhaps God has appointed Shimei to curse him, we know that this is not the case and God does in fact restore David to his throne, but we can see David's humility in his response to Shimei. Rather than fighting for his righteousness, David humbles himself and allows the cursing to go on without reacting. Job however, reacts negatively to his friends and

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condemns God to preserve his own righteousness. Ironically in trying to preserve it he loses it. Just as Jesus said, "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matt 16:25). Elihu calls Job out in the following way, "Why do you complain against Him [God] That He does not give an account of all His doings?" (Job 33:13)

Elihu then gives a beautiful discourse in God's defense.

*"14 Indeed God speaks once, or twice, yet no one notices it. 15 In a dream, a vision of the night, When sound sleep falls on men, While they slumber in their beds, 16 Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction, 17 That He may turn man aside from his conduct, And keep man from pride; 18 He keeps back his soul from the pit, And his life from passing over into Sheol...29 Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men, 30 To bring back his soul from the pit, That he may be enlightened with the light of life." (Job 33:14-18 & 29-30)*

*"5 For Job has said, 'I am righteous, but God has taken away my right'...10 Therefore, listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do wickedness, And from the Almighty to do wrong. 11 "For He pays a man according to his work, And makes him find it according to his way. 12 "Surely, God will not act wickedly, And the Almighty will not pervert justice. 13 "Who gave Him authority over the earth? And who has laid on Him the whole world? 14 "If He should determine to do so, If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath, 15 All flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust...17 "Shall one who hates justice rule? And will you condemn the righteous mighty One, 18 Who says to a king, 'Worthless one,' nobles, 'Wicked ones'; 19 Who shows no partiality to princes Nor regards the rich above the poor, For they all are the work of His hands? (Job 34:5, 10-15 & 17-19)*

*"33 Shall He recompense on your terms, because you have rejected it?... 35 'Job speaks without knowledge, And his words are without wisdom. 36 'Job ought to be tried to the limit, Because he answers like wicked men. 37 'For he adds rebellion to his sin; He claps his hands among us, And multiplies his words against God.'" (Job 34:33 & 35-37)*

*" 2 Do you think this is according to justice? Do you say, 'My righteousness is more than God's'?... 15 "And now, because He has not visited in His anger, Nor has He acknowledged transgression well, 16 So*

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*Job opens his mouth emptily; He multiplies words without knowledge.”  
(Job 35:2 & 15-16)*

*“5 Behold, God is mighty but does not despise any; He is mighty in strength of understanding. 6 “He does not keep the wicked alive, But gives justice to the afflicted. 7 “He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; But with kings on the throne He has seated them forever, and they are exalted.” (Job 36:5-7)*

*“17 But you were full of judgment on the wicked; Judgment and justice take hold of you. 18 “Beware that wrath does not entice you to scoffing...21 “Be careful, do not turn to evil, For you have preferred this to affliction. (Job 36:17-18 & 21)*

Elihu's stance is very clear in his rebuke of Job. According to Elihu Job has "...add[ed] rebellion to his sin..." (Job 34:37) and he has "...preferred [evil] to affliction." (Job 36:21). Furthermore, we see an incredible description of God's character here and true words of wisdom from His spirit speaking through Elihu. Like the statements quoted specifically from Job 36:5-7 and Job 34. God does not despise any, he is completely impartial, and no one put him in charge or told him to create our universe, yet he gave his breath to us all.

Elihu also has a complete opposite motivation in his rebuke of Job compared with Job's three friends. Where Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar condemned Job despite finding no evidence to do so (Job 32:2), Elihu wished to "...justify..." Job (Job 33:32), and he goes so far as to rebuke Job and his friends for being "...full of judgement on the wicked..." (Job 36:17). This is an important juxtaposition of God's and Elihu's stance in contrast to Job and his friends. Where Job and his friends spoke cavalier about the wicked deserving of wrath, God wishes to save the wicked from the pit – that means all of us – and Elihu desires to justify and encourage Job while correcting his false worldview which ought to be our position as well. Elihu has become a type and shadow of Jesus correcting Job in hopes to preserve him. Job's friends however, desire to condemn Job through the lens of their confused worldview and Job agrees with their perspective only until the worldview turned back upon himself.

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### How does God feel about all this?

God's stance echoes Elihu's which is why Elihu was not included in God's rebuke. God begins by rebuking Job's words, *"Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38:2)*. He then cuts to the heart of Job's worldview,

*"Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it...Will you really annul My judgement? Will you condemn Me*

*that you may be justified?" (Job 40:2 & 8).*

Just as Elihu challenged Job's logic, God does the same. Here God calls Job the "...faultfinder..." and asks if Job will really annul God's judgement. God knows he has not judged Job, but God is challenging Job's position by pointing out that since Job believes God has judged him, Job must circumvent God's judgement by ultimately condemning God.

We focus on Job's suffering, and rightly so, but we overlook God's suffering within this arrangement. Remember God's response to Satan in chapter two,

*"...he [Job] still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me [God] against him, to ruin him without cause." (Job 2:3)*

God was incited by Satan to allow Satan to ruin Job without cause and naturally this would make God appear at enmity with Job. Job then condemns God because Job associates these evil acts that came upon him as an unrighteous judgement rendered by God. Just as Job's friends condemned Job despite finding no evidence, Job passed the condemnation along and condemned God despite having no evidence. This reflects Adam's sin when he blames God for giving him Eve after they ate of the fruit commanded not to in Genesis 3:12. No one faults Job for thinking this way, I know I would not last half as long as Job through this kind of suffering. But I'm not reading Job to know how I would react. I'm dissecting Job's words to know the truth and whether or not he sinned. It's plain here that according to God's rebuke, Job sinned.

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### But what about God's comment at the end of chapter 42?

In chapter 42 God makes the following statement,

*"...the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has." (Job 42:7)*

God makes this comment because of the way Job responded to God's rebuke. The mistake is to think that God is commenting on Job's words and calling every word that Job spoke in the book of Job good. But we know that this is not true as I showcased several verses where Job did not speak well of God. What God is actually speaking to is Job's immediate reaction after God rebukes him.

### What about Job?



So then, what was Job's reaction to God's rebuke that led God to commend Job and what is Job's opinion about his own words?

*2 "Then Job answered the Lord and said, I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. 3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have declared that which I did not*

*understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." 4 'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.' 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." (Job 42:2-6)*

Job acknowledged that he spoke that which he "...did not understand..." and that he "...retract[s]..." his words and then he proceeds to "...repent in dust and ashes." Also, notice in chapter 16 verse 15 Job states "I have sewed sackcloth over my skin...". Job was already wearing sackcloth and here in chapter 42 he is repenting in ashes and dust. Job clearly believes that he

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was wrong in what he spoke and not just simply mistaken; he truly believed he sinned in the things he said against God.



### Here's the "Good News"

Now to summarize what this means for us and the significance of recognizing and acknowledging Job's sin. As I said in the beginning of this write up, I am not attempting to undermine or minimize Job's righteous acts which he clearly had in abundance. My priority in all of this is to exalt and magnify God's righteousness through this entire book. I also stated at the beginning that God's intervention echoes that of the gospel. This is the very point I want to highlight and communicate to you the reader.

God is unchanging (Num 23:19). "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever." (Heb 13:8). This means his gospel message is also unchanging.

God knew full well how Satan would react when He inquired if Satan had considered his servant Job in chapters 1 & 2. If God knew how Satan would react, why let him do it in the first place? Why incite Satan knowing that Satan would incite God against Job in response?

The answer is simple; for Job to gain greater intimacy with God. Job's suffering came in layers, and with each layer Job's righteousness and integrity was tested. But Job was not tested capriciously or randomly. In my opinion, God had to expose Job's areas needing of sanctification systematically, and in order to expose those areas, Job first had to have his wealth and his body broken to reach where it was deeply rooted. Job was holding onto a specific outlook towards God and God's character that was untrue. Job however, was unaware that he had this false outlook. This understanding of God through the lens of the retribution principle prevented Job from going deeper in intimacy with his savior. Job's righteousness did not falter with the loss of wealth or family, or even the deterioration of his own body. Job's righteousness faltered when his own righteousness was brought into question. God's ultimate goal of inciting Satan against Job, was for Job to have his misunderstanding exposed and reframed. Job's response says it best, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You..." (Job 42:5)

This is the cumulative goal of the gospel; to obtain salvation and intimacy with our God and savior Jesus Christ. Just as John the Baptist faltered in Matthew 11:3, Job faltered so that "...[God] may show mercy to all." (Rom 11:32). It is not only for Job's sanctification that his suffering came, but so that Job would be pushed to the edge of himself and that God might

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show him grace. John the Baptist speaks well when he said "...[Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30).

Now here is the really cool part about all this. God showed Job grace because Job repented. But look at what happened to Job's friends because they did not respond as Job did.

*"...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." (Job 42:7-9)*

Job's friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar did not respond to God even though God appeared before them all by whirlwind in Job 38:1. None of them repented in sackcloth, dust, and ashes except Job. None of them spoke anything in response. Just as with the ten lepers where only one returned to glorify God after Jesus healed them in Luke 17:11-19, out of the four people rebuked by God, only Job responded well. The result is Job was covered by grace, and needed no sacrifice be made on his behalf. But Job's friends required a sacrifice and to have Job intercede for them. This reflects the words of Paul in Gal 4:21-31. Job was a son of the free woman and therefore he was covered by grace. But Job's friends responded poorly and fell under the law which requires sacrifice. Just as Elihu, a gentile I might add, was a type and shadow of Jesus interceding for Job. Job became a type and shadow of Jesus for his friends. And God accepted his friends not because of their righteousness but because of Job's righteousness. Likewise, we are accepted by God not because of our righteousness but because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

"...Let God be true though everyone were a liar, as it is written, "That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged." (Rom 3:4)

This is a huge lesson for us all. Job faltered under great suffering and faced rebuke for complaining against God but was shown mercy. Jesus however, never complained though his suffering was even greater, but humanity, his own creation, showed Jesus no mercy. Yet despite his great suffering, He became the King of grace and mercy for us all. We do not deserve Him.

## JOB'S SIN, GOD'S GRACE

And look at how good God really is through this whole ordeal. God willingly allows Satan to enter his presence. He willingly underwent misrepresentation from Job. He willingly appeared before Job and allowed Job to speak with Him, at Job's repeated request. God then covered Job under mercy and allowed Job to know Him in greater intimacy. Furthermore,

*"Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book!  
24 "That with an iron stylus and lead They were engraved in the rock  
forever!" (Job 19:23-24)*

God answered Job's cry that his words would be written down forever.

We serve an incredible, loving God, who not only sent his own son to sacrifice himself for us; a gift we never asked or searched for. But then he also gives us the desires of our hearts. The question is, what do you desire? Do you desire greater intimacy with him? Or, do you desire things that draw you away from Him?

I pray for all those who read; Jesus, may we all desire to know you and have greater intimacy with you, amen.

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