

#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?” (Prov 31:10–31)

* capable, strong, noble character (NIV)

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*”).

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: “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 Misérables* 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

5. Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, begins on the 1st day of the 7th 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 righteous are immediately inscribed in the book of life. The 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 [10th day]. If they deserve well, they are inscribed in the book of life, if they do not, they are inscribed in the book of death.” (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)

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

¹ 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.

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

God puts Job on Trial

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

⁸ 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?

Ancient Jewish Targum of Job: “And it happened on the day of judgment at the beginning of the year, ...” (PGT #2)

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

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

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)

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

Job enters teletial world with nothing (death, opposition)

¹³ 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.] ²⁰ Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, ²¹ 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. ²² In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

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

¹ Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came. ... ³ 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. ⁴ And Satan ... said, ... ⁵ Touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. ⁶ 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)

⁷ So went Satan ... and smote Job with sore boils from ... his foot unto his crown. ⁸ And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself ... and he sat down among the ashes. ⁹ Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. ¹⁰ 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)

¹¹ When Job's three friends heard of all this evil ..., they came ... to mourn with him and to comfort him. ¹² And when they ... [saw him] and knew him not, they ... wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads. ... ¹³ 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.

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

¹ Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. He said:...

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

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

²⁵ What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.

²⁶ I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil."

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

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.*

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

14. Job's defense against accusations of his friends

Job wishes for a mediator (NIV Job 9)

² But how can a mortal be righteous before God? ...

²² It is all the same; that is why I say,

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

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

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

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

³⁵ 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)

³ But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God.

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

¹² Your maxims are proverbs of ashes; your defenses are defenses of clay. ...

¹⁵ Though he slay me, yet will I hope [KJV trust] in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face. ...

¹⁸ Now that I have prepared my case,

I know I will be vindicated. ...

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

²¹ Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors.

²³ Then summon me and I will answer,

or let me speak, and you reply.

²⁴ How many wrongs and sins have I committed?

Show me my offense and my sin.

²⁵ 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)

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

¹⁹ Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high.

²⁰ My intercessor is my friend

as my eyes pour out tears to God;

²¹ on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend.

Job trusts in his redeemer (NIV Job 19)

¹ "How long will you torment me and crush me with words? ...

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

¹¹ His anger burns against me;

he counts me among his enemies. ...

¹⁹ All my intimate friends detest me;

those I love have turned against me. ...

²⁵ I know that my Redeemer lives,

and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

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

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

² If only I knew where to find him;

if only I could go to his dwelling!

³ I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments.

⁴ I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say.

⁵ Would he oppose me with great power?

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

⁷ 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)

^{27:2} “As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice, ...

³ as long as I have life within me, ...

⁶ I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it

^{31:5} “If I have walked in falsehood

or my foot has hurried after deceit--

⁶ 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.]

16. God's Defense (Job 38–40)

Then the LORD answered Job

out of the whirlwind, and said,

² Who is this that darkeneth counsel
by words without knowledge?

³ Gird up now thy loins like a man;

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

⁴ Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? ...

⁷ while the morning stars sang together

and all the sons of God shouted for joy? ...

Nibley: We all know [this] challenge. ... 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. (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)

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

¹ The Lord said to Job:

² “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!”

³ Then Job answered the Lord:

⁴ “I am unworthy—how can I reply to you?

I put my hand over my mouth.

⁵ I spoke once, but I have no answer—
twice, but I will say no more.”

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

⁶ Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm [KJV whirlwind]:

⁷ “Brace yourself like a man;

I will question you, and you shall answer me.

⁸ “Would you discredit my justice?

Would you condemn me to justify yourself? ...

^{41:1} “Can you pull in the leviathan with a fishhook
or tie down his tongue with a rope?

19. Job's second response to God (NIV Job 42)

² “I know that you can do all things;

no plan of yours can be thwarted. ...

³ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,

things too wonderful for me to know. ...

⁴ My ears had heard of you

but now my eyes have seen you.

⁶ 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. Epilogue: God's judgment (Job 42)

⁷ 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*. ⁸ 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. ¹¹ 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. ... ¹⁶ After this lived Job [140] years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even* four generations.

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 worshiped 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)

Nibley: The round dance of the creation drama takes the form of the prayer circle in the temple. ... The valuable apocryphal *Testament of Job* [brings it vividly to mind, and] ... lays special emphasis on temple ordinances. ... In the opening lines ..., Job tells his ... daughters and ... sons... “Make a circle around me, and I will demonstrate to you the things which the Lord expounded to me, for I am ... 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 ... 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 cherubim.” (ATD)

23. Jewish Mourning (WHY 67–68)

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. ... 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.”

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

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

³ 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. ⁴ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ... ⁹ He had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ 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 unfailing faith is characterized by such exclamations as, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). (GTS: Job, The book of Job)

The book of Job makes several points: (see Tanner)

- a. Suffering is not necessarily a sign of punishment. ...
- b. 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.
- c. Neither prosperity nor suffering can be easily interpreted. It may be that *suffering* is the blessing and *prosperity* the trial.
- d. Individuals often live out personal tragedies quite apart from the general prosperity and happiness of the larger community.

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)