

Book Of Job

'There was a man in the land of Utz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and righteous. He revered God and shunned all evil ... this man was the greatest of all the men of the East' (Job 1:1 & 3).

There is an incredible amount of information written within the Book of Job. The whole book is too long to write every verse in full, so we will give scripture references and leave the detailed study to you. The first thing we need to know about Job is that he was righteous, blameless and always shunned evil. During the time of his intense suffering, although he challenged the Lord with strong words, he remained righteous throughout. The Lord insisted Job was righteous many times throughout the book, so regardless of what his three friends said, Job stood his ground and claimed his innocence and his blamelessness. God told the devil that Job was a blameless and upright man (Job 2:3). Job was a righteous man who prayed for, and sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord on behalf of his adult children (Job 1:5), and later, on behalf of his three 'friends' who were actually little more than tormentors (Job 42:8 & 9). That was the task of a family patriarch. Job knew the Lord intimately, and the Lord referred to Job by name several times throughout the Bible. In Hebrew, Job's name is pronounced 'Iyov'.

Where did Job live? He lived in Canaan (now Israel) in an area called Utz (now called Oz), which was an area near Gaza named after Noah's great grandson Utz (Genesis 10:23). It must have been a large area at that time in history, because it had at least three kings or governors and was listed as a place where foreigners lived. 'All the mixed foreign peoples; all the kings in the land of Utz ...' (Jeremiah 25:20).

When did Job live? Approximately 4,000 BC. The exact year Job lived is unclear, but by studying verses within the book, we can discover the approximate time frame. If we study the names of Job's contemporaries, we can deduct Job lived around the time of Jacob and Esau, and Job's longevity is typical of people who lived in Canaan at that time. If we take a look at the names of Job's three friends; Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, we can work out the time in which Job lived. Eliphaz was the eldest son of Esau and his Hittite wife Adah. Eliphaz later became a chief or governor of an area called Teman (hence the name Eliphaz the Temanite) and they lived in the land of Edom, named after Esau (Genesis 36:2, 4, 15, 16 & 19). Bildad the Shuhite came from the area called Shuah which was in Canaan. Jacob's son Judah married a Shuhite woman (Genesis 38:2 & 12). Zophar the Naamathite also lived during the same time. Jacob's son Benjamin had a son named Naaman (Genesis 46:21), who later became the patriarch of the family of the Naamites or Naamathites (Numbers 26:40). Further to this, there was a man named Iob (in Hebrew Iyov – the same as Job) who lived at the same time, and was the son of Issachar, another of Jacob's sons (Genesis 46:13). Although Job lived at the time of Jacob, there is no record of Job moving to Egypt with the rest of the Israelites. Neither is there mention of any of Esau's family, (namingly Eliphaz) or any of Job's friends or immediate family travelling to Egypt.

Who wrote the Book of Job? The author is unnamed, but Job wanted his words written down; 'Oh, that the words I now speak were written! Oh, that they were written in a book' (Job 19:23). Someone heard those words and wrote them down! The Book of Job was probably written as a biography by somebody who was there with Job throughout his time of suffering. Initially, his wife was less than impressed by Job's righteousness and mocked him, causing him to rebuke her. Mrs Job said, "Do you still hold fast your blameless uprightness? Renounce God and die!" But Job said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Should we accept only the good at the hand of God and shall we not accept the bad?" In all of this, Job did not sin with his lips (Job 2:9 & 10). We cannot judge Mrs Job too harshly for her words. We need to remember Job's ten deceased children were her's too. She could have been close friends with the servants who died, and she may have helped raise the livestock killed in those events. Mrs Job was shocked and grieving, and when people are grieving, sometimes they say things they normally would never think of. It wasn't just Job who was affected by all this suffering and multiple deaths, his whole family was deeply affected. The author of Job's book would have been someone who knew all this; someone who knew the intimate details of Job's suffering; someone who was there to witness Job's conversations with the Lord and with his wife; someone who knew Job's illness turned his wife's stomach and she couldn't bear to be near him because his breath smelled (Job 19:17); someone who knew Job was prepared to let his beloved wife go so she could marry another man, rather than hold onto her and keep her with him in the state he was in (Job 31:10); someone who knew and understood Job was upset because his genitals had been defiled by the ashes and dust on which he sat (Job 16:15). Those are very intimate details. Who gets close enough to a man to be able to smell his breath? Who would be able to listen in to an intimate conversation between a sick husband and his grieving wife about the intimate parts of his body? The only person who was there the whole time and went through the trauma with Job was his wife, who outlived him. She was probably the

person who either wrote the book as it happened, or dictated the intimate details to one of her children who was born after all the suffering was over. If we look carefully, we see the author was very defensive of Job's good character as a loyal wife would be. 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly' (Job 1:22); 'Job did not sin with his lips' (Job 2:10). Those words, 'with his lips' are very intimate and not likely to be written by a man. Two other verses that show Mrs Job may have written the book is right at the end, when the names of Job's three daughters are written, but not his sons, and the verse says they were the most beautiful girls in all the land and their father gave them their inheritance along with their brothers (Job 42:14 & 15). Who but a mother would write these things about her daughters? There was nobody else close to Job who could have written these things down; all their children and most of their servants were dead. The servants who were still alive plus Job's own siblings and friends were so repulsed by Job's illness they avoided him. However, it does not matter who wrote the book or when it was written because all scripture is inspired by God and all scripture is timeless.

The Book of Job was probably the first book of the Bible that was written. There are many verses written in the Book of Job that are quoted in other books of the Bible. Here are a few examples: 'He wounds and He heals' (Job 5:18; Deuteronomy 32:39). 'What is man that You should magnify him and that You should set Your mind upon him?' (Job 7:17; Psalm 8:4). 'Blessed is the man whom God reproveth. Do not despise the chastening of the Lord' (Job 5:17; Psalm 94:12; Proverbs 3:11). Even the Egyptian Pharaoh quoted loosely from the Book of Job; 'Who is God that I should obey His voice?' (Exodus 5:2) ... 'Who is God that we should serve Him?' (Job 21:15). Jesus quoted the words of Job; 'You have not given water to the weary to drink and you have withheld bread from the hungry' (Job 22:7; Matthew 25:42). 'Receive the Law and instruction from His mouth and lay up His words in your heart' (Job 22:22), then King David responds with, 'Your Word I have laid up in my heart' (Psalm 119:11). Moses was born about 400 years after Job, and it was Moses who wrote the first five books of the Bible and gave us the history of creation by divine inspiration. When Moses and King David were alive, they appeared to have had Job's book to refer to, proving the antiquity of it.

Job had ten adult children who were obviously very close and went to each other's houses to celebrate their birthdays for days at a time (Job 1:2, 4, 5, 13, 18 & 19). After they died, Job missed them like any normal loving father would (Job 29:5). Job was very wealthy and owned 11,000 farm animals and had hundreds of servants (Job 1:3). At the start of Job's tragedies, all his oxen and donkeys were stolen, and some of his servants were murdered by the neighbouring tribe of Sabeans. Only one servant escaped the massacre and was able to tell Job (Job 1:14 & 15). The Sabeans were a tall, strong tribe of people; men 'of stature' (Isaiah 45:14). Then lightning struck Job's sheep, some of the shepherds and killed them all except for one man who was able to tell Job (Job 1:16). After that, another neighbouring tribe called the Chaldeans split up into three groups, stole all Job's camels and killed more of Job's servants, and again one servant escaped the massacre and told Job (Job 1:17). Then a wind (tornado or whirlwind) came in from the desert, lifted the roof, and destroyed his son's house that collapsed around them, killing all Job's ten children instantly. One servant survived and ran to tell Job (Job 1:18 & 19). This all happened in one day. After hearing all this shocking news, Job fell on the ground, worshipped God and said, "Naked I came into the world from my mother's womb, and naked will I depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this, Job did not sin nor did he accuse God foolishly (Job 1:21 & 22). Some time later, Job suffered a bout of painful boils all over his body. The affliction was so bad Job was unrecognisable (Job 2:12). Job's unnamed friends, surviving servants, his brothers and sisters were all repulsed by his illness and ignored him when he spoke (Job 19:14 to 19) but they visited him after his calamity was over and gave him money and gold (Job 42:11). When he broke out in boils, Job had no choice but leave the house and sit outside the town on the rubbish tip where the rubbish was burned. Job sat on the ashes and scraped his boils with pieces of broken pottery (Job 2:7 & 8).

There are deep spiritual lessons we can learn from the Book of Job. As much as we dislike talking about the devil, there is some information about him that could help people understand more about the limits placed on the devil. The Book of Job reveals the devil can go into heaven, into the presence of God (Job 1:12; 2:7), he can appear amongst the angels and can speak to God. The angels were obviously used to this happening because they were not in the least afraid or perturbed by it (Job 1:6; 2:1). That scenario happened again in the days of Israel and Judah (1 Kings 22:19 to 23; 2 Chronicles 18:18 to 22). The devil walks around the earth (Job 1:7; 2:2) like a roaring lion, solely to cause trouble (1 Peter 5:8). We can see by those scriptures the devil is limited to walking; he does not fly. He masquerades as an angel of light, or pretends to be from God when he's not (2 Corinthians 11:14). The devil virtually mocked Job and accused him, as he accuses us to God day and night (Revelation 12:10). When the devil accuses us, that is the same as attacking the character of God, because we are the children of God. We have the power to completely overcome the devil by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony (Revelation 12:11). Only committed believers can

overcome the devil. Jesus has given us power over all the power the devil did have (Matthew 10:1; Luke 10:17 to 19), making the born-again, Holy Spirit filled, committed believer more powerful than the devil, but only if we submit ourselves to God, and then we will have the authority to resist the devil and he must flee from us (James 4:7). In regards to God's people, the devil can only go as far as God permits (Job 1:12; 2:6). The devil has to ask permission before he can touch anybody, and that permission was given in Job's case, but it was denied with the disciples (Luke 22:31 & 32). The only power the devil has, is the limited amount permitted by God.

The devil gave the boils to Job (Job 2:7) so he has a form of power but he could go no further than God permitted. Since we know the devil has power to inflict sickness, and we know that if we submit to God and the devil has to flee, then it is logical, that if we know someone who has an illness from the devil, we have the authority in Jesus to order that sickness to go. Obviously not all sicknesses are demonic, but some sicknesses are. If we deal with the demonic aspect of a sickness there can be immediate healing. When Jesus rebuked demonic sicknesses, the people were totally and instantly healed in their bodies and their minds (Matthew 8:16; Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35). The devil had the power to stir up the Sabeans and the Chaldeans to steal all of Job's flocks and kill his servants (Job 1:15 & 17). He stirred up King David to disobey God and count the war-age male population of Israel (1 Chronicles 21:1). He in some way, hindered Paul from going to the Thessalonian church, but exactly how he did that, is not written (1 Thessalonians 2:18). The devil stirred up Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3). He made Judas betray Jesus (John 13:27). He has power with signs and lying wonders, with deception of wickedness for those who are lost (2 Thessalonians 2:9 & 10) but we notice the lying wonders were directed to the people who deliberately reject the truth. The devil has a measure of power over nature, causing lightning and strong wind (Job 1:16 & 19). It is possible the devil was the cause of the storm Jesus rebuked and that was within his power (Matthew 8:26; Mark 4:39; Luke 8:24). We notice Jesus rebuked the storm in the same way He rebuked the devil. The storm that caused Paul to be shipwrecked could have been demonic (Acts 27:10 to 44).

All believers suffer from time to time, but if we look at the pattern outlined in this Bible study, the ones who are the most righteous seem to suffer more intensely and for longer periods. Before all those tragedies happened to Job, we notice God pointed Job out to the devil almost like a trophy (Job 1:8; 2:3). God appeared to be proud of Job like a father is proud of a well behaved son. That was when the devil seemed to become jealous and provoked God to give Job to him to torment (Job 1:9 to 11; 2:4 & 5). Noah was a very righteous man, yet he suffered through the flood and the effects afterwards (Genesis 6:8 & 9). Daniel was told by the Lord several times he was a specially beloved man, yet he ended up in a lion's den (Daniel 6:16; 9:23; 10:11; 10:19). These three men were mentioned by the Lord Himself as being especially righteous. "When a land sins against Me and I stretch out My hand against it ... even if Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they would save their own lives by their righteousness", says the Lord God ... "They would not deliver their children, but they alone would be delivered ... Though Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, as I live, they would not deliver their children, but they would deliver their own lives by their righteousness" (Ezekiel 14:13 to 20). Moses suffered so much stress because of the burden of the children of Israel, he actually asked God to kill him to relieve him of the burden (Numbers 11:14 & 15); yet Moses was the only man who was able to speak to God face to face like they were friends (Exodus 33:11). Three righteous Jewish youths, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah aka Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego all ended up in a furnace because they stood up for righteousness. The Lord Himself stood with them in the furnace (Daniel 1:7; 3:11 to 30). In the New Testament, there is mention of people who were hunted down, slaughtered, forced to wear animal skins, forced to live in desolate places in the mountains and caves, yet these people had divine approval and they were considered by God to be too good to be on this earth (Hebrews 11:37 to 39). Paul the Apostle suffered so much he cried to the Lord three times to take the suffering or the 'thorn' away, but God refused (2 Corinthians 12:7 to 9). Jesus suffered terribly, yet we know He had an extremely close and loving relationship with God the Father, and several times in the New Testament, God spoke from heaven reaffirming His love for Jesus (Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35; 2 Peter 1:17 & 18). We can learn from this, suffering or misfortune is not a sign of God's displeasure, but actually proof of a special divine love; a compliment to one's righteousness. That puts a whole new and different perspective on suffering we need to keep hold of.

When we criticise or assume the suffering of another person is a result of sin, the Lord considers that attitude to be sin. If we know we have done nothing wrong, then we can stand against anybody who says we have (Job 27:3 to 13). 'After the Lord had spoken to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz, "My wrath is kindled against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, like My servant Job has ... My servant Job shall pray for you for I will accept his prayer so that I will not deal with you after your folly, in that you have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job has"' (Job 42:7 & 8). When the Lord told

the three men to offer up burnt offerings for themselves, they had to provide the animals because Job had none left (Job 42:7 to 9). Job said a lot of negative things about God. He also said a lot of negative things to God face to face. Most religious people would regard the things Job said to be awful, yet here was a man of whom God said was of outstanding righteousness.

The three friends of Job, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar came to comfort him, but when they first saw the state he was in, they were so shocked they wept for him, tore their clothes, threw dust over their heads and for seven days, nobody said anything because they could see the grief and the pain he was suffering and he was unrecognisable (Job 2:11 to 13). He was so thin his flesh had wasted away and his bones stuck out (Job 19:20; 33:21). After a full week Job spoke first and the first thing he did was curse the day he was born; he wanted to know why he was not stillborn; he wanted to know why his mother had not miscarried or that he had died in-utero; he desired rest; he spoke of feeling miserable; he said what he had feared had come upon him and finally he said he had no ease from suffering (Job 3:1 to 26), yet God did not consider any of these comments foolish or evil.

Job's three friends said things that were unacceptable to God. They made negative, critical and false accusations directed at Job. Eliphaz launched into a tirade of false accusations that came from an evil spirit, and Eliphaz heard a 'voice' (Job 4:12 to 21). Bildad was also speaking from the influence of an evil spirit. 'To whom have you uttered words? And whose spirit came forth from you?' (Job 26:4). Job was asking, "Who or what have you been talking to?" The devil ridicules any claim for people to be right with God. The theme of the whole book of Romans is righteousness. Romans and Revelation tells us mankind can be right with God through the blood of Jesus (Revelation 1:5). The evil spirit that influenced Eliphaz and Bildad was probably a religious spirit. A religious spirit tries to wear down other people and that is exactly what Job's friends did to him. A religious spirit in an unsaved person will try to use religion and will quote scripture to make believers feel guilty. They often use all the right language but behind it is a negative thing that causes no end of trouble. Notice that Eliphaz actually quoted scripture while he was accusing Job of sin, which is exactly what the devil did to Jesus.

The three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, said Job had sinned and had brought the problems upon himself. They made false accusations and they lied to Job, but they mingled their lies with snippets of truth. The three friends took turns to verbally attack the poor man. They blamed Job for his own sickness which brings with it a sense of guilt. They said he lacked faith, had secret sin, lacked wisdom, prayed incorrectly, was tested by God and failed. They criticised him, rebuked him, blamed him, accused him and wore him down (Job 5:1 to 27; 8:1 to 22; 11:1 to 20; 15:1 to 35; 18:1 to 21; 20:1 to 29; 22:1 to 30; 25:1 to 6). Bildad even wrongly accused Job's righteous ten children of sin that caused God to kill them (Job 8:4). Job said they were speaking lies (Job 21:34). Job told his friends they had been deceitful and had failed him (Job 6:15). Job said he had heard many (negative, wearisome and miserable) things (Job 16:2 to 6) and inferred that his 'friends' were making his suffering worse. With 'friends' like them, Job did not need any enemies! Once the three men finished speaking to Job, a humble young man named Elihu gave his opinion of the situation. He was annoyed at the three 'friends' of Job because they were not able to find a correct answer to the question of Job's suffering, and because they blamed Job for his suffering. Elihu was also annoyed with Job for being a little self-righteous (Job 32:1 to 4). Elihu probably said more than the other three men, but never accused Job once and later, the Lord did not find the young man Elihu, guilty of any wrongdoing.

It is a terribly sad fact, that most Christian's today act in exactly the same way as Job's three 'friends' did. They will accuse the sufferer of not having enough faith. Or they will jump to the conclusion that the sufferer has a secret sin tucked away somewhere, just like Job's friends did. They will accuse the sufferer of lacking wisdom, being disobedient, holding unforgiveness, having failed, praying incorrectly and all manner of wrong statements, often quoting scripture to back up their accusations. There are books written on that subject, it is preached from the pulpit, but the sad fact is, Job's 'friends' said the same things and what they said was offensive to God. After the three men stopped speaking to Job, God accused them of speaking foolishly. Think on this: are you a person who assumes that someone who is suffering is in that position because they have sinned, or they have brought the trouble upon themselves and they somehow deserve the problems? If you think that, then you are an accuser of the brethren and you are doing the devil's work because he is the accuser of the brethren. It would be better to stop accusing God's people; to stop jumping to wrong conclusions; to stop assuming they are in the wrong; to stop loading the innocent up with condemnation and stop doing the work of the devil. Remember it was an evil spirit that influenced those three men, and if you are doing the same thing, then you are speaking the words of an evil spirit and it is not from God. Think about what you say before you speak, and ask yourself from what spirit are you speaking before you open your mouth. Jesus called accusers hypocrites, and said take the beam out of your own eye before trying to

remove the speck in your brother's eye (Matthew 7:5; Luke 6:42). Most certainly God deals with sin, but we have all sinned so God deals with all of us in different ways. As we said earlier; all believers suffer from time to time, but if we look at the pattern outlined in this Bible study, the ones who are the most righteous, seem to suffer more intensely and for longer periods. We must bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). Let the rebuke from God against Job's three 'friends' be a strong lesson. If the person you are accusing does not pray for you, then God just might deal with your folly (foolishness) (Job 42:8). We must not assume those who are suffering are doing so because of sin. They just might be a source of the Father's pride, which causes the devil to be jealous. We can look to those people for inspiration for our own walk with God, rather than try to cut them down. To look at it another way, if your life is easy, maybe you are not as righteous as you may think you are and maybe God does not have a lot to be proud of.

Now to Job's response to his suffering. Remember that God said Job did not once sin with his words. Job used some strong words against God; not exactly accusing Him, but Job certainly made his feelings known which is right. We are not without emotion and should not remain stoic. David poured out his feelings in the Psalms. It is appropriate to mourn. We can tell God how we feel. Christianity is not a mindless way of life; it is a constant challenge to intelligent thinking. Job said God had smitten him without cause, or without any reason (Job 9:17), and that was true. He said God had not treated him justly, something God agreed with. Job complained God used him for target practice. 'Why have you set me as Your target?' (Job 7:20). Job said there is no justice on earth (Job 9:24) and that is true. Job said God mocked the calamity of the innocent (Job 9:23). Job was distressed when young people mocked him (Job 30:1 to 10). Job's sufferings started in one day; his illness and misery lasted a few months (Job 7:3). He completely lost hope (Job 7:6) and he loathed his life (Job 7:16). Job viewed God as vindictive, indifferent and unconcerned and told God to leave him alone (Job 7:16 & 19; 9:13 to 21).

We need to realise God's ways are past our ability to understand, and so we cannot explain everything about Job's suffering. There are not many people who suffer to the extent Job did but some people do. His situation was very unusual. Job's suffering was considered to be 'captivity' or bondage; 'The Lord reversed the captivity of Job and restored his fortunes' (Job 42:10). To rebuild his wealth would have taken several years, and for Mrs Job to have ten more children would have logically taken more than ten years. Job started with 11,000 animals and ended up with 22,000. He started with ten children and ended up with ten more. The reason Job still had ten children was because although the first ten died, they were not lost eternally. They were righteous young people.

The Book of Job defends the absolute power, glory, perfection and might of God. He is the Almighty One and is in total control of everything. The Lord is worthy of our praise just because of Who He is. The devil tried to deny that (Job 1:9 to 11; 2:4 & 5) but Job proved him utterly wrong (Job 1:20 to 22; 2:10). That shows an amazing amount of confidence God had in Job. The Book of Job paves the way for the coming of Jesus as our Saviour, Redeemer and Mediator; 'God is gracious to mankind and says, "Deliver him from going down to the pit (of hell). I have found a Ransom" ... God has redeemed my life from going down to the pit and my life shall see the Light' (Job 33:24 & 28). Job longed for a mediator (Job 9:32 to 35; 16:21; 33:23) and was frustrated because he could not get into the presence of God. The difference between Job and us, is we have a Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). In the midst of all his suffering, Job had the most wonderful revelations about Jesus. Job said, "I know my Redeemer lives and He will stand upon the earth." (Job 19:25 to 27). We know Jesus came and stood on the earth and He lives. That could only have come to Job by divine revelation. Then Job continues and says, "We will see the Lord face to face." (Job 22:26; 33:26) Thousands of people saw Jesus face to face when He was on earth, and when we go to heaven, we will see Him face to face then too.

After Elihu's long discourse, the Lord spoke to Job and from the words of the Lord we learn the most wonderful and truly amazing things about creation. There are detailed descriptions of beasts called behemoth and leviathan, animals we now call dinosaurs. One had a tail the size of a cedar tree and the description of it is unlike any other animal on earth except a dinosaur (Job 40:15 to 41:34). There are other things we can learn from studying this book. Most people are unaware God visits us every morning and everything we do is tested. There are so many revelatory verses hidden within the pages of the Book of Job, it is a 'must read' for everyone. There are some things written that are really amazing. The Book of Job is packed full of scientific statements. These are things the scientific world has only discovered within the last hundred years or so. There are also some profound statements that are food for thought.

Here are just a few examples; 'The ear tries words like the palate tastes food' ... 'Can tasteless food be eaten without salt? Is there any flavour in egg-white?' ... 'You have curdled me like cheese' ... 'Who made

the constellations; the Great Bear, Orion, the Pleiades and the vast spaces of the universe?' ... 'God's wisdom is as high as the heights of heaven! What can you possibly do? His wisdom is deeper than hades! What can you possibly know? His wisdom is longer than the earth is round and broader than the sea. Who can hinder Him?' ... 'A stupid man will get wisdom only when a wild donkey's colt is born a man!' ... 'Man is born to trouble just as surely as flames fly upward' ... 'No doubt you are the only wise people in the world and wisdom will die with you!' ... 'A man's days are already determined and the number of his months is wholly in Your control, and he cannot pass the boundary of his allotted time' ... 'When He has tried me, I shall come forth as pure gold' ... 'What God wants to do, that is what He does' ... 'God does not give account for any of His actions' ... 'God spreads out the northern skies over emptiness and hangs the earth upon nothing' ... 'He holds the waters bound in His clouds and the cloud is not torn under them' ... 'He has placed a limit or horizon upon the waters at the boundary between light and darkness' ... 'These are just the outskirts of His power – the faintest whisper of His voice! Who can understand His power?' ... 'There is a mine for silver and a place where they refine gold; iron is taken out of the earth and copper is smelted from the stone ore; man searches for the ore buried deep in the darkness. The earth gives bread but underneath there is blasting like fire. Its stones are the bed of sapphires; it holds gold dust' ... 'Wisdom cannot be bought with gold nor silver. It cannot be valued in onyx, the beryl or the sapphire. Gold and glass cannot equal wisdom nor can it be exchanged for jewels or fine gold. Wisdom is above coral or crystal; above rubies or pearls or topaz. Where does wisdom come from? Only God knows' ... 'I am full of words, my chest is ready to burst. I must speak so I get relief' ... 'If God should withdraw His life-giving Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish and man would turn to dust' ... 'God is not partial to royalty nor does He regard the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of His hands' ... 'If we have sinned, how does that affect God?' ... 'Animals are told of a coming storm' ... 'God does marvellous things with His voice; great things we cannot comprehend. He says to the snow, "Fall on the earth." He speaks to the showers and to the downpour and mighty rains. Out of nowhere comes a whirlwind and cold from the winds. By the breath of God, ice (hail) is given and the breadth of the waters is frozen over. He loads thick cloud with water. Lightning is turned by His guidance' ... 'Who determined the measurements of the earth?' ... 'Morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy' ... 'God sets the boundaries for the sea, "Thus shall you come and no farther" ... 'Have you explored the springs in the sea?' ... 'Do you know where light dwells or where darkness abides?' ... 'Do you know the hidden treasures of the snow or the hail?' ... 'The ostrich can run faster than a horse' ... 'God can do all things and no purpose of His can be thwarted' ... 'I had heard of God by the hearing of my ears but now my spiritual eye sees Him'.

Job was not a young man when his suffering began. He was the father of ten adult children, so he would have been at least 40 years old. He lived for 140 years after his suffering and saw his second family of children and grandchildren down to the fourth generation (Job 42:16 & 17). We know the devil carried out the actions, but because God is in complete control over the whole universe, ultimately, it was the Lord Who took responsibility for everything that happened to Job (Job 42:11). What was God's purpose for causing all that suffering? 'You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the Lord's purpose and how He blessed Job in the end. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy' (James 5:11). 'The Lord turned the captivity of Job and restored his fortunes ... and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before ... And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning' (Job 42:10 & 12). If it were not for the suffering of Job, we may never have been given a book with so much information written in it. For thousands of years people thought the earth was flat, but this book tells us it is round and is suspended. Only recently we have learned every snowflake and every hailstone is different, but this book tells us about the treasures hidden in snow and hail. We have recently learned clouds are made up of stored water, and this book tells us that. We recently learned that there are springs of fresh water deep under the oceans, yet this book tells us that. How many of us thought mining was a recent science? Scientists have often wondered how birds, insects and animals know a storm or flood is coming and are at a loss to explain, but this book tells us. This book tells us how migratory birds know where to fly, how to navigate and where to nest. It also tells us how animals like turtles know where to return to lay their eggs, many years after they have hatched. Scientists have recently learned light is an entity that travels, it comes from somewhere, goes away somewhere and it overcomes darkness, and this book tells us exactly that. If modern scientists would only read the Bible, they would learn so much, very quickly and save millions of research dollars. Job had the right idea. He asserted his absolute, total and complete trust in God with the well-known phrase, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him' (Job 13:15).

Amen and God bless you.

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