

# JOB: LIFE'S BIGGEST QUESTIONS



James Travis

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*“If this blameless and upright man can still encounter trials and tribulations, maybe our relationship to God is not based on who we are, what we have, or what we have done?”*

# INTRODUCTION

The book of **Job** is the first book of poetry in the Bible and, so I read, is a masterpiece of Hebrew poetry and literature. Hebrew poetry is a little different in that ideas, not sounds, are woven together to tell a story. To learn more about Hebrew poetry, [read this](#).

**Job** tackles life's deepest and biggest questions and that is how we are going to work through the book – looking at the questions and what they mean for us.

A few quick-fire facts about the book of **Job**;

Both **Ezekiel 14.14** and **James 5.11** testify to Job although the authorship, date of writing, and place of writing are unknown.

Most scholars, so I read, would hold that Job is the oldest book of the Bible due to the style of language used (*some terms are simply unknown, thank goodness for context!*).

This puts it as being written somewhere around the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and we see a faith influenced by events as far back as the time of Noah.

The central problem is theological, not human. Less about **Job's** problems and more about how God is acting in the midst of them.

Despite this being old, old Hebrew poetry, there will still shine through the Gospel; the Good News of Jesus. The central problem is theological; how can God allow, permit, even promote these circumstances...The Good News of Jesus will still shine through with contrast, comparison, foreshadowing, and types.

**Job** was **blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil**, yet still encountered problems that would send most of us packing. If this blameless and upright man can still encounter trials and tribulations, maybe our relationship to God is not based on who we are, what we have, or what we have done?

God is so far above and beyond our ways and thoughts that everything we think is humanly 'normal' in relating to others is blown out of the water when we read **Job**. I read recently that the book of Job helps free us from believing in a "score-keeping" God. We are brought to see the God who is, who is all, and who is love.

On that alone, this is sure to be a great journey!

# WHO ARE WE?

This is the first big question that we encounter in **Job**.

*And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.*

## **Job 1.8-12**

The first big question is about our identity – who are we?

God gives a pretty good character reference for Job, doesn't He? Job is described as a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil. However, the Accuser, Satan, basically says 'OK, well, Job is only like that because you have prospered him. I bet if you

take all of that away, his real character will come out and he is not so great.'

So, our identity. Are we willing to take God at His Word and see ourselves as His children, redeemed, ransomed, forgiven, loved unconditionally, **blameless** in His eyes, justified in His eyes through our faith in Jesus?

The alternative is that we try to forge our own identity on the shifting sands of the culture we live in, how we feel about this or that, or what other people say about us. In **Job's** case, that was the Accuser saying that he was not all that, that he was loyal to his blessings, and that he was in this walk with the Lord for what he could get out of it, not because of his firm faith that God is good.

Where we look for identity, for belonging, for security, for acceptance, for love will impact hugely how we feel about ourselves, how we feel about the world around us, and how we interact with it. I would encourage you to look to the truths of God's Word to see who He says you are.

Today, consider these truths from the Word about who you are.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the*

heavenly places, Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for **adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ**, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. **In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace**, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

### **Ephesians 1.3-10**

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But **to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God**, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

### **John 1.9-13**

# WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

As we continue working through **Job**, we come to a question that everyone will have asked at some point in their life – **why is this happening?**

Perhaps the circumstances that led you to ask this question were simply the worst you could have faced, and if that is you I'm sorry you had to endure such a time. Maybe it was an accumulation of small things that got you down, maybe it was just something that happened that was so utterly confusing that you asked yourself **why is this happening?** In **Job 2** we see this question being asked,

*Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.*

## **Job 2.9-10**

Job has received horrible news (**1.13-19**), responded in mourning and worship (**1.20**), expressed a wisdom and



maturity that seems beyond most of us (**1.21**), and not blamed God for anything (**1.22**). From here, the Accuser is certain that if his health fails, Job will turn against the Lord (**2.1-6**). Job is afflicted with **loathsome sores** that are so bad he needs to scrape himself with broken pottery for relief (**2.8**).

Then, the question. Job's wife clearly doesn't understand her husband's resolute faith and dedication to the Lord (*perhaps the hardest thing for Job to deal with*), and tells him to **curse God and die**.

When faced with life-changing circumstances, tragedies, heartache, loss, pain, distress, or tribulations, we would do well to answer the question of **why is this happening** with the words of Job here,

Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?

Job is not saying that God has afflicted him with evil, but that as the great and good things in our lives are gifts from God sent for our ultimate good, so too the circumstances that may seem to be for our ruin are actually contributing to this ultimate good (**Romans 8.26-30**). I like how this is phrased,

*[When] adversity comes to us...we are wise to see that even in adversity, there may be a "gift" that we should **accept**.*

This is not easy, this is not pleasant, and nobody seeks these situations out. Friends, they will come. Some things we will never know this side of eternity, and that is so hard for us, isn't it. When they come, and when we ask **why is this happening**, let us turn to the Lord in faith and trust that there is Omniscient wisdom behind what is happening, there is a greater good, and even if we don't know why until we see Him face to face, that what is happening in your life right now is showing God's great love for you.

# WHY GO ON?

Since our last big question, Job's friends have heard of the tragedy (**2.11**), and have come to provide comfort through their presence (**2.13**). This is so important when people are suffering; just be there.

Don't worry about having profound insights to share, just be there.

Don't try to throw a Bible verse at them to fix everything, just be there with them in their grief.

As we move into **chapter 3**, Job starts a lament and brings up today's big question – **why go on?**

*"Why is light given to him who is in misery,  
and life to the bitter in soul,  
who long for death, but it comes not,  
and dig for it more than for hidden treasures,  
who rejoice exceedingly  
and are glad when they find the grave?  
Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,  
whom God has hedged in?*

**Job 3.20-23**

When he says '**why is light given**', he is simply asking '**why go on**'? Why do my eyes still open? Why am I still living? Why, when I am so miserable, and my life is so bitter, should I go on? Why should I go on when I feel so hedged in, so constricted, when death seems like a better option? Job isn't, so I read, seriously thinking about committing suicide, simply pouring out his deep and raw emotions (*EnduringWord*).

*Friends – taking your own life is  
never the answer.*

We see in **Revelation 9.6** that things will get so bad during the last days that people will **seek death**. This has to be right up there with the Devil's greatest lies – death will be a sweet release and you will go to a better place. This is a plague of demonic deception on our world – kill yourself and it will all be better. Job is not seriously considering this (**1.8**), but sadly many do, and many see it through.

So, why go on?

First, the idea that your life is worthless is a lie. You are made in the image of God (**Genesis 1.27**), and this means your life has inherent and intrinsic value. Simply being

alive is evidence that you matter, that you have worth, and that you should be alive. There are no mistakes made by the Lord, you are no accident.

Second, you are loved. You are known, loved, and valued by the creator of heaven and earth. You are so loved that He personally took action to reveal Himself to you so that you can begin to seek Him and pursue relationship with Him, and He went even further and opened the door to that relationship by sending Jesus.

**Light is given**, you are alive for this very purpose – to know of, to grow in relationship with, and to be loved by God. Feeling strong emotions is ok (**3.24-26**), expressing them is ok, talking about them is ok.

*It's ok to not be ok.*

*Talk to someone about how you feel.*

*Reach out to someone about not being ok.*

If this is how you feel, this will never change the truth that you are loved, that you matter, that your life has value and worth and dignity, and that Jesus died for you. That is **why we go on.**

# CAN I BE RIGHT BEFORE GOD?

Today, a question posed by Eliphaz (**4.1**),

*'Can mortal man be in the right before God?*

*Can a man be pure before his Maker?*

**Job 4.17**

Eliphaz seems to think that somewhere down the line Job has sinned (**4.7**), and that everything that is happening to Job must be the result of some sin he may have forgotten. As with yesterday, there is such a degree of demonic deception going on here; 'can you ever *really* be ok with God? Sure Job, you are 'blameless', whatever that means, but come on, you must have done something, can you *really* be in the right before God? Can you *really* be pure before Him?'

The Word of God that we carry in our Bibles tells us really clearly that left to our own devices, trying to earn and work our way to Him, that the best we can do is as good as filthy rags, as strong and sure as leaves blown away in the wind (**Isaiah 64.6**).

So, can we be right before God?

There is a simple answer to this with profoundly deep and complex workings – yes you can by faith in Jesus.

Ours is a faith that is so simple in practice but complex in understanding. Maybe you have friends who practice another religion and it seems to complex in it's adherence but very simple in premise.

'We are all trying to climb the same mountain' they may say. Have you ever tried to climb a mountain? It's hard. It's tough. Unlike the mountains of this world, the metaphorical mountain of the Lord that represents right standing before Him can never be climbed alone so no, Eliphaz, no mortal man can be right before God, no human can be pure before his maker.

Thankfully, we serve a God who loves us so much that He knows this and He took action to fix this problem. Rather than watch us try to climb the mountain, He came down and will take us up with Him. He has the ability to climb what we cannot.

We have the opportunity to be **right before God**, we have the chance to be **pure before our maker** if we put hope, and trust, and faith in Jesus alone to accomplish this (**Romans 3.28, 5.1, Habakkuk 2.4, Genesis 15.6, Galatians 2.16, 3.24**).



*Can I be right before God?*

*Yes, you can.*

Alone you will never do this. Alone you will never be good enough. That's the bad news. Accept this. But, don't dwell on this, because there is Good News, there is the Gospel. Jesus, who is eternally good enough, gives you the opportunity to be **right before God**. When looking at you who have faith in Jesus, God sees you *through* this lens, He sees the righteousness and the purity and the perfection of Jesus and treats you the same. Amazing.

Can I be right before God? Yes, you can.

# WHO WILL SAVE ME?

Eliphaz continues his counsel and asks Job another question, something that we have all asked at some point,

*Call now; is there anyone who will answer you?  
To which of the holy ones will you turn?*

## **Job 5.1**

Having laid out his first batch of counsel for Job (**4.2-21**), Eliphaz asks this rather poignant question, **is there anyone who will answer you?** Job must have asked himself this whilst enduring the worst that earthly life can throw at him, **who will save me?**

If you have ever been through any of Job's trials and tribulations you will no-doubt have asked yourself this question too, **who is going to save me, who is going to make this better?**

It's important to say here that God always saves. Period. Full stop. He promises to save you (**John 3.16-18**). It's also really important to say that God promises to always deliver us *through* circumstances, but never promises to

save us *from* our circumstances. A fine difference in language but a perspective-altering difference too.

The Lord never guarantees to rescue and deliver us from every situation that trials us. We are seeing here that Job is living through this trial, he is experiencing profound loss and grief. The Lord does, however, promise to rescue us *in spite* of them, to rescue us *despite what is going on around us* unto eternal life with Him.

Paul had the proper perspective here (**2 Timothy 3.10-11**), and believed in a God that can work miracles to deliver His people, but never guarantees it. Paul knew that even though he was in prison, even though he was awaiting execution, that the Lord would never leave nor forsake him, would always be an ever present help in times of need, and even if earthly circumstances seem to have defeated him, that his Lord and Saviour had overcome the world and had something far greater waiting on the other side.

## *Is that something you know?*

The prophet Joel knew this, didn't he, when he wrote that **everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (2.32)**. This is where Job would be calling, this is

where Job's answer will come from, this is the Holy One to whom we all turn. Turn to Him today!

# CAN I FIX THIS?

As **chapter 6** begins, Job answers Eliphaz's counsel and asks of himself (*and perhaps rhetorically*) this question,

*What is my strength, that I should wait?*

*And what is my end, that I should be patient?*

*Is my strength the strength of stones, or is my flesh bronze?*

*Have I any help in me,*

*when resource is driven from me?*

## **Job 6.11-13**

Job is asking himself if he can fix his own problems, is he in complete control of his own destiny and situation, simply, **can I fix this?**

Job realises that he lacks the strength to fix his problems (**v.11**), that he is inherently weaker than many things and not quite the pinnacle of existence that we are often told we are (**v.12**), and that he simply does not have the omni-attributes needed here (**v.13**).

Coming to this point when we are suffering is a huge milestone. Knowing that we are sometimes powerless to prevent, too weak to rectify, or simply unable to undo the problems we encounter removes a tremendous burden from us. Knowing that it is not on us to be the Lord of our

own existence is a paradigm-shifting truth to grasp. Do you know that?

Do you know that you are powerless to prevent trials coming your way?

Do you know that you are too weak to fix everything that goes wrong in your life?

Do you know that you are just unable to undo the problems you face?

This is bad news, isn't it. Have you accepted that?

But, as the dawn follows the night, here the Good News follows the bad. You cannot prevent, you cannot fix, you cannot undo, you cannot. But, there is One who can. There is One who will walk through the fire with you, there is One who will love you like nobody ever has (or will), there is One who promises for you a hope that is as sturdy as an anchor, One who has plans for your future.

That One is Jesus.

Give your trials to Him. Give your wrongs to Him. Give your problems to Him. He has conquered all that the world, the flesh, or the devil can throw at you, and is ready, willing, and able to work powerfully in your life.

**Can I fix my own problems?** Simply, no, but Jesus can.

# IS THIS ALL THERE IS?

In answering our last big question, we came to the conclusion that we cannot fix our own problems, but that there is One who can. Now, Job continues in despair and seems to ask, 'Is this all there is?'.

*"Has not man a hard service on earth,  
and are not his days like the days of a hired hand?"*

## **Job 7.1**

Job is feeling like he has been conscripted to fight in a battle that is not his (**a hard service**), and feels trapped in this position (**the days of a hired hand**). This is certainly a difficult place to be in.

Have you ever felt like that? That you have been sucked into a situation and battle that is not your own, or that you are so totally trapped in something you cannot envisage a way out?

At times like this we should look to the most repeated command in the Word and the most repeated promise in the Word, both of which can be found in **Isaiah 41**,



*Fear not, for I am with you;  
Be not dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you,  
Yes, I will help you,  
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'*

*Fear not, don't worry, don't stress,  
don't let anxiety get the better of  
you, because I am with you.*

David Guzik writes on this,

*"Years ago, J.B. Phillips wrote a wonderful book titled, 'Your God is too Small'. In it, he showed how when people forget the greatness of God, they easily become **dismayed**. But God says, **be not dismayed, for I am your God**.*

Job was in a situation that seemed to be world-ending. His circumstances were getting on top of him, he was dismayed, and his thoughts were leading him to conclude that this was all there was ever going to be. This is so easy to do.

But, the command and promise of God tell us something different. There is more. There is One who promises to

walk the difficult road with us, to carry us if need be, to join us in the battle, to fight the battle for us.

There was more for Job, and there is more for you.

# WHAT AM I?

Today, Job asks why he is getting so much attention from God.

*What is man, that you make so much of him,  
and that you set your heart on him,  
visit him every morning  
and test him every moment?  
How long will you not look away from me,  
nor leave me alone till I swallow my spit?*

**Job 7.17-19**

Job is questioning why God is so intent on pursuing him, why God is constantly concerned over him, why God is even bothered that Job exists (**vv.17-18**). He wants to know why he hasn't even a second to himself (**v.19**).

There is comfort to be taken from knowing that God is intently and intensely interested in you, that there is nowhere you can go or no situation you can be in that escapes His sight and attention. Here, Job seems to be coming from a negative place (**...nor leave me alone...**), but the very presence which Job is lamenting here will later be seen for the wonderful, loving, enveloping, protecting, reassuring, providential presence it truly is (**42.1-6**).

Today, if you feel that you are forgotten, if you are wondering why God would be interested in you, think on the truths of God's Word.

You are known, you are loved, you are intently and intensely pursued by a God who wants what is best for you, and who gave everything He could to prove this to you.

If you are asking yourself '*what am I?*', you are the object of God's tremendous love and there is nothing He won't do to show you that.

# IS GOD ALWAYS RIGHT?

Today we have a change in speaker. **Bildad the Shuhite** comes to the table, so to speak, bringing with him a straight-talking, black and white approach that borders on insensitive. He seems to hear the words of Job, but certainly not the pain of the words (**v.2**). He clearly thinks Job and his family have sinned (**v.4**), and asks *if God is always right*.

*Does God pervert justice?*

*Or does the Almighty pervert the right?*

## **Job 8.3**

So, is God always right? What do we do when we think that God may have **perverted justice**? What do we do when we feel like God is against us?

The first thing to do is take our thoughts and feelings captive to the revealed truth of the Word and of Jesus (**2 Corinthians 10.5**). We know we are fallible and fallen, and our thoughts and feelings betray us based on what is going on around us. We begin to justify our own poor behaviour, begin to employ moral relativism, and begin to

see ourselves as the victim in all situations. So we take these thoughts captive and turn to revealed truth.

God is good all the time, and all the time God is good – ***Luke 18.19.***

God loves you – ***1 John 4.19.***

God wants what is best for you – ***Romans 8.28.***

God has demonstrated this in the most spectacular way possible – ***John 3.16.***

God knows far more than we do – ***Isaiah 55.8-9.***

God is all knowing, all loving, all wise, therefore will always make the right choice, therefore is always right – ***Psalms 147.5.***

*Is God always right?* Our thoughts and feelings may try to convince us otherwise, but the revealed truth of His Word and Jesus Christ tell us that yes, He is.

Take comfort from this today!

# WILL I EVER BE GOOD ENOUGH?

What a question.

It's deep, it's emotional, it's raw, and it's something that we have all asked at some point in our lives.

I hope that when you asked this, the answer you got was 'yes'. If directly or indirectly you got a 'no', if you feel like you will never be good enough, you find yourself in good company here.

Job replies to Bildad (**ch.8**) and says,

*Truly I know that it is so:*

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

**Job 9.2**

This is a process that we all work through, isn't it?

We accept that the world was made. We accept that the world was made by an all-powerful creator God. We accept that this all-powerful creator God is uniquely holy and pure. We accept that, by nature, we are not. We

question, *will I ever be good enough* for this all-powerful, creator God who is uniquely holy and pure?

The answer is that alone, left to your own devices, no, you won't be. You never will be. This is bad news.

We many look at others and appear humanly righteous, as people like Noah (**Genesis 7.1**) and Job himself (**1.1**) were. But, bigger picture, compared to the uniquely holy and pure righteousness of God, are we? Can we ever be good enough?

*There will only ever be one way  
that God looks at you and declares  
you righteous – faith in Jesus.*

As by nature we are all broken and sinful, by faith we are declared righteous (**Romans 5.19**).

There will always be others around us to whom we can point and say look, see, I am more righteous than him/her. Does this make us good enough?

With faith in Jesus, you have the only thing you ever need to be good enough for our all-powerful creator God who



is uniquely and totally holy and pure. This is the Good News!

# IS GOD ANY DIFFERENT?

There are certain things that we all want. Love, respect, comfort, security, the pursuit of happiness, hope for the future, to know that there is something or someone greater, to belong to something bigger than ourselves, to know that God is different to us.

*Here, Job seems to be asking the same kind of question,  
Have you eyes of flesh?*

*Do you see as man sees?*

## **Job 10.4**

When things are crumbling around him, Job is asking ‘God, are you any different? Is there any point in me trusting you? Are you just like everyone and everything else? Are you any different?’

He answers his own question in **vv.8-13** but things around him lead him to ask the question. It’s so easy, and very human, to ask these big questions of God when things are going wrong. Given the current state of the pandemic-ridden world, we would be forgiven for asking the same questions, ‘*Really God, why is this happening? I thought you loved everyone? Are you any different?*’

Ask those questions. Ask and then turn to the Word to find the answers in places like this,

*"Seek the Lord while he may be found;  
call upon him while he is near;  
let the wicked forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

***For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.  
Isaiah 55.6-9***

Yes, our great God is different.

He is real, He is near, He delights in compassion, forgiveness, and grace. He knows what is truly best for His creation (**Job 10.12-13**) in ways that we simply cannot understand. He is different.

Whilst it looks like the world is falling apart, could it be that things are falling into place in the eyes of Him who sees the bigger picture? I would encourage you today to trust in His unfailing love, grace, wisdom, and His ability

to ensure that His will is always done, on earth as it is in heaven.

# CAN I KNOW GOD?

Today **Zophar the Naamathite** answers Job and asks,

*“Can you find out the deep things of God?*

*Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?*

*It is higher than heaven—what can you do?*

*Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?*

**Job 11.7-8**

There is little compassion coming Job’s way from Zophar, and he even thinks Job deserves worse (**11.6**). He basically tells Job that he is totally deserving of everything that is happening to him (**vv.2-6**), and then rebukes Job for boasting in his claim to be innocent. Rather than comforting Job in his affliction, Zophar seems to think that God is so unknowable that there must be some unknown – *but real* – way that Job has sinned.

At the core of Zohar’s argument is the idea that we cannot really know God, we cannot **find out the deep things of God**, we cannot find **the limit of the Almighty**, that we cannot ever really **know** God.

*So, can we know God?*

There are two ways we can know God – His general revelation and His specific revelation.

General revelation is what can be known of God to each and every human being from simply being observant about the world we live in. Created beauty, the fine tuning of the universe, the cycle of life, and the order of life, for example (***Psalm 19.1-4, Romans 1.20***).

Specific, or special, revelation is how God has revealed Himself, His plans, His purposes in specific ways. This is things like dreams, visions, His Word, and through the person and work of Jesus.

Of these, the Word and the person of Jesus are by far the most revealing, the most thorough, and the most special (***2 Timothy 3.16-17, Hebrews 1.1-3***).

Can we know God? Absolutely. We can observe the world He has made, we can read the Word He communicated, and we can be in relationship through faith with His Son, His very likeness in human form, Jesus.

# IS GOD GOOD?

Job continues to speak and through his words answers a question that most of us have asked or been asked; *is God good?*

*“Let me have silence, and I will speak,  
and let come on me what may.  
Why should I take my flesh in my teeth  
and put my life in my hand?  
Though he slay me, I will hope in him;  
yet I will argue my ways to his face.*

## **Job 13.13-15**

Even though he didn't understand what was going on, he trusts God (**I will hope in Him**). Have you ever been in a situation like that? Circumstances that you don't understand, a situation that you cannot make sense of, when the only thing left to do is trust wholeheartedly in God. Job knew that even **though he slay me**, even though the terrible things happening to him were not outside of God's permission or declaration, that trusting and hoping in Him were still the right things to do.

Even though blameless and upright (**1.1, 8**) Job was going through a set of circumstances that would break us all.

Even though he was without blame and suffering, he still did not curse God (**1.22, 2.10**).

Even though he was on the precipice of death (**3.20-26**), he hoped in and trusted God.

*Even though he slay me, I will  
hope in him.*

Reading this, it is hard to look past the Christ-centred type that Job is. The truer, better Job, think about Jesus;

A blameless and upright man charged and punished as if He had sinned – **Isaiah 53.6, 2 Corinthians 5.21**

A man who throughout His ordeal, did not curse God. On the contrary, He sought forgiveness for those involved – **Luke 23.34**

A man who, on the precipice of death, trusted God – **Luke 23.46**

A man who, even though slain, brings eternal hope – **1 Thessalonians 1.3, John 4.13-14**



Is God good? Job knew that He is. For you and me,  
despite what is going on around us, let us forever say yes,  
yes He is.

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I DIE?

Job is lamenting the present and seems to be wondering about the future, and asks,

*“For there is hope for a tree,  
if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,  
and that its shoots will not cease.  
Though its root grow old in the earth,  
and its stump die in the soil, yet at the scent of water it will  
bud  
and put out branches like a young plant.  
But a man dies and is laid low;  
man breathes his last, and where is he?  
As waters fail from a lake  
and a river wastes away and dries up,  
so a man lies down and rises not again;  
till the heavens are no more he will not awake  
or be roused out of his sleep.*

## **Job 14.7-12**

It looks like Job is wondering, *what is going to happen to me? What happens when I die?*

As human beings we must all endure a physical death. This is one thing that unites every single person ever to set foot on Earth.

Our bodies were not made to live eternally in their current state, evidenced by the fact there are no double-centurians in our midst. Do you know anyone who is 200 years old? The oldest recorded and fully authenticated human life in modern times was one hundred and twenty two years, one hundred and sixty four days. All this to say, Job's question here is something that will certainly affect every one of us, and is consequently something of the utmost importance to us.

The Word is so clear about what happens for the believer. In as few words as possible, for those that have put hope, faith, and trust in Jesus, physical death brings **'immediate transition...into the presence of Christ'**. As a believer in Jesus, your earthly death means closing your eyes here and opening them in the presence of your Redeemer.

There is no uncertainty for the believer, no apprehension about destination, no fear of the future.

For a more in-depth look at this with many Scriptural references, head over to GoodLion; **Personal Eschatology: What Happens When I Die?**

# WHERE DOES MY COMFORT COME FROM?

Today Eliphaz takes his turn to speak. It looks like he feels that the counsel of good friends is all that is provided for comfort during trials (**15.9-11**), and Eliphaz is not impressed with Job's resolute trust in God (**13.15**).

*Are the comforts of God too small for you,  
or the word that deals gently with you?  
Why does your heart carry you away,  
and why do your eyes flash,  
that you turn your spirit against God  
and bring such words out of your mouth?*

## **Job 15.1-13**

He asks, simply, *where does comfort come from then?* He seems to think that God's comfort is exclusively given through the counsel of others (**Are the comforts of God too small for you, or the word that deals gently with you?**). Whilst this is not untrue, it is not exclusively true. God certainly does speak through the counsel of other believers in our lives. Huge comfort can be taken from

being in the presence of someone who has been in the presence of the Lord.

However, this is but one way the Lord comforts His people. They are vast and varied, but I would suggest that they all point to one place. God's comfort in times of trouble and affliction, in times of stress and anxiety, in times of uncertainty and persecution is the One we read of in **Luke 2**,

*25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.  
26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.  
27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,  
29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,  
according to your word;  
30 for my eyes have seen your salvation  
31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and for glory to your people Israel."*

God's comfort always takes us in some way, shape, or form, to the Lord Jesus Christ, the **consolation of Israel**, God's **light for revelation, salvation, and glory**.

If you are troubled, afflicted, stressed, anxious, or uncertain today, seek out the comfort of God available to you through the person and work of Jesus.

# WHERE IS MY HOPE?

Job laments the poor counsel he is receiving (**16.1-22**), then asks a universal question, *where is my hope?* (**v.3, 15**).

With the world as it is right now, full of COVID-19 information, misinformation, anxiety, stress, and uncertainty, Job's question is timeless and still very true. So, where do we turn for hope?

Do we turn to the news outlets? But how do we know if it's genuine or biased? Clear or contradictory?

Do we turn to social media to connect with others? But how do we know that this is a genuine picture of people's life? Facts or filters?

Do we turn to home comforts? Do we turn to earthly pleasures? Do we turn to worldly ways of ignoring reality? We could go on...

There is only one infallible, evidenced, proven, steadfast, sure, anchor-like place to turn for hope in the midst of trial and tribulation (**Hebrews 6.19**).

*I lift up my eyes to the hills.*

*From where does my help come?*

*My help comes from the Lord,*

*who made heaven and earth.*

*He will not let your foot be moved;*

*he who keeps you will not slumber.*

*Behold, he who keeps Israel*

*will neither slumber nor sleep.*

*The Lord is your keeper;*

*the Lord is your shade on your right hand.*

*The sun shall not strike you by day,*

*nor the moon by night.*

*The Lord will keep you from all evil;*

*he will keep your life.*

*The Lord will keep*

*your going out and your coming in*

*from this time forth and forevermore.*

## **Psalm 121**

Adam Clarke wrote this, a fitting thought to take into today,

*“Job himself, though sometimes strongly confident, is often harassed with doubts and fears upon the subject, insomuch that **his sayings and experience often appear contradictory.***



*Perhaps it could not be otherwise; the true light was not then come: **Jesus alone brought life and immortality to light by his Gospel.***"

Our hope always comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

Turn to Him today!

# WHAT DO WORDS DO?

In between Job's last question and this one, Bildad interjects and says, basically, that Job ought to listen to the rebuke of his friends. Job then replies and says,

*How long will you torment me  
and break me in pieces with words?*

## **Job 19.2**

Words are so powerful, aren't they. Here we see Job's friends using harsh and hard words towards him. Remember that old saying that *'sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me'*? It's not true, is it. Hard words hurt. Harsh words hurt. Even more so when tensions are high and emotions are frayed. Job is enduring the worst of all earthly circumstances and his friends have not chosen their words wisely, it seems.

We read in **Proverbs** that

*Kind words are like honey—  
sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.*

## **16.24**

Words have the power to cut people down, but they also have the power to build people up. We read in the book of **James** that it is so important that we choose our words wisely (**3.1-12**). Words are so powerful, aren't they.

Try as we might, we will never make the right choice with our words 100% of the time. But, there was One who did. Peter described this One as having **words of eternal life** (**John 6.68-69**).

There is only one place to go for words that always heal, always encourage, always edify, always build up.

There is only one place to go for words that are always sweet to the soul and are always healthy to the body.

There is only one place to go for **words of eternal life**.

In this time of global uncertainty, I would encourage you to make the same decision Peter does here,

*...Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? **You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.**"*  
**John 6.67-69**

# IS LIFE FAIR?

Back in **20.4-11**, Zophar said, basically, that the wicked get what is coming to them and die. Here Job responds with another probing question, *is life fair?*

*Why do the wicked live,  
reach old age, and grow mighty in power?*

**Job 21.7**

How do we accept things like this?

How do we accept that the **wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power**? If we are trying earnestly to live the life that God wants us to live, how can we accept the fact that those who are brazenly *not* living His life seem to be prospering (**v.14**)?

In a world where we (*want to*) control everything and everyone around us, this kind of deep moral contradiction seems to outrage us; he/she is bad...but they are doing well...this should not be so...

Deep down, this is a perspective issue. Do we think we are the ultimate authority and judge in the universe? Do we think that everything ought to be as we want it to be?

Are we so detached from objective truth that everything is evaluated through our own lens of subjective truth?

Do you know what, sometimes life isn't going to feel fair. People who seem to be wicked will seem to be prospering, people who do objectively bad things will seemingly face no consequence, and people who are diligently trying to follow God's plan for life will be seemingly second best.

The answer to this is perspective, to look beyond our brief physical habitation on earth. I read somewhere that one of the big problems with people and their assessment of life as unfair is that they only look at themselves and their earthly physical life. No thoughts of eternity, no big picture thoughts. That's true, isn't it.

We forget that we are made with eternity in mind.

We forget that we are not working towards earthly rewards and riches.

We forget that no eye has seen, that no ear has heard what is waiting for us.

We forget that we are created, finite beings, with a limited perspective.

We forget that we are not the centre of the universe and ultimate moral judges.

Sometimes life is not going to feel fair by your standards and expectations. When these feelings creep into your mind, turn to the timeless and objective truths of the Word of God, and slowly but surely begin to accept that His perspective is different, bigger, better, and ultimately how you want to see things.

# WHY BOTHER?

After Job closes his last response with the words ‘**There is nothing left of your answers but falsehood**’ (21.34), Eliphaz replies and asks, simply, *why are you bothering to keep going with this, Job?*

*“Can a man be profitable to God?*

*Surely he who is wise is profitable to himself.*

*Is it any pleasure to the Almighty if you are in the right, or is it gain to him if you make your ways blameless?*

**Job 22.2-3**

Eliphaz is trying to convince Job, look, stop telling us you are right before God, so what if you are?, does God even care?, why bother?

It’s so easy to feel like this, isn’t it? Why am I bothering to keep going down this path paved with hurdles and obstacles, does it really matter? Does God even care? Is it making any difference?

In **Luke 15** we read of three examples that show us that yes, God cares, and that there is a reason for us to be so bothered about the life we are living. Through reading the parables of the lost sheep (15.3-7), the lost coin (15.8-10), and the prodigal son (15.11-32), **Luke** records

for us three proofs that we should be bothered, that we should keep going in the face of push-back, of trials, of temptations, of opposition, of our own self-doubt, of anything.

Eliphaz asks is it any pleasure to the Almighty if you are in the right? Yes, it is.

*...there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. (Luke 15.7)*

*...there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. (Luke 15.10)*

*...the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate. (Luke 15.22-24)*

Be bothered.

Keep going. He sees, He cares, and He loves you.



# HOW DO I FIND GOD?

Job answers Eliphaz (**ch.22**) and asks, simply, *how do I find God?*

*Oh, that I knew where I might find him,  
that I might come even to his seat!*

## **Job 23.3**

It's interesting and important to remember that this is Job's response to the worst that life can throw at him: to run towards and to find God.

*RATHER THAN LOOK DEEP WITHIN,  
RATHER THAN TRYING TO PULL HIMSELF UP BY HIS OWN  
BOOTSTRAPS,  
RATHER THAN PUT HIS HOPE IN THE TEMPORARY  
TRAPPINGS OF THE WORLD,  
JOB'S SINGULAR FOCUS IS TO FIND GOD IN THE MIDST OF  
TROUBLE.*

Charles Spurgeon wrote,

*“Good men are washed towards God even by the rough waves of their grief; and when their sorrows are deepest, their highest desire is not to escape from them, but to get at their God.”*

Do you feel that? Is the current state of the world driving you towards God in a fresh, new, and reinvigorated way?

If you already have a relationship with the Almighty, I would encourage you today to prioritise it, to make time for it, to invest in it, to let the worldly circumstances we all find ourselves in push you with renewed vigour to the foot of the cross and to Him who sits on the throne.

# WHERE IS WISDOM?

In **Job 28** the question is asked,

*“But where shall wisdom be found?*

*And where is the place of understanding?*

*Man does not know its worth,*

*and it is not found in the land of the living.*

**Job 28.12-13**

So often in life we are willing to give so much for so little. We sacrifice things we will never get back in order to get things which will never last. We give up health, time, friendship and fellowship, and relationships in order to gain money, possessions, a sense of self-worth, and perceived status.

Is this a good idea? Does this sound wise? Does trading fundamental for futile strike you as a good deal?

Where do we look for wisdom, a model for living, the ultimate example of how we should be investing our time, our talent, and our treasure? How do we know where the most valuable of attributes (**v.15**) is found?

The Word of God to us bound in our Bibles tells us that wisdom once walked as we walk, lived as we live, and that true wisdom can be found in the person of Jesus;

*...I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, **which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.***

### **Colossians 2.1-3**

*Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.** For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

### **1 Corinthians 1.20-25**

Job's question, and all of ours, can be answered in the person and work of Jesus, **in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**, Jesus who is the **wisdom of God**.

# IS GOD ALWAYS THERE?

*Job here asks if God is always there?*

*Does not he see my ways  
and number all my steps?*

## **Job 31.4**

In context, Job is saying that he has taken a vow of purity and chaste conduct, particularly with what he allows himself to look at (**v.1**). He says, in defence of his conduct, that should he have violated this then God would surely know and would surely have sent calamity for this reason (**vv.2-3**).

Although Job is defending his conduct, we can take the principle and take great comfort from it. He uses the omnipresence of God (*His being everywhere*) as a character witness, and we can take the same attribute and draw comfort from knowing that God is never far from each of us (**Acts 17.27**).

Whatever you are doing today, however you are feeling today wherever you are going today, take comfort from knowing that God goes with you, that there is nowhere

we can go to escape His presence (**Psalm 139.7**), and that He is a very present help in times of trouble (**Psalm 46**).

*Is God always there?* Absolutely.

Call out to Him and see just how '*there*' He is.

# IS GOD IN CONTROL?

Today Elihu speaks and begins by rebuking Job's friends and Job (**ch.32, 33**), then starts to lay out the case for God always being just and right. He then asks this question,

*Who gave him charge over the earth,  
and who laid on him the whole world?*

**Job 34.13**

I don't know about you, but I like to watch travel programmes on tv, or cooking programmes that involve the host going off to some interesting place. Often this ends up in a country where the main religion is not Christianity, and there are often many little gods on show and being talked about. For me, when I see this I often wonder, *'Who decided that he/she should be a god, who is the main god, what do they do, who made that god a god, you know, where did that god come from?'*

The difference with the God of the Bible, the God we worship as Christians is that nobody caused Him to be, He just is (**Exodus 3.14**). Without taking a deep dive, there is no story of how He came into being, He simply is, He is



being itself, He is pure reality without which we would not be (*if you want a deep dive, email me for a paper I wrote*).

Friends, our God is not a shallow creation of man to satisfy the deep longing we have for something higher and greater. Nobody **gave Him charge over the earth**, nobody **laid on Him the whole world**. It all belongs to Him (***Psalm 24.1***), He made it all simply by declaring it into existence (***Genesis 1***). Nobody gave Him charge because He is already in charge, He is in control of all He made (***Psalm 46.1, Philippians 4.6-7, Luke 12.22-26, Revelation 1.17***), rest easy in this truth today.

# IS IT MY RIGHT TO QUESTION?

Lots of the culture nowadays seems to be very self-centred, doesn't it. Things like *your rights, your desires, your feelings, you, you, you*. Maybe you have even heard people say something like, *when I get to heaven, God has some explaining to do...*

Is this right? Is this one of our rights?

*...Elihu answered and said:*

*"Do you think this to be just?*

*Do you say, 'It is my right before God,'*

*that you ask, 'What advantage have I?*

*How am I better off than if I had sinned?'*

**Job 35.1-3**

Is it our right to question God? Are we to calculate just how much we can get away with (**how am I better off the if I had sinned?**)? One particular consequence of a society where the individual is held up as the pinnacle is that thoughts like this will start to become more and more acceptable. What does the Word say?

Amos wrote that we should all prepare to meet our maker (**Amos 4.12**), and we see in the New Testament the truth that we will all stand before the throne, either to receive our heavenly reward and posting (**Revelation 20.4, 2 Corinthians 5.10**), or to receive the sentence for our rejection of God and His Christ (**Revelation 20.11-15**).

All this to say that for you, believer, there will be no need to question.

For you, the not-yet believer, the truth is this; no, there will not be an opportunity to question God, it is not your right to stand before your Maker and argue your case, to demand explanations, or bargain your way into eternity. Should you stand before Him having rejected His salvation on offer through Jesus here on earth, your standing will be a sentencing, not a hearing. Friend, your actions and decisions in the here and now will determine how you meet your Maker, please, choose wisely.

The only question that we have the right to ask is this: have I put hope, trust, and faith in Jesus alone for my salvation?

# DO YOU KNOW?

Here in **Job 37.14-20** we see Elihu giving Job one last piece of advice and he asks, simply, are you really all that you think you are, Job? Do you know all that you think you know?

*"Hear this, O Job;  
stop and consider the wondrous works of God.  
Do you know how God lays his command upon them  
and causes the lightning of his cloud to shine?  
Do you know the balancings of the clouds,  
the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge,  
you whose garments are hot  
when the earth is still because of the south wind?  
Can you, like him, spread out the skies,  
hard as a cast metal mirror?  
Teach us what we shall say to him;  
we cannot draw up our case because of darkness.  
Shall it be told him that I would speak?  
Did a man ever wish that he would be swallowed up?*

Despite his relative youth (**32.6-10**), Elihu seems to be hitting closer to home with his questions of Job. Rather than just suggest that Job must have sinned somewhere,

somehow (**32.3**), Elihu seems to have considered his response a little more deeply.

Elihu asks probing questions of Job to show that, really, you can't understand what is truly going on here (**Do you know...do you know...can you, like Him...teach us...**).

Elihu still holds to this idea that Job has sinned, but at least he frames the idea better than the other counsellors on hand. At the core, Elihu seems to be saying, look Job, you cannot understand all of these wonderful workings of God, so you have no chance of understanding the mystery of why you are suffering so.

Elihu is right, isn't he? We cannot know how the Lord lays out the skies as a master artist paints a picture, we cannot understand the **wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge**, we cannot spread out skies, we cannot know ever truly know what to say to Him who sits on the throne, we just don't know.

Where does this leave us? What does this leave us with?

It leaves us with trust, and with faith. There are things we will never see or understand this side of eternity (**Isaiah 55.8-11**), but, as Corrie Ten Boom said,

*Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.*

So, learn all you can about our known God, and trust the unknown to Him!

# WHO MADE IT ALL?

Today we hear from the Lord, He **answers Job out of the whirlwind and says,**

*“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?  
Tell me, if you have understanding.  
Who determined its measurements—surely you know!  
Or who stretched the line upon it?  
On what were its bases sunk,  
or who laid its cornerstone,  
when the morning stars sang together  
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

**Job 38.4-7**

Until now we have not heard from God, although He has been spoken of many times. By asking this question, **where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?**, God is simply showing that “if you cannot answer these things, you do not have a place to demand answers from Me” (Guzik).

Nobody was there when all this began. Nobody knows the minutiae of **its measurements**. Nobody knows **on what its bases were sunk**, or **who laid its cornerstone**. Nobody knows these things except Him who made all that we see and don’t see.

We often like to think we know far more than we really do, don't we? We often like to think we know about how everything is made and how it all works. Could we ever even begin to comprehend how to make something so impeccably balanced and fine tuned as our world?

Would we have put the planet Jupiter in just the right place to act as a cosmic-vacuum cleaner, sheltering our planet from space debris?

Would he have created the Earth with a crust so precisely-thick that it allows just enough oxygen to be transferred through to support human life, but not too much?

How thankful we are that the Earth and everything therein belongs to, and was made by, the Lord (***Psalm 24.1***). How thankful we are that in Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible (***Colossians 1.16***). How thankful we are that He made it all and we have the pleasure and privilege of enjoying it!



# WHAT CAN I SAY?

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you jumped to a certain conclusion, only to be corrected later? It happened to me recently when someone asked me what I thought was a crazy question that had already been answered, but when I paused and thought, it turned out it wasn't a crazy question, and I hadn't answered it. Humble pie for me. Today, as we wrap up our journey though **Job**, our main character has finally seen himself in proper perspective, and responds accordingly.

*Then Job answered the Lord and said:*

*"Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you?*

*I lay my hand on my mouth.*

*I have spoken once, and I will not answer;*

*twice, but I will proceed no further."*

**Job 40.3-5**

Having realised the truth of the situation through the Lord's pretty epic reply (**ch.38-39**), Job now understands that he is **of small account**, and that he has little to say.

I'm convinced that, just as my personal example of crazy questions, when we see the truth of the situations we find ourselves in, the appropriate response will be forthcoming. As I realised that the question put to me

was a valid one, here Job realises that, do you know what, **I am of small account**, what can I say to you, God? He realises that there is little else to say (**v.5**), and that he needs to be quick to listen to the Lord, and slow to speak (**James 1.19**).

Perhaps that is the best place for us to wrap up this journey through **Job**; life's deepest questions are, in part, easier answered when we realise that we do not inherently possess the answers, that we have little to say towards the answer, and that we need to look beyond ourselves to God Almighty for the answers.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Pastor James and his wife Robyn have been in Bahrain for seven years. He is the pastor at **Saar Fellowship**, an international church.

James and Robyn have two boys, Roman and Jesse, who were born in Bahrain, and they have family history in the country dating back to the 1960s!

James is Calvary Chapel University's first M.Div graduate and enjoys swimming, cycling, running, and good coffee!

Find more from James at **[www.jamestravis.net](http://www.jamestravis.net)**

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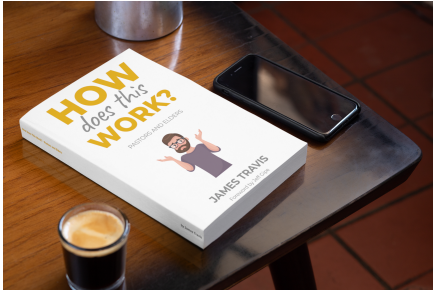
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# How Does This Work?

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In “*How Does This Work?*” James Travis gives a Biblical and historical survey that will be helpful for any pastor and leadership team. He capably makes the case for pastoral leadership that avoids the pitfalls

of lone leadership. The “notes” portions after every chapter make this a perfect book for a pastor to work through with his leadership team.

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CGN Executive Team

Author of “*Contented*”

