

# 11



## Job's sufferings:



Experienced, explained & exhausted  
Justice denied, debated & delivered

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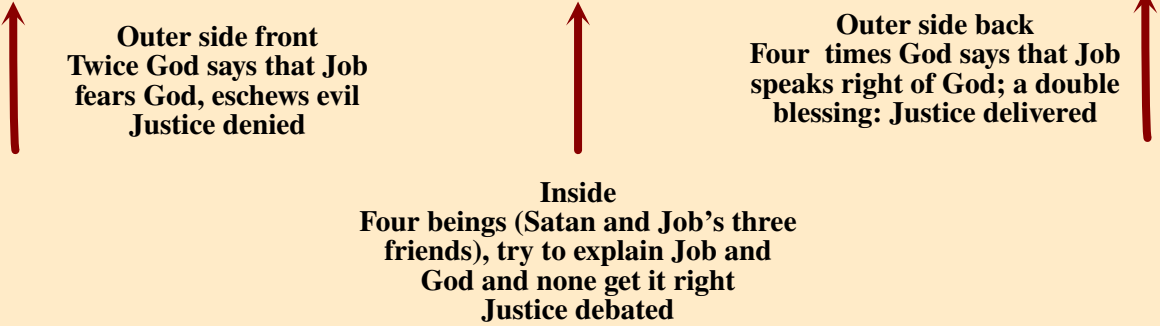
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Introduction

This eleventh *Sandwich* paper centres on the biblical figure Job, whose life drama is narrated in the biblical book that bears his name. The table below diagrams the sandwich.

The start of Job: 1:8, 2:3	The end of Job: 42:7-8
The Lord said to Satan, “Have you placed your heart on <b>my servant Job</b> ? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil.”	After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “My wrath is kindled against you and your two friends; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as <b>my servant Job</b> has.
The Lord said to Satan, “Have you placed your heart on <b>my servant Job</b> ? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil. He still persists in his integrity, although you incited me against him, to destroy him for no reason.”	Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to <b>my servant Job</b> , and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and <b>my servant Job</b> shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as <b>my servant Job</b> has done.”



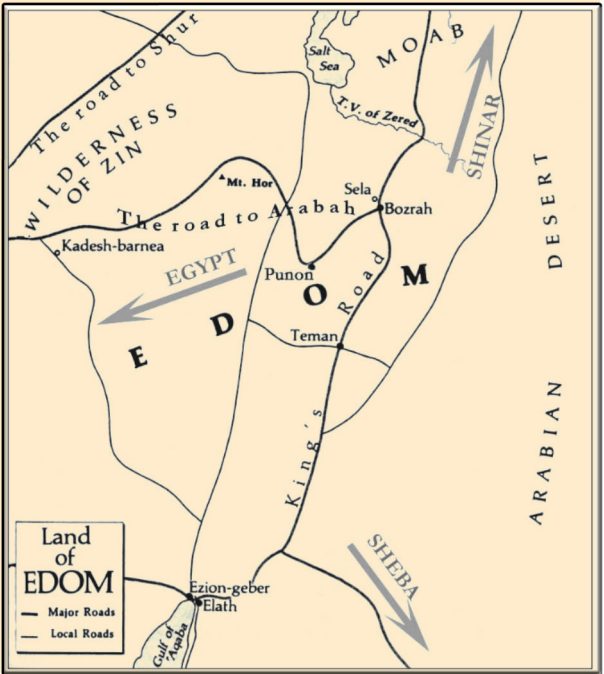
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The Geography of Job

Job lived in the land of Uz (Job1:1), and the land of Edom (of Esau, Genesis 36:1) was in the land of Uz (Lamentations 4:21). This implies that the land of Edom was within the land of Uz and was smaller than it, which is consistent with Jeremiah’s reference (Jeremiah 25:15-26) to “all the kings of the land of Uz”. Job was one of the people east of the Jordan River, where the Midianites and the Amalekites lived (Judges 6:3, 33, 7:12, 8:10). Job lived in tents (Job 5:24, 11:14, 18: 6.14-15, 19:12, 20:26, 22:23), close to the desert (Job 1:19, 24:5, 38:26), and to wadis or dry riverbeds in the desert that are flooded with water during the rainy season (Job 30:6), and close to the Jordan (Job 40:23). This lifestyle left it open to predators from the Chaldeans and the Sabæans from North Arabia ([Delitzsch, Morris](#)).

Further, Uz was in proximity to the tribe of the Temanites, the Shuhites, the Naamathites (Job 2:11), the Buzites (Job 32:2), as well as to the great Arabian Desert (1:19). Job’s residency was probably near Bozrah, for he was a leading figure in the area and he needed large pastures eastward of Teman. Secondly, the routes taken by caravans coming from the north of Canaan to go into Egypt were either the road of the Sea (Via Maris), the road to Shur or the road to the Arabah or the King’s Road to the Gulf of Aqaba ([Gertoux](#)).

See map at right ([biblestudydaily.org](#)).



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## The Geography of Job continued

Although Job was a cattle farmer he was not a nomad since he and his sons lived in houses of clay (Job 1:4,19; 4:19) near a public square where Job took his place on the seat as part of the city's government (Job 29:7). He knew of the existence of copper mines (Job 28:2), near Bozrah, the only ones known at that period in this area. One possibility, then, is that Job and his family lived in Bozrah ([Gertoux](#)).

## The Genealogy of Job

As was the common practise then to give names to cities or regions from their founder or from a famous ancestor, the land of Uz was probably named after the son of Aram, and grandson of Shem (Genesis 10:23, 1 Chronicles 1:17), or after the eldest son of Nahor, Abraham's brother (Genesis 22:21). Uz's brother was Buz, and in this line was Bethuel the father of Rebekah. A third suggestion is that Uz was a descendant of Esau, of Seir the Horite (Genesis 36:28). However Job was not an Edomite because he lived in the land of Uz, not Edom, and he was faithful to the worship of Jehovah (Job 1:5, 31:26-28) like his forefather Nahor (Genesis 31:53), contrary to Esau (Genesis 26:34-35)([Gertoux](#)).

Job's genealogical line then, was, probably:

Noah ----> Shem ----> Nahor (Abraham's brother) ----> Uz (Buz his brother) ----> Aram ----> Bethuel (the father of Rebekah) (Genesis 10:23, 22:20-23).

In sum, the biography of Job is brief, but Uz was likely his forefather. If so, he was in the godly line of Shem and a relative of Abraham. However, we don't know the name of his wife, or his exact age, although he received a bonus of 140 years, the double of life that he had before his suffering, making him about 210 years old at his death.

Moreover, the data in the genealogies of Genesis reveals a steady decrease in lifespans following the flood, and is helpful in pinpointing the time of Job. Noah died at 900, Shem at 600, Terah, Abraham's father at 205, and Abraham at 175, so, on the basis of this metric, Job was probably a post-diluvian living around the time of Terah.

## The Goodness and Greatness of Job

Job was a man that *was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil* (1:1).

Job had seven sons, three daughters, 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and a very great household, so that he was the greatest of all the people of the east.

His sons used to go and hold feasts in one another's houses in turn; and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. And when the feast days had run their course, Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, "*It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.*" This is what Job always did (1:2-5).

Sandwiched between two statements of Job's goodness, is the statement of the greatness of his wealth. Which comes first? Possessions or piety? The rest of the story will answer that question.

## The God of Job

### All beings are contingent on Him

It is the Lord who said *my servant Job* (1:8, 2:3). Lord is Yahweh, which to a Hebrew audience it may have looked like He Who Causes "That Which Is" To Be ([Abarim Publications](#)). Yahweh is the Source of all being and therefore being is inherent in Himself, but is contingent in all others.



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## The God of Job continued

The Lord gave Job the most honourable distinction as *my servant*. There is no higher calling in life than to serve God. But Job stands in special distinction. "There is none like him in the earth" made him unequalled among men, although many shared the honour of 'my servant' - Abraham, Moses, Caleb, David, Isaiah, Eliakim, Israel, Jacob, king of Babylon, Zerubbabel, the Branch, and, the Lord Jesus.

### All beings are accountable to Him

Accordingly, if all other beings are contingent on the Lord, they are also accountable to Him. Firstly, the "sons of God", the phrase indicates their supernatural nature, and their submission to God as the sovereign Lord. In the Hebrew Bible "sons of God" is generally taken to refer to angels.

Secondly, Satan. The word means "adversary" or with the article "the adversary", in Job 1 the superhuman adversary or Satan. He is the great accuser of the saints (Zechariah 3, where "Satan was standing to 'satanize' Joshua the priest; and in Revelation 12, he is identified as the Serpent in Genesis 3). He came among the angels at this time because he is one of them and has access among them, and along with them comes to give an account to his Creator for his whereabouts and his actions (Net Bible Study Notes).

### All beings are restricted by Him

The Lord raises Satan's contemplation of Job, because He knows everything, and Satan puts forward his proposition that God blessed Job with possessions because of his piety. So, if the Lord takes away all Job's possessions, Job becomes impious. The Lord allows Satan to test his own thesis by taking away all that Job has and his children, except Job himself. So Satan leaves the presence of the Lord to facilitate calamity within the confines of God's sovereign purpose (1:9-12).

### The Grief of Job

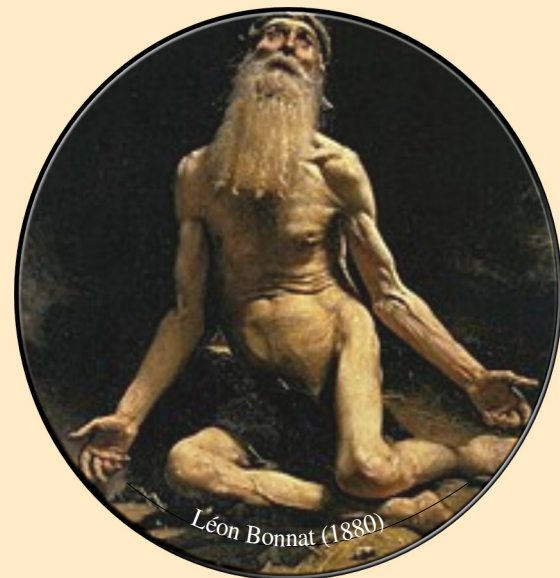
However, Job acknowledged that the Lord gives, and takes away; blessed be His name. That is, Job did not sin or charge God with wrong-doing (Job 1:20-22). Satan's proposition number one is destroyed.

There was another day when the angels and Satan were before the Lord. Job still held firmly to his integrity despite Satan encouraging the Lord to destroy him without reason.

Satan replied that if the Lord touches his bone and his flesh, then he will curse God to His face. So the Lord gave Job into his power but he had to spare his life."

So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and inflicted loathsome sores on Job from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And, Job took a potsherd to scrape himself, and sat among the ashes.

Then Job's wife said to him, *Do you still persist in your integrity? Curse God, and die. But he said to her, "You speak as any foolish woman would speak. Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips* (Job 2:1-9).



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## Grief of Job continued

So far, Satan's proposition is that piety is contingent on prosperity and health. That is, Job has an ulterior motive to please God; He blesses God because God blesses him. Satan's proposition is that God looks after Job materially and physically, because Job is into God spiritually. That is, Job is devoted to God because God is devoted to him. It's a "quid pro quo", a two-way street, or something for something.

In both tests, Job didn't do as Satan indicated he would, and his proposition proved false. Satan's thesis that Job epitomises the piety-prosperity nexus falls flat. At this point, the Adversary calls it a day, and disappears from the story entirely, never to raise a claim against Job again. Poor Job. In his experience of Satanic-inflicted suffering, the Adversary denied him justice.

### 2. In the middle

So, if Satan's theological proposition is found wanting, what is the explanation for the suffering of the pious when they stand fast in their piety? When Job's four pastoral friends heard about all his calamity, they came to show sympathy and to console him in his mental and physical pain (Job 2:13). They were stunned into silence. What followed in chapters 3-37, the greater part of the book, are a series of poetic dialogues between Job, and his four pastoral counsellors in which justice is debated. God is noticeably silent. Below is a summary.

#### Job and his pastors

The oldest of Job's friends, Eliphaz was the first son of Esau, and the first son of Eliphaz was Teman (Genesis 36:9, 15), which means that he likely hailed from the kingdom of Edom. This connection consequently places Job after Esau, in the time of the patriarchs between Abraham and Moses.

Bildad was a Shuhite (Job 2:11), a descendent from Shuah, son of Abraham by his concubine Keturah (Genesis 25:2). Shuah was born after Sarah's death, making Bildad, probably, the great-great-grandson of Shuah.

Zophar was identified as a Naamathite (Job 2:11), and the Septuagint calls him the King of the Mineans, in southern Arabia, which today is Yemen. Centuries later, this kingdom was overrun by the same Sabeans who oppressed Job, who then founded Saba (Sheba), famous because of the Queen of Sheba, who visited King Solomon.

Finally, Elihu was the son of Barachel the Buzite, a descendant from Buz, Uz's brother and a son of Abraham's brother Nahor (Genesis 22:20-24). Elihu lived near both Eliphaz and Bildad, and was younger than Job. In sum, Bildad and Elihu were from the chosen line, while Eliphaz and Zophar were not.

#### Job

Asserting that he has spoken no **injustice**, he wants no **injustice** to be done to him (6:29-30). He has kept God's commandment and has not turned aside. Job desires to argue his case with God for he knows that he shall be vindicated, despite Job depicting God as his enemy Who aims to destroy him (Job 10:2-13-15). Job's spirit is broken, and he is ready to die (17:1). Job says **injustice** has been done to him. Indeed, he says that for him, justice has been denied.

Nevertheless, he calls for help against the **injustice** done to him but there is no answer and no **justice**, for now anyway (19:7). However, he sees it afar off, for he is confident that his Redeemer (Vindicator - the near kinsman who will pay off one's debts, defend the family, avenge a killing) is alive and he will rise upon the dust to mete out **justice**, although Job does not expect to live and see his vindication in this life (Job 19:25-29). Surely, God's appearance will vindicate Job and bring judgment on those who persecute him and charge him falsely.



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## Job continued

Job's sense of **injustice** is magnified by his sense that God enables the wicked to live on, reach old age, and grow mighty in power whose children are established, their houses are safe, and no rod of God is upon them. Their bull breeds without fail. They sing to the tambourine and the lyre, and rejoice to the sound of the pipe. They spend their days in prosperity, and in peace they go down to Sheol (21:7-15). The conundrum for Job is that one dies in full prosperity, being wholly at ease and secure, while another dies in bitterness of soul, never having tasted of good (21:23, 25). In other words, for Job, **prosperity is not contingent on piety**.

In summary, Job in looking back yearns for his pre-suffering days when life with God and family were great (29:2). Looking inward he holds fast his righteousness and integrity, and his heart does not reproach him for any of his days (27:1-6), despite that God has taken away his right, and made his soul bitter. Looking forward, his lips will not speak falsehood, for he wants to give God an account of all his steps. Like a prince he would approach him (31:2-3, 5-6, 8, 23, 35-37). While Job's thesis is that **injustice** has been done to him, the four pastors take the opposite view that **injustice** has been done by him. Here are their arguments briefly.

### Eliphaz

'Is it for your piety that he reproves you, and enters into judgment with you? Is not your wickedness great? There is no end to your iniquities. Agree with God, and be at peace; in this way good will come to you (22:3-21). If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored, if you remove **injustice** from your tents (v23), you who drinks **injustice** like water' (15:15-16).

### Bildad

'Does God turn **justice** into **injustice** (8:3)? If your children sinned against him, he delivered them into the power of their transgression. If you will seek God...if you are pure and upright, then he will restore to you your rightful place. The hope of the godless shall perish (8:13). God will not reject a blameless person, nor take the hand of evildoers' (8:20).

### Zophar

'God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves. If you direct your heart rightly, you will stretch out your hands toward him. Do not let **injustice** reside in your tents. Surely then you will be secure, and forget your misery. But all way of escape will be lost to the wicked (Job 11). The possessions of their house will be carried away, dragged off in the day of God's wrath. This is the portion of the wicked from God, the heritage decreed for them by God (20:28-29).

### Elihu

Elihu was angry at Job because he justified himself rather than God, and angry also at Job's three friends because they had found no answer, though they had declared Job to be in the wrong. Elihu asserts that evil is far from the Almighty, and he doesn't do **injustice**. He is great in power, but **justice** and abundant righteousness he does not oppress (37:23-24). For he repays a person according to his conduct and does not pervert **justice** (Job 34:10-12). Therefore, exhorts Elihu, do not turn to evil, Job, for because of this you have been tested by affliction (36:17, 21).

In brief, in this section, justice is debated. Job feels that he is blameless and God has done him an **injustice**. However, his four pastoral comforters take the opposite view that God did not do Job **injustice**. Rather, **injustice** has been done by him or his family. That is, suffering is caused by sin. In all of these arguments explaining suffering and debating justice, both parties have reached an impasse. So, who will break the deadlock? Only the Lord can snap it. Will He intervene?



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### 3. Outer side back

And now, finally, God breaks His silence after the windbag pastors have run out of puff. He gives His attention to Job from the eye of a violent storm. This storm was something like a tempest, or hurricane associated with the advancing divine glory, either to judge the guilty or protect His innocent people (Ezekiel 1:4; Nahum 1:3; Zechariah 9:14).

The Lord says to Job: “Why do you confuse the issue? Why do you talk without knowing what you’re talking about? Pull yourself together, Job! Up on your feet! Stand tall! I have some questions for you, and I want some straight answers” (Job 38:1-3).

Up to this point it has been Job who has been demanding answers of the Almighty, and seeking to know why His purpose is to destroy an innocent man. He received no answers. God remained silent for nobody can make demands of Him.

However, the tables are now turned, and it’s the Almighty asking the questions and demanding answers. The word ‘answered’ (‘anah) means to “testify against” as in 15:6 where ‘Job’s mouth condemned him, and his own lips testified against him’. The Almighty is star witness against Job who is in the dock.

#### Do you know this?

After the Lord chides Job for talking without **knowing** what he is talking about (38:1-3), He proceeds to show the little that he knows with seven ‘**know**’ questions. Here they are.

*Who determined the earth’s measurements—surely you **know**! (Job 38:5)*

*Have you caused the dawn to **know** its place (Job 38:12)*

*Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you **know** all this (Job 38:18).*

*Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness, You **know**, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great! (Job 38:21).*

*Do you **know** the ordinances of the heavens? (Job 38:33).*

*Do you **know** when the mountain goats give birth? Can you number the months that they fulfil, and do you **know** the time when they give birth (Job 39:1).*

God then confronted Job directly:

*Now what do you have to say for yourself? Are you going to haul me, the Mighty One, into court and press charges?*

*Job answered: I’m speechless, in awe—words fail me. I should never have opened my mouth! I’ve talked too much, way too much. I’m ready to shut up and listen” (Job 40:1-5).*

#### Can you do this?

Once again, God testifies against Job from the eye of the violent storm.

*I have some more questions for you, and I want straight answers.*

*Do you presume to tell me what I’m doing wrong? Are you calling me a sinner so you can be a saint? Do you have an arm like my arm? Can you shout in thunder the way I can?*

*Go ahead, show your stuff. Let’s see what you’re made of, **what you can do** (Job 40:6-9).*



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## Can you do this continued?

God gives Job a threefold test to discover what he can do, to see if he is as strong as God:

1. Catch the wicked and capture them in the grave (40:9-14). God says that if Job can do that, he would acknowledge that he is strong enough to save himself. God's monologue with Job implies that he can't catch the wicked and capture them in the grave.
2. Catch and capture Behemoth (40:15-24).
3. Catch and capture Leviathan (41:1-34).

Before we discuss Job's response to God, what can we make of Behemoth and Leviathan?

### ***Behemoth***

Behemoth is a plural Hebrew word describing the domesticated livestock of the earth that God created (Genesis 1:24, 6:7, 7:23, 8:17; Job 12:7). In Job 40:15, the plural form refers to a single creature and in so doing implies a "super beast" ([Turpin](#)). The fact that God created Behemoth as He did Job, does not support it being a mythical creature as some suggest.

Behemoth eats grass like an ox, lies in the reeds, in the marsh, and under the plants of the river (Job 40:15, 20-21). It is one of the first of God's works, but its Maker can destroy it, or being the most magnificent of all God's creatures, God leads him around like a lamb (40:19). The implied answer to God's question to Job is that while God can lead Behemoth around like a lamb, Job certainly can't catch and capture him (40:15-24)? In sum, one view of Behemoth is that no other living creature alive fits its description, and so it must be extinct, probably a dinosaur ([Turpin](#)).

### ***Leviathan***

Unlike 'Behemoth', a word that only occurs once in the Hebrew Bible (Job 40:15), Leviathan occurs six times (Job 3:8; 41:1; Psalm 74:14, 104:26, and Isaiah 27:1 twice). If Behemoth was a land creature that God made (Psalm 104:26), then Leviathan was created by God to inhabit the sea (Job 3:8, 41:1, Psalm 104:26, Isaiah 27:1). The word is derived from a root word meaning "twist, or coil," and Leviathan is also called the "fleeing serpent" in Isaiah 27:1, an expression also found in Job 26:13 where God's hand twisted or whirled the "fleeing serpent".

Moreover, the Lord's description in Job 41 suggests a fearsome, physical creature. Here, the Lord said to Job that *no one is fierce enough to dare disturb Leviathan, so is there anyone in all the earth who dares to stand up to Me? Who could ever confront Me and force Me to repay him? Everything and everyone under heaven is Mine* (Job 41:9-11).

The most we can say with confidence is that both Behemoth and Leviathan do not match any known living species today ([Turpin](#), [Paul](#)).

So, if Job is not brave enough to do battle with Leviathan, then how can he even begin to argue with God?

Further, the following texts suggest a literal Leviathan under the alternative label 'Rahab':

*By His (God's) power he stills the sea; by his wisdom he pierced **Rahab** (proud, strong one) the great sea monster...His hand pierced **the fleeing serpent** (Job 26:12-13).*

*You (Lord God) crushed the **Rahab** and pierced it; with your strong arm you scattered your enemies. The heavens belong to you, as does the earth. You made the world and all it contains (Psalm 89:9-11).*



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**Leviathan continued**

This text may allude to creation when God overcame the great deep and brought order out of chaos. But if so, why is the creature an enemy of God? And, why does God pierce it and crush as if to disable it? Do these texts imply that Rahab is a spiritual being, or symbolises one? This leads us to the following texts in which Leviathan is a metaphor for political powers.

For example, Leviathan (and Rahab) symbolises great powers such as Egypt and Babylon (Job 9:13, Psalm 74:13-14, Isaiah 27:1, 12-13, 30:7) ([Keil & Delitzsch](#)). Also, the sea serpent seems to be a reference to Egypt in Isaiah 51:9-10; Ezekiel 29:3; 32:2, but is not identified as Leviathan.

In coming to the NT, a being higher than world-powers is clearly intended ([The Pulpit Commentaries](#)). The view from Revelation 12:9, 20:2 is that Satan is seen symbolically as a great, fiery-red dragon as well as the ancient serpent, probably an allusion to Leviathan in Isaiah 27:1, the only other biblical linkage to the “dragon” and the “serpent”.

*On that day the Lord with His cruel and great and strong sword will punish **Leviathan** the fleeing serpent, **Leviathan** the twisting serpent, and He will destroy the dragon that is in the sea.*

In Psalm 74:14 Leviathan has multiple heads, a fitting symbol for John to borrow in his apocalypse for the dragon with seven heads (Revelation 12:3) ([Wallace](#)). Also, Isaiah's triple vengeance on the triple enemy, the fleeing serpent, the twisting serpent, and sea dragon, is parallel to the trinity "the devil," "the beast," and "the false prophet" (Revelation 19:20, 20:10) ([The Pulpit Commentaries](#)). So, Leviathan is symbolic of a supernatural being that only God can destroy ([Senter](#)).

But, is this symbolic connection from literal Leviathan to supernatural being that only God can destroy one that Job made? Was he able to understand that Satan, an evil heavenly creature, like Leviathan with seven heads, was the facilitator of his misfortunes, and would be destroyed in the future by his redeemer? I'm not sure that we can draw that conclusion from Job's story. God never makes Job aware of the meeting of the sons of God and Satan in the divine council, so he has to suffer in ignorance of Satan's proposition and God's purpose.

Job learns from the Lord's reference to the fearsome animals living in his day, which he cannot control but God can, that he must look to God rather than to his own assessment of his circumstances. Job needs to trust the Sovereign Lord of the Universe's omniscience, and omnipotence, who will do as He pleases without question.

Finally, Job must not be jealous of the wicked who live to a ripe old age and get rich. His proposition that prosperity is not contingent on piety is true in their case, as bitter as it felt to Job, just as Satan's proposition that prosperity is contingent on piety was not true in Job's case. Either way, the Sovereign Lord will dispense prosperity and poverty as He pleases, and Job, and every pious believer since is to trust God in spite of suffering ([Lopez](#)).

**Repentance.** Job started the suffering journey well acknowledging that *the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*. Initially, Job did not sin, nor did he charge God with moral impropriety or foolishness (Job 1:21-22). However, a change came over Job who demanded answers of the Almighty, and sought to know why His purpose is to destroy an innocent man.

The Lord's monologue to Job changed him. Now, he is fed up with himself, exasperated to the point of rueing what he has said, and retracts, repents in dust and ashes showing deep humiliation, and sorrow, as his own words reveal:

*“I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted...I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; **therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes**” (Job 42:1-6).*

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**Rebuke.** Job's friends got it wrong earning a rebuke from the Lord but they find atonement and acceptance.

*After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as **my servant Job** has. Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to **my servant Job**, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and **my servant Job** shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as **my servant Job** has done." So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the Lord had told them; and the Lord accepted Job's prayer (Job 42:7-9).*

**Restoration.** *The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the adversity that the Lord had brought upon him (Job 42:11).*

The interesting statement in this text is that the Lord brought adversity upon Job, although some assert that his misfortunes were coming not from God as he believed but from Satan, known at that time under the name Leviathan (Job 3:8). However, the text above contradicts that opinion. More accurately, the originator of Job's adversity was God; the facilitator was Satan.

I note throughout an important behaviour of God to follow. God never criticised Job to others, rather, He only commended Him. Any criticism He had for Job, He said it to His face. A great rule to follow.

For me, the striking thing about the previous passages of text is what God called Job: **my servant Job**, which occurs four times, double the number before his suffering began (Job 1:8, 2:3). Job has doubled his spiritual growth and dedication to the Lord through his suffering. And, this doubling of God's honour means much more than the doubling of his material prosperity mentioned below.

***The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters....After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. And Job died, old and full of days (Job 42:10-17).***

There is no mention of Job's wife in this text. We don't know if she was the mother of Job's additional sons and daughters, or if a new wife was part of this blessing. The fact that the text is silent about her speaks volumes. At the beginning, she was most vocal in advising Job to renounce God (Job 2:9). For her, piety didn't pay. Now she is silent, and like Satan disappears from the story. It seems that the blessing of the Lord is for Job and his children and their offspring alone. When you leave God out, He returns the favour.

To the Hebrews, the act of blessing endowed with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, and so on ([HAW Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#)). Note that in legislative Scriptures, this verb occurs often juxtaposed with the verb 'arar meaning to curse, or rather to bind or restrict. If these verbs are truly each other's opposites, we may conclude that the 'blessed' (*barak*) conveys a liberation or unrestrictedness. Its core idea is possibly the freedom which truth brings about ([Abarim Publications](#), John 8:32).

So, when it seemed highly unlikely, God brought an end to Job's calamity. Suffering which was, and explained, is now expired. And, from the Almighty, justice was delivered.

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## Conclusion

Let's remind ourselves why the story of Job was written.

At the start, Satan put the proposition to God that Job was pious because God prospered him. That thesis was proved false when Job remained pious despite the loss of his prosperity.

On the other hand, Job found in his experience that the wicked have it good, living to a ripe old age and getting rich. His counter proposition was that prosperity is not contingent on piety in some cases (Job 21:7,10, 14-15).

So, what have we learnt, along with Job?

Firstly, acknowledge that the real issue is not piety, nor prosperity but the purpose of God. Without an explanation from God of His purpose, we are encouraged, although it may cost us everything, to trust God's purpose that may allow for grotesque suffering, waiting for the day when God finally defeats the evil powers on high and on earth (Isaiah 24:21).

Secondly, that God expires Job's suffering with enormous blessing is a promise that His purpose will not allow evil, and suffering that it inflicts, to exist forever. Justice He will deliver.

Thirdly, the story of Job expands our theological horizons by showing us new insights into God and His ways that far outstrip everything we have known of Him so far ([Ortlund](#)).

## Inclusio revisited

Inclusio is a literary device to end a text where it starts. It's also known as a bracket, an envelope, or a bookend, or as I colloquially call them, 'sandwiches'. To a text, sandwiches provide structure, the outer brackets highlight the central theme, informing and shaping the reader's understanding of the middle section, the filling.

So, what's the central theme of Job, then? In the outer side front, Job was declared to be God's servant, complete, flawless, just, wholeheartedly trying to please God. In the outer side back, Job was declared to be God's servant twice as much as at the start, who spoke the right thing about God, that He is true, just, and honest. The theme? A man who was doubly honoured by God, because he honoured God.

In the light of that theme, we understand the middle part of the sandwich correctly. Men have their own explanations of themselves and other men about their relationships with God. How wrong they were in the full light of God's assessment of the same men.

## Quotes on justice

*"If it were not for injustice, man would not know **justice**" (Heraclitus)*

*If we do not maintain **justice**, **justice** will not maintain us (Francis Bacon)*

***Justice** delayed, is **justice** denied (William E. Gladstone)*

*"For I the Lord love **justice**; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense (Isaiah 61:8)*

*"The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are **justice**...just and upright is he"*

*(Deuteronomy 32:4)*

*The Lord is known by his **justice**; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands*

*(Psalms 9:16)*

*"Evil men do not understand **justice**, but those who seek the Lord understand it completely" (Proverbs 28:5)*

*When **justice** is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers (Proverbs 21:15)*

*Trusting me, you will be deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to **suffer**. But take heart, I have triumphed over this corrupt world order (Jesus, John 16:33).*





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