

JOB

Chapter 42

Job's Confession and Repentance

Then Job answered the LORD and said: 2 “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 3 ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 ‘Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’ 5 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; 6 therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

42:1–6 Job’s last recorded words are his response to the Lord’s second discourse. (CSB)

42:2 Job finally sees that God and his purposes are supreme. (CSB)

purpose. Term can refer to God’s goodwill (Jer 23:20) or people’s evil will or schemes (Ps 139:20; Pr 12:2). (TLSB)

Although Job still was unable to understand God, he was now convinced that everything takes place within the framework of God’s wisdom and of his almighty power. God is in control. He can bless and he can afflict; he can give and he can take away. Job had certainly experienced that, but he had to learn not to question God’s governance in this world, but submit to him and acknowledge that God knows best. We also need to learn that lesson. (PBC)

42:3–4 Although Job does not receive a direct answer to his questions, he admits the foolishness of his past comments by citing God’s speech. He is sorry for sitting in judgment of his Creator’s justice. He admits that he questioned the Lord out of ignorance of the Lord’s might and mercy. He thought God was unfair according to human standards, when, in fact, the Lord always acts according to His own mysterious purposes (Rm 11:33). Job breaks his silence and speaks from his heart. (TLSB)

42:5 *hearing of the ear.* Job trusted in the Lord, but his knowledge of the Lord had been like hearsay. He had lived according to the word he had learned. Now, however, through the whirlwind, he has seen directly the Lord’s might and mercy. (TLSB)

Job—and his three friends, and Elihu—had only heard of God, but now Job has seen God (see Isa 6:5) with the eyes of faith and spiritual understanding. He can therefore accept God’s plan for his life (see v. 2)—which includes suffering. (CSB)

my eyes see you. A down payment on the hope expressed in 19:26. (CSB)

He is absolutely certain, however, that death is not the end of existence and that someday he will stand in the presence of his Redeemer and see him with his own eye. (PBC)

42:6 *I despise myself.* To his humility (see 40:4–5) Job adds repentance for the presumptuous words he had spoken to God. (CSB)

repent. Hbr *nacham*, “to regret,” “be sorry.” Job recognizes himself as being a mere man (Gn 3:19). See note, 1:20. Dust is a biblical symbol for mortality (4:19). An ancient practice of repentance was to cover one’s head with ashes (2:8, 12; Is 58:5; Jnh 3:8). Dust and ashes have strong connotations of self-negation and worthlessness, yet they identify Job with the patriarchs as a humble suppliant. Repentance is never solely a human act, but something that happens to the individual when confronted by God. A change of heart occurs. This change worked by God’s Holy Spirit through the Word affects Job’s attitude as well as his life. He regrets his imprudent indictments of God’s injustice. (TLSB)

dust and ashes. Symbolic of humiliation and insignificance (see note on Ge 18:27). Job would someday use “dust and ashes” to symbolize repentance. (CSB)

In the original Hebrew there is a striking similarity in sound between those two words. The word for “dust” is *aphar* and the word for “ashes” is *epher*. That is just one example of the poetic literary qualities of this book. (PBC)

42:1–6 Job represents all of humanity’s failure in trying to avoid the wages of sin (Rm 5:12). Finally, we must admit that we seldom can comprehend God’s ways, because sin clouds our understanding. We need not put on sackcloth and ashes; God wants only “a contrite heart” (Ps 51:17). What Job could not do to save himself, God did by sending “His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). • Lord, we thank You for Jesus and for taking control of our lives by Your divine Spirit. Amen. (TLSB)

The LORD Rebukes Job's Friends

7 After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. 8 Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. 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.” 9 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.

42:7–9 Despite Job’s mistakes in word and attitude while he suffered, he is now commended and the counselors are rebuked. Why? Because even in his rage, even when he challenged God, he was determined to speak honestly before him. The counselors, on the other hand, mouthed many correct and often beautiful creedal statements, but without living knowledge of the God they claimed to honor. Job spoke to God; they only spoke about God. Even worse, their spiritual arrogance caused them to claim knowledge they did not possess. They presumed to know why Job was suffering. (CSB)

To the friends God seemed to be a cold and heartless being who punished sinners in exact proportion to the sins they committed. In their theology the law predominated and the gospel played an insignificant role. Their actions and words leave us with the impression that their religion was a cold, formal discipline lacking a personal relationship with God. (PBC)

42:7–8 *my servant Job.* The phrase is used four times in these two verses – a designation for one who stands in a special relationship with God and is loyal in service (e.g., Moses, Nu 12:7; David, 2Sa 7:5; see Isa 42:1; 52:13; 53:11). (CSB)

God accepted Job as the priest and mediator for his friends. (PBC)

Temanite. against you. Eliphaz, the leader of Job's three friends, is addressed by God. The three friends had sinned against the Lord. Job's friends portrayed the Lord as a cold, heartless being who punished sinners in proportion to their sins but did not readily have mercy. They measured the Lord according to human standards of justice, thereby misleading Job into questioning divine justice. (TLSB)

as My servant Job has. Job is now vindicated. Although no absolution is spoken, the Lord's action provides the clear forgiveness desired by Job. Job depended on a personal mediator—the Lord. Job's relationship is once again restored to what it was at the beginning (1:8; 2:3). The Lord has accepted Job's recantation and gives Job the title "My servant." This suggests a close relationship of mutual friendship and high honor as referenced in the beginning of the story (1:8). Other noteworthy "servants" include Moses, Joshua, and Isaiah's Suffering Servant. (TLSB)

42:8 *seven bulls and seven rams.* Equivalent to several years' wages for an individual person, or what was required of nobility (Nu 23:1; 1Ch 15:25–26). (TLSB)

a burnt offering ... pray ... prayer. To appease the Lord's righteous anger. See pp 170–71. Job, in remarkable irony, becomes the mediator for his friends. He is appointed the priestly task of praying for them. In other words, Job returns to the duties of his spiritual leadership (1:5), acting as the patriarchs had prior to the establishment of a formal priesthood. Job can approach the Lord directly, knowing He will always do what is right and proper. (TLSB)

42:9 *prayer.* Job's prayers for reconciliation are heard and answered, so that Job's friends are forgiven (Jas 5:16; 1Jn 5:16). Job serves as priest and mediator, anticipating Jesus' role for us (1Tm 2:5–6). Job's experience of suffering becomes a greater model later in the OT (Is 53:12) and ultimately in the NT (Lk 23:34; Heb 7:24–28), when Jesus approaches the Lord's throne and makes intercession for all sinners (Rm 8:34). The irony of Job praying for his friends is enhanced by the fact that they argued that God was angry with Job. The reality is that their comments so displeased God that only Job can be their mediator! Even their offerings were insufficient. (TLSB)

42:7–9 Here we see Job praying for his friends, who, though they acted friendly, were actually his spiritual enemies. Job did not accuse his friends and ask for judgment, but followed the Lord's gracious lead and acted as their mediator before the Lord. Jesus, who suffered for us, also pleads for us daily. He is our priestly intercessor and our personal Savior from sin, death, and the devil. • Lord, teach us the friendly arts of intercession and patience, for You have shown such friendship to us. Amen. (TLSB)

The LORD Restores Job's Fortunes

10 And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends. And the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. 11 Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and ate bread with him in his house. And they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him. And each of them gave him a piece of money and a ring of gold. 12 And the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. And he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. 13 He had also seven sons and three daughters. 14 And he called the name of the first daughter Jemimah, and the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-happuch. 15 And in all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters. And their father gave them an

inheritance among their brothers. 16 And after this Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, four generations. 17 And Job died, an old man, and full of days.

42:10 Job's prayer for those who had abused him is a touching OT illustration of the high Christian virtue our Lord taught in Mt 5:44. Job's prayer marked the turning point back to prosperity for him. (CSB)

Job's restoration is an act of grace, not a reward for faithfulness. His mediating actions again show that he is no longer the accuser of the Lord, but one who in repentance and recognition receives double from a gracious God. As vv 11–15 show, the Lord provides for those who experience the cross. (TLSB)

twice as much. Job's blessings exceed what he had originally possessed. Yet that was not his motivation for service. Only the Lord's vindication avails for him, and the Lord is seen as a life-giving healer. (TLSB)

42:11 *Then came to him.* During his time of affliction, Job had complained that he was ostracized (19:13–19). Now the family returns, and Job becomes a host once again. Hospitality was one of the supreme characteristics of nobility in biblical times. Job has been blessed with sufficient wealth that he can be generous to all who have needs or desires. In biblical times, eating together showed that a relationship was strong or restored (Dt 14:26b). We do not know why Job's family was not at his side throughout the earlier chapters, but the Lord does not criticize them for failing to visit Job. (TLSB)

each of them gave. Job's family and friends brought great riches to him, providing literally "silver pieces" (unique term used only here, in Gn 33:19, and in Jsh 24:32, suggesting this was an early form of money and worth much) as well as gold rings—either finger rings or earrings (Gn 35:4; Jgs 8:24). Job's riches come from God, although God uses Job's friends and family as divine instruments of providence. God has apparently blessed them also, so that they can be generous to Job. (TLSB)

The Hebrew word translated by this phrase is always found in patriarchal contexts (see Jos 24:32; Job 42:11); Jos 24:32. – Before his affliction Job had been a generous and hospitable man. Now again, after his restoration, he made people feel welcome at his table. This verse informs us that his brothers and sisters (probably including also cousins and other relatives) as well as other acquaintances came to eat with him and comfort him. (PBC)

42:12–16 The cosmic contest with the Accuser is now over, and Job is restored. No longer is there a reason for Job to experience suffering—unless he was sinful and deserved it, which is not the case. God does not allow us to suffer for no reason, and even though the reason may be hidden in the mystery of his divine purpose (see Isa 55:8–9)—never for us to know in this life—we must trust in him as the God who does only what is right. (CSB)

The livestock here is double of what he had at the beginning of the book. If we count Job as the first generation, he saw his great-grandchildren. If we count his children as the first generation, he saw his great-great grandchildren. In either case he must have seen many descendants, particularly since he had ten children. Psalms 127 and 128 declare that children are a great blessing from God. Job enjoyed that blessing. (PBC)

42:12 The number of animals is in each case twice as many (see v. 10) as Job had owned before (see 1:3). (CSB)

Job's possessions increase twofold as a sign of God's gracious beneficence. All that he had lost (1:3) in terms of sheep, camels, yokes of oxen, and female donkeys are returned to him with interest (Ex 22:4). (TLSB)

42:13 *seven sons and three daughters.* To replace the children he had lost earlier (see 1:2, 18–19). (CSB)

Job's restoration is composed not only of material possessions. Children are given to him again. Because children are priceless gifts from God, they cannot be replaced like cattle or property on a two-for-one basis. (The LXX doubles the number of children.) Because his original sons and daughters were in heaven, it can be understood that he did have his family double in size. Chrys: "He suffered afflictions, you say. True. But those afflictions were the occasion of great good. His substance was doubled, his reward increased, his righteousness enlarged, his crown was splendid, his prize glorious. Both his spiritual and temporal blessings were augmented. He lost his children, but he received, not these restored, but others in their room, and those too he had safe for the Resurrection. Had they been restored, the number would have been diminished, but now having given others in their stead, He will present them also at the Resurrection" (NPNF 1 13:504). (TLSB)

42:14 Each name is symbolic of something beautiful. Their Hbr names, transliterated in the text, can be translated as "Turtle Dove," "Cassia" (Cinnamon), and "(Flask of) Antimony" (an ebony-colored powder used as eye shadow in ancient times). (TLSB)

Jemimah. Means "dove." (CSB)

Keziah. Means "cinnamon." (CSB)

Keren-Happuch. Means "container of antimony," a highly prized eyeshadow (see note on Jer 4:30 – Antimony, a black powder used to enlarge the eyes and make them more attractive (see 2Ki 9:30; Eze 23:40)). (CSB)

42:15 *an inheritance among their brothers.* According to Mosaic Law, a man's inheritance was divided among the sons in the family (Nu 27:1–8; 36). However, Job is so blessed with property and goods, and his daughters are so pleasing, that he divides his goods among both sons and daughters. Job's experience of the Lord's fairness, justice, and equality in life is demonstrated in his own family dealings. Curiously, Job's wife is not mentioned here, although because the children are identified, we can assume that she remained at his side as he remained faithful to her (31:9–10). (TLSB)

42:16 *lived a hundred and forty years.* The longevity of a true patriarch (see note on Ex 6:16 – In the OT, attention is usually called to a person's life span only when it exceeds 100 years.). (CSB)

42:17 *old and full of years.* Eliphaz's prediction was more accurate than he realized (see 42:16–17); Ge 25:8. (CSB)

As in his other blessings, Job's life is lengthened as well, considering that the normal life span after the flood was closer to 70 years (Ps 90:10). If he was 70 at the time of his affliction, he would have lived longer than Terah (205), Abraham (175), Isaac (180), and Jacob (147). The length of Job's life points to his living during the patriarchal era of Israel. He also is blessed to see his children's children's children, a true blessing (Ps 128:6; Pr 17:6). (TLSB)

42:17 *Job died.* No mention of an afterlife is given here. Certainly, his death was like that of patriarchs and faithful servants where the epitaph “full of days” was used: Abraham (Gn 25:8), Isaac (Gn 35:29), David (1Ch 29:28), and the priest Jehoiada (2Ch 24:15). In the certain confidence of one who believes God, the author does not need to reaffirm Job’s resurrection faith; he will see God (19:25–27). One may wonder why there is no mention of Satan at the end of the story. It is likely that chs 40–41, which describe the Lord’s power over Behemoth and Leviathan, also signify His power over Satan. See notes for those chapters. Ephr: “[Death boasted to Satan,] You went down to contend with Job, and he conquered you and came up; but I, after he had conquered you, then conquered him” (*NPNF* 2 13:207). Yet death loses its boast before Job’s Redeemer! Jerome: “[Job] hopes for a resurrection; no, rather he knew and saw that Christ, his Redeemer, was alive, and at the Last Day would rise again from the earth. The Lord had not yet died, and the athlete of the Church saw his Redeemer rising from the grave” (*NPNF* 2 6:439). (TLSB)

42:10–17 We often take our blessings in life for granted: our families, our friends, even our possessions. If they would be taken away, we would undoubtedly be filled with remorse and regret for not valuing them as we ought. Even when everything is wonderful, we can forget about God’s gracious providence and gift of justification. The Book of Job returns us to the roots of our existence—our faithful Lord. In the midst of suffering comes the bright light of victory in our Redeemer—Christ. Lutheran hymn writer Paul Gerhardt penned Joblike hymn stanzas during the difficult Thirty Years’ War, a century after the Reformation: • “Why should cross and trial grieve me? Christ is near With His cheer; Never will He leave me. Who can rob me of the heaven That God’s Son For me won When His life was given? When life’s troubles rise to meet me, Though their weight May be great, They will not defeat me. God, my loving Savior, sends them; He who knows All my woes Knows how best to end them.” Amen. (*LSB* 756:1–2). (TLSB)