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If Satan cannot kill a godly person, he will endeavor to discredit him in any way possible.

The Book Of Job

Agony, Epiphany, Humility and Ministry

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Introduction

This document is truly a *commentary* in that it is a collection of comments rather than a complete analysis or narrative discussion of the Book of Job. It does not address every verse nor provide a complete exposition of the passages dealt with. It is designed as a database of notes to help clarify the point of the book and draw out its practical insights for spiritual life. This commentary will also highlight some of the humor in Job that may escape the casual reader.

The commentary is arranged in single-paragraph blocks and uses digital-style references to facilitate computer searches. For computer sorting purposes, biblical references use a three-letter designation for book titles and zeroes as place holders in the chapter and verse numbers. Consequently, the passage traditionally designated Job 1:1 will appear as JOB 01.01, while Job 19:10 does not require the place holders and will appear as JOB 19.10. Paragraphs given a double-zero designation, such as JOB 00.01, contain introductory information and are not related to a specific verse of the text. Biblical references embedded in the commentary text omit the unnecessary zero place holders but use the dot rather than the more traditional colon. References that do not designate a book refer to verses in the text of Job.

Blue type in the body of this document reveals a clickable link.

Comments on the English text of Job refer to the New International Version unless otherwise noted. The author has also utilized the standard Hebrew text of Job (Heb.), as well as the Septuagint version (LXX), and makes a reference or two to a manuscript (MS) of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Because of the humor in the book of Job, and the insights it contains on spiritual warfare, I've marked humorous passages with a smiley face, and passages dealing with the spiritual battle with a warrior:



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Job's sixth reply: ch. 21

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If only I could present my case to God in court!: ch. 23

Why doesn't God set days to arbitrate disputes and dispense justice?

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Job's Restoration To Ministry

The Commentary

- **JOB 00.01 [SETTING FOR BOOK]:** The story of Job is pre-Mosaic, possibly pre-Abrahamic. Uz was a grandson of Shem, great-grandson of Noah (Gen. 10.23). A “land of Uz” could hardly be recognized earlier than 100 years after the flood. Therefore, if the flood occurred around 2,000 BC, the earliest time period for Job’s life would fall between 2,000 and 1,800 BC. Some commentators suggest a later date, based on terms that seem anachronistic in the text, but a later vocabulary could well have crept into the earlier oral or written history of Job. Suggesting a post-Abrahamic setting, Aristeas the Exegete, a 1st-century b.c.e. Jewish scholar, “uses a tradition where Esau marries Bassara from which marriage issues Job. However, other traditions of the period have Jacob killing Esau in a civil war (Jub. 37—38 esp. 38:2; T. Jud. 9; b. Sot\ a 13a; Gen. Rab. 100: 63d).” (Source: Freedman, David Noel, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, (New York: Doubleday) 1997, 1992.) Though we don’t know Job’s lineage, strong local traditions place Job’s dwelling place and burial place in Syrian territory not far from today’s Golan Heights.
- **JOB 00.02 [AUTHORSHIP AND DATE]:** Abegg, et al, mention a MS of Job written in the paleo-Hebrew script. This MS dates to ca. 225-150 BC, but implies an earlier source dating back to before the Babylonian exile. “Rabbinic tradition attributes the book of Job to Moses.” (Source: *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*.)
- **JOB 01.03 [A STRATEGIC TARGET]:** In the book of Job there is much implied about the spiritual battle that is not laid out for us explicitly. It is odd, for example, that once Satan succeeds in afflicting Job with boils, thus setting up the situation where God can do His sanctifying work in Job, Satan disappears from the story and we never hear about the end of the challenge in the heavenlies. We are left to imagine Satan’s comeuppance. Nevertheless, as we learn Satan’s tactics from the rest of the canon and from life experience, we can read some things between the lines in Job. When we read in verse 3 that Job “was the greatest man among all the people of the East,” we realize that Job was a strategic target for Satan because of Job’s influence in the larger community. In fact, Job bemoans the loss of this influence in chs. 29 and 30. When God asks, in verse 8, “Have you considered my servant Job?” He asks ironically, for He knew very well that Satan had already taken an interest in this powerful representative of the True God. In relatively recent times, Satan had narrowly missed destroying the entire human race by dragging them down into depravity. Only Noah and Noah’s family had slipped through his hands. Now, once again, one man stood between Satan and the corruption of the world. Satan took a keen interest in bringing the human race down again, but this time he would begin with the most powerful and righteous representative that God had among mankind. If Satan could destroy Job’s faith, the rest of the human race would surely follow! 
- **JOB 01.01-05 [JOB’S STRAYING CHILDREN]:** When our children stray from Christ and His laws, our automatic response as parents is, “Where did I go wrong.” Parents often do bear some of the responsibility for their children’s weaknesses, but sometimes the influence of a child’s own fallenness far outweighs any error on the part of parents. The book of Job reveals that even perfect parents must fight spiritual battles on behalf of straying children. Job provides an early example of a parent interceding for his children. 
- **JOB 01.05, 11; 02.05;09 [BARAK = TO BLESS OR TO CURSE]:** When Job worries that his children may have “cursed God in their hearts,” he actually uses the word

barak, which normally means to *bless*. *Barak* thus appears euphemistically four times in Job. We can hear the sarcasm in Satan's voice when he tells God, "...strike everything he has, and he will surely *bless* you to your face."

- **JOB 01.06A [THE SPIRITUAL REALM]:** The book of Job conveys the reality of the spiritual (non-material) realm in the strongest of terms. Not only do we see the "sons of God" and Satan appearing before Elohim-YHWH, but spirits appear to men and YHWH Himself answers Job out of the storm.
- **JOB 01.06B [THE ADVERSARY]:** Though the NIV uses *Satan* as a proper name in these passages, the Hebrew is actually *the Satan*, i.e., *the Adversary*, and thus is more of a title. Note, however, that this is chronologically the earliest reference to Lucifer by this title. It's possible that Lucifer gained his title as the Adversary (or Accuser) because of his adversarial activities against Job. However, it's likely that by the time of Job and the other patriarchs, the Serpent from Eden had become recognized by all as the arch adversary of God and of all mankind. 
- **JOB 01.07 [ROAMING]:** *Roaming* connotes freedom from restraint; roaming or walking over the earth implies some kind of authority over it. Satan's answer to the LORD (here and in 02.02) has a haughty tone. 
- **JOB 01.08 [THE SCHOOLING OF SATAN]:** Let us recognize that God has had an age-long purpose of "schooling" Satan and the other fallen angels. It is to God's eternal glory that those heavenly creatures who rebelled against Him shall at last own that His manifold wisdom is and always has been immaculate. Just as God demonstrated this to the heavenly principalities through the sanctification of Job, He continues to demonstrate it through the church (Eph. 3.10). 
- **JOB 01.09 [THE HEDGE]:** Satan complains of God having placed a hedge of protection around Job. This appears to be the case for all God's people, but we jeopardize that hedge by our sins (see Isaiah 5.1-5). Satan required special permission to penetrate the hedge around Job, for Job was a "perfect" man. Our need then, is to avoid idolatry and all manner of sin that would jeopardize our hedge of protection, and to repent when we recognize sin in our lives and ask God to restore that hedge. If we lead blameless lives, then we can recognize that God is working out deeper purposes through us should our hedge be penetrated through no fault of our own. 
- **JOB 01.12 [THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE ENGAGED]:** Because explicit mention of Satan disappears after chapter two, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that the spiritual battle continues on an intense level throughout Job's story. Not only are Job's friends infected with the Adversary's spirit of accusation, but his wife becomes Satan's very mouthpiece urging Job to do what Satan promised God Job would do, namely, "curse God" (see note at 02.09). This is not the end of the invisible spiritual engagement, however. Both Job and his friends come under demonic oppression or influence. Job is troubled by nightmares (07.13-15), and begs for relief from them (13.21). Eliphaz is misguided by a frightening spirit that comes whispering to him in the night (04.12-17). Job wonders aloud what spirit is inspiring Bildad's innuendo (26.1-4). Self-confident Elihu brags that a spirit compels him (32.18). We best understand the ferocity of this battle, however, when we recognize Satan's goal. The Devil's ultimate goal, of course, 

is to destroy Job and every other human being. Since, however, Satan is not permitted to utterly destroy the child of God, and in Job's case is not even permitted to kill his body, the Old Serpent aims at neutralization. The way to neutralize the child of God is to get that child to *disengage from God*. Granted, the true believer never *completely* disengages from his Savior, but Satan all too often succeeds in getting the believer to grow cold toward his God, to stop drawing near to God, to give up on intimacy with God. This is what Satan worked so hard to accomplish with Job. Satan had to neutralize Job's strategic influence in the community (see note at 01.03). If he could not accomplish it by killing Job, he would try to destroy Job's reputation, and more importantly, try to chill Job's heart toward God. Job loved God, but if Satan could get that love to cool, then people would no longer be drawn to God through Job's fervent devotion. If Satan could kill Job's hope, people would stop asking Job for the reason behind that hope (cf. 1 Peter 3.15). It is in pursuit of these destructive ends that Satan relentlessly hammers upon Job with every means that comes to hand.

- **JOB 02.09 [SPIRIT OF ACCUSATION (A)]:** The spirit of the Accuser, the Adversary, begins to infect those close to Job. Job's wife is first to vent her judgmental anger toward Job for the loss of their children and estate. In the LXX of this verse she makes this lengthy statement: "How long wilt thou hold out, saying, Behold, I wait yet a little while, expecting the hope of my deliverance? for, behold, thy memorial is abolished from the earth, even thy sons and daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb which I bore in vain with sorrows; and thou thyself sittest down to spend the nights in the open air among the corruption of worms, and I am a wanderer and a servant from place to place and house to house, waiting for the setting of the sun, that I may rest from my labours and my pangs which now beset me: but say some word against the Lord, and die." With Satan's encouragement, Job's wife jumps to the conclusion that Job had been living a double life, that he was secretly indulging in some wickedness against God. In a retaliatory attitude she encourages him to end his hypocrisy. Using the very word that Satan used to predict Job's fall (01.11; 02.05), she tells her husband to bless (= curse) God openly so that the populace will rid her of such a husband (cf. 1Kings 21.13). What a great example of how Satan plays dirty: he was forbidden to kill Job himself, but he had no scruple about inciting others to kill Job for him! 
- **JOB 03.25 [JOB'S FEAR]:** Here is a clue to God's sanctifying purposes for Job. What was it that befell Job that he had been fearing? The loss of his children? The loss of his wealth or influence? Health? This perfect man was nevertheless made of flesh and still had to be cleansed of a subtle idolatry. Ironically, Job was known as a man who "feared God." In a sense, what Job feared, namely God Himself, has come upon him to do a deep work in his soul.
- **JOB 04.07-08 [SOWING AND REAPING]:** With profound insensitivity to the fact that Job's children have been killed, Eliphaz states the principle of Gal. 6.7. Worse, he first presuppose its corollary! He assumes in verse 7 that whatsoever a man reaps he must surely have sown. However, our Lord Jesus is the answer to his rhetorical question: Who being innocent has ever perished? People who suffer a tragedy have not necessarily sown the seeds of that tragedy. The principle of sowing and reaping cannot be fully understood outside of the larger context of spiritual warfare.
- **JOB 04.15-17 [SPIRIT OF ACCUSATION (B)]:** Eliphaz has assumed that Job's catastrophes have come from God. Therefore, there is obviously some dispute between God and Job. But Eliphaz has always known Job to be a man of integrity, so how can 

God be just in afflicting Job? An evil spirit comes to Eliphaz in the night moments of half-sleep and asks a simple question: “Can a man be more pure than his Maker?” What subtlety! The evil spirit voiced no lie, but firmly planted the thought in Eliphaz’s mind that Job had in fact been hiding some impurity and now God has found him out.

- **JOB 05.06-07 [ELIPHAZ’S LAW OF CAUSATION]:** He took his time getting to the point, but Bildad reminds Job that trouble doesn’t happen without a reason but comes with the job description of the fallen race. Bildad’s implication is that Job’s troubles have come upon him for giving in to his fallenness. Bildad is right that no trouble happens without cause, but is wrong in assuming that the immediate cause of this trouble lies in Job (2.3). Again, life cannot be fully understood apart from the bigger picture of spiritual warfare.
- **JOB 05.17-18 [GOD CHASTENS WHOM HE LOVES]:** Eliphaz states a clear and certain truth: God chastens in order to correct. The only problem is that he misapplies it to Job, assuming that Job had merited *severe* correction. We should understand that though God chastens His children, He does not do so in a burst of anger as human fathers do. On the contrary, God would not bring major catastrophe to chasten whom He loves, without first sending many gentle warnings. Only after we stiffen our necks against God’s gentle calls to repentance does He bring severe chastening. It follows that catastrophe unpreceded by warnings probably comes at the instigation of the Adversary, rather than as a chastening from the Father.
- **JOB 05.19-22 [HOW MANY TROUBLES WAS THAT?]** I’ve got two words for you: Count Eliphaz’s troubles. He gets seven troubles by using two different words for famine and mentioning destruction twice. 😊
- **JOB 05.26 [WE WOULDN’T WANT YOU TO DIE IN ILL HEALTH]:** How comforting can this blessing be: May you come to the grave in full vigor! This reminds me of the Yiddish joke in which a man wishes a friend a happy birthday by saying, “May you live to be a hundred years and three months!” His friend replies, “Thank you, but why ‘and three months?’” “Well,” says the first, “I wouldn’t want you to die suddenly!” On the other hand, perhaps Bildad was an early proponent of the “health and wealth gospel.” 😊
- **JOB 05.27 [CONFIDENCE OR ARROGANCE?]:** Job’s “friends” steadily gain confidence in their suspicions, accusations and advice. Eliphaz expresses it first by saying, essentially, “I know I’m right, so you’d better take what I’m telling you and apply it to yourself.”
- **JOB 06.14-20 [INCONSISTENT FRIENDS]:** Job accuses his friends of allowing their devotion to dry up, now that hard times have come. A true friend will not turn suddenly judgmental when catastrophe falls upon someone. Remember the unmerited blindness of the man in John 9, and don’t jump to the conclusion that tragedy in a person’s life is a judgment from God.
- **JOB 08.04 [SPIRIT OF ACCUSATION (C)]:** The consensus grows that Job and his family had hypocritically lived double lives. Shocking though it was to the unsuspecting community, some of Job’s family were secretly sinning in a manner deserving of death. Bildad declares this verdict against Job’s children. 
- **JOB 09 [THE TEMPTATION TO DESPAIR]:** Job’s attitude slips badly. He feels he is already condemned (v. 29) though he has done nothing wrong (v.21). What hope does he have of ever regaining God’s favor (v. 2)? Job begins to think of God as arbitrary

and capricious (vv. 22-24). He sees God as inattentive (vv. 16,17), rather than the infinite God who gives every person His undivided attention.

- **JOB 09.32-35 [LEGAL PRINCIPLES]:** Job begins to think in terms of legal arbitration. He longs for an advocate. This is a proper yearning, for we all need an advocate and God desires that we realize it (1 John 2.1). However, Job himself now labors under the false fear that God is judging him.
- **JOB 12.02 [DRIPPING SARCASM]:** Wouldn't it be fun to deliver this line in a dramatic presentation of Job's story? 
- **JOB 14.14 [AFTERLIFE IN JOB]:** The book of Job assumes an incorporeal component of human existence (32.8). The implication of that reality is that existence does not end at bodily (physical) death. Job envisions people resting in death rather than ceasing to exist (3.13-19). Job asks, "If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come." He knows that a person who dies will not live on earth again in the present age, but he also knows that a "renewal" is coming. It is marvelous to realize, contrary to the guffaws of liberal scholars, that as early as the patriarchal age there was the hope of resurrection. Job's expresses confidence of his own resurrection in chapter 19: "And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes — I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" Job not only expects to see God after death, but expects to see Him with his own eyes, reclothed in his own flesh!
- **JOB 16.02 [MISERABLE COMFORTERS]:** Though God works all things together for good in the final tapestry, the rips and tears and stains of the present are *real* calamities. Job understood the principle of Romans 12.15. "Have I not wept for those in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor?" he asks in 30.25. Job's friends had started out well, for "When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads" (02.12). Their compassion soon gave way to judgment, however, and they began to suggest, even insist upon things that were not true about Job. The heart cannot find solace, however, in what the mind rejects as false (and vice versa). Job complains in 21.34, "how can you console me with your nonsense? Nothing is left of your answers but falsehood!" What Job desperately needed was a shot of truth to help him make sense of his life's sudden meltdown. Little did he know that he was about to see the Truth with his own eyes.

**Why are we regarded as
cattle and considered stupid in
your sight?**

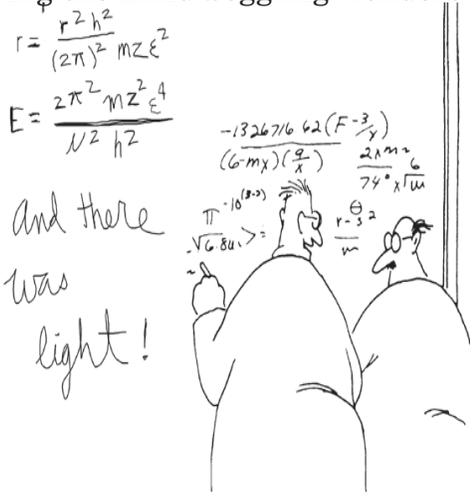
Job 18.3



- **JOB 19.25A [THE LIVING ONE]:** In our English translations, Job says, “I know that my Redeemer lives,” but in the Hebrew, the life word is actually an adjective. It’s not so much that Job’s Redeemer lives, but that He is *the Living One*, the One with life in Himself (John 5.26).
- **JOB 19.25B [THE FINAL WORD]:** The words translated “in the end” or “at the last” are actually a Heb. adjective that stands parallel to “Redeemer.” It is the adjective YHWH applies to Himself in Isaiah 44.6 and 48.11 when He calls Himself the “First and the Last.” Job’s Redeemer is the “one coming after,” i.e., “the Last.” When Job has disintegrated in the dust, the Lord will stand upon that very dust and declare that Job was indeed righteous, contrary to the innuendo of his friends.
- **JOB 22 [SPIRIT OF ACCUSATION (D)]:** Eliphaz continues relentless in his attack upon Job. “God is not benefited by righteousness,” he says, “but God does punish sin.” Eliphaz suggests some specific ways that Job may have sinned. He rebukes Job for implying that God may be ignorant of the facts. He reminds Job that though God seems to bless evil men for a while, He destroys them before their time. Eliphaz urges Job to repent and be restored. 
- **JOB 24.18-25 [SLOW JUSTICE]:** Job recognizes that the exaltation of the wicked is only for a season, but he wants that season to be shortened by regular intervals of God meting out justice. If God would mete out justice more regularly, then the wicked would soon be condemned, *and* Job would soon be vindicated.
- **JOB 26.01-04 [MY ARE YOU SPIRIT-FILLED!]:** In one of Job’s great sardonic rejoinders, with tongue in cheek he praises his talkative friends. Job insightfully asks them, “whose spirit spoke from your mouth?” They of course would claim unction from God, but another spirit has been at work in them. 
- **JOB 29.1-30.1 [JOB NEUTRALIZED WITHOUT RECOGNIZING THE ENEMY]:** In this chapter, Job bemoans his loss of influence in the community. Whereas he once “broke the fangs of the wicked,” and men listened to him expectantly waiting in silence for his counsel, now even the dregs of society mock Job. This loss of influence points up a major goal of Satan’s: to undermine the influence of the godly. Of course the most direct route to ending a godly person’s influence is to kill him (in a non-martyr situation), and Satan would have done that to Job if God had permitted it (ch. 2.6; viz. John 8.44). **If Satan cannot kill a godly person, he will endeavor to discredit him in any way possible.** It is instructive to note that at this stage, Job gives no indication that he recognizes the hand of Satan in his circumstances. We who have the benefit of retrospect, should discern Satan’s work more readily when he endeavors to undermine our influence for the gospel. 
- **JOB 31 [JOB RESTS HIS CASE]:** Returning to legal language, Job signs his brief and ends his words. No one can convict him of harboring known sin. Job *is* perfect in that he had greater integrity than his contemporaries and was at God’s appointed place of personal growth.
- **JOB 32 [ELIHU ENTERS THE DEBATE]:** A member of the audience now throws in his two cents. Elihu comes forward at the end of the story to stand as the epitome of spiritual arrogance. His mother did not help him learn humility by naming him Elihu. You’d find it hard to be humble too if your name meant, “He is (my) God.” (Just think, whenever anyone asked, “Who’s he?” a person would have to respond, “Him? Oh, ‘He is (my) god.’”) Elihu summarizes Job’s position thusly: “I am without sin but God treats 

me like an enemy...I am innocent but God denies me justice” (33.8-11; 34.5,6). Elihu implies that Job simply does not see his sin yet, but God will bring conviction through chastening (33.12-33). For Elihu the practical issue is this: Job implies that “it profits a man nothing when he tries to please God”—this can only lead to impiety (34.9; 35.3). Elihu is convinced that Job *is* guilty and that he is adding rebellion to his previous sins (34.33-37). Elihu errs in assuming that Job deserves his disaster, but he is right about this: God is not an oppressor (37.23). So why in God’s name is Elihu beating Job up some more?

- **JOB 36.04 [CAREFUL, ELIHU!]:** Elihu brands Job an ignoramus (34.35; 36.16), and then speaks of his own knowledge in the same terms as God’s (36.4; 37.16). Then he condemns Job in the most complete terms (36.16-21). Red flag, Elihu! You’re walking on dangerous ground!
- **JOB 38.01 [YHWH ANSWERS OUT OF THE STORM]:** God enters the drama to put things into perspective. How? By showing the men their inability to: control nature, control God, fathom God’s purposes, or save themselves. God’s presence arrests everyone’s attention, for its manifestation is as a raging storm (Psalm 50.3).
- **JOB 38.19 [THE ABODE OF LIGHT]:** What can compare to the creation of light when God said, “Let there be light”? “About 1,000 billion (10^{12}) photons of sunlight fall on a pinhead each second; when you look at a faint star, your eye receives a few hundred photons from that star each second.” (Source: Gribbin, John; *Q is for Quantum*) God begins to give Job perspective by parading the mind-boggling wonders of creation.



MAN WOULD LIKE TO THINK HE UNDERSTANDS LIGHT

- **JOB 40.08 [MORE PERSPECTIVE]:** Here is a key question: “Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?” Key perspective: “Everything under heaven belongs to me.” (41.11)

- **JOB 40.12 [HUMBLING THE PROUD]:** Cf. Zechariah 14.12. The ability to humble the proud is particularly a divine attribute and priority (40.11-14). By this power God judges the wicked and teaches the righteous their dependency upon Him.

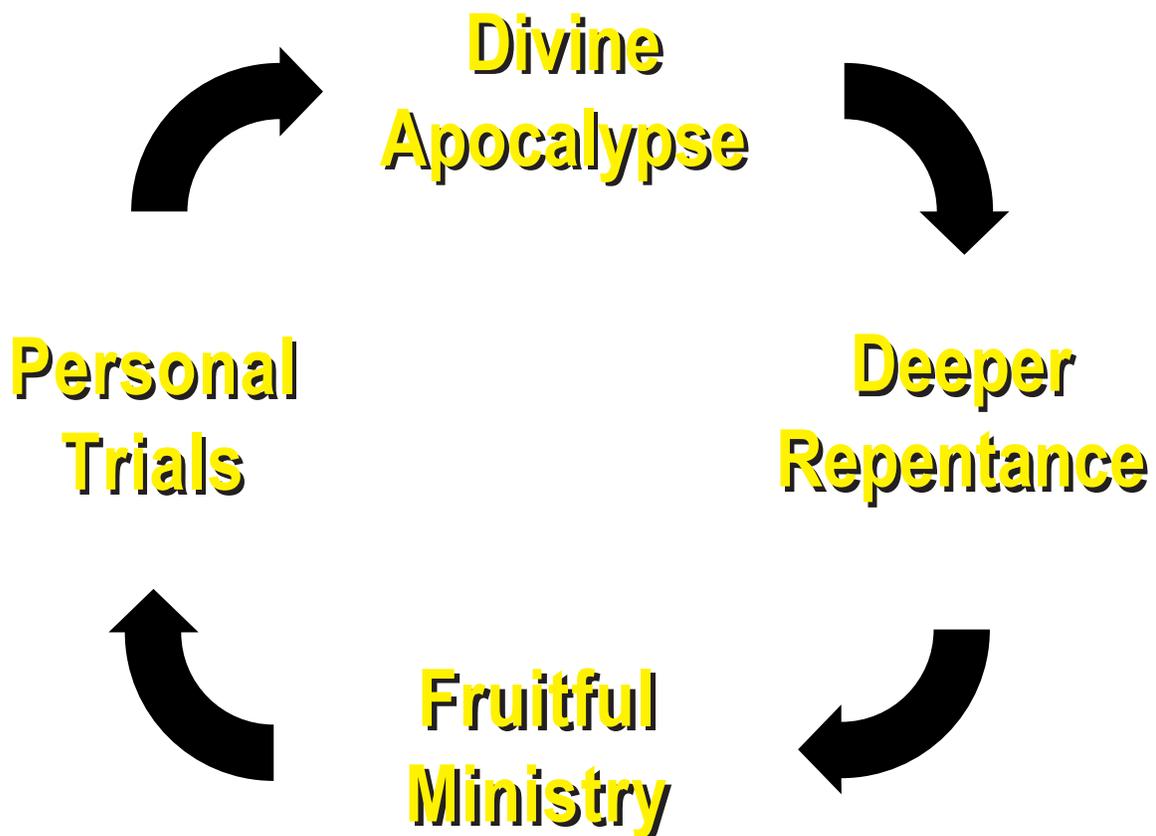
- **JOB 42.02 [JOB’S SECOND CONFESSION]:** Job acknowledges the deeper purpose in his trials. Job sees the answer to his questions now. The answer is God Himself. The purpose of Job’s trial was to prepare him for a deeper revelation of the relational, self-disclosing God.

- **JOB 42.05-06 [JOB REPENTS]:** What does Job repent of in the end? Probably an array of things, but most of all for thinking that he had understood the big picture and for the resultant creeping doubt regarding God’s goodness toward him. God had had deeper purposes all along, and Job’s patience had given out too soon.

- **JOB 42.07-10A [JOB’S INTERCESSION]:** What’s the fruit of a deeper revelation of God? More effective ministry to our friends and neighbors. What a tremendous commendation of one’s ministry of intercession to have it said, “and the LORD accepted Job’s prayer.” Philosophers, theologians and scholars who do not believe in or understand intercessory prayer cannot appreciate that a deeper purpose in Job’s trial was to make him a more powerful

prayer warrior. Here's the sequence: (1) Go through trials; (2) Learn of God through the fresh revelation of His character occasioned by the trials; (3) Deepen your personal repentance; (4) Intercede for others more effectively because you now have a better understanding of God and His ways. Or more concisely: agony, epiphany, humility and ministry.

- JOB 42.07-10B [THE HUMBLING OF ELIHU]: What more stinging rebuke could Elihu have received than to have God simply not acknowledge Elihu's presence! I imagine Elihu went to the justice of the peace the next day to apply for a legal change of name. 😊
- JOB 42.17 [JOB'S HEALING]: It is implicit in the account of the latter part of Job's life that God healed him of his skin disease. This provides an instructive insight on divine healing: Whether or not Satan is involved in our disease, healing comes when God has accomplished His purposes in the trial. It behooves us then, when we pray for healing, to seek God regarding the deeper purposes, if any, in the illness. 



The story of Job reveals a common cycle in the lives of the people whom God uses.

The net product of this cycle is increasing intimacy with the Creator.