



Job

Come Follow Me

Dating the text of Job

Scholarly consensus holds that it was either written, or substantially revised, during the time of the Babylonian Exile – probably after the Book of Deuteronomy but during the same period as much of the Deuteronomistic History (Austin, p. 96).



Job

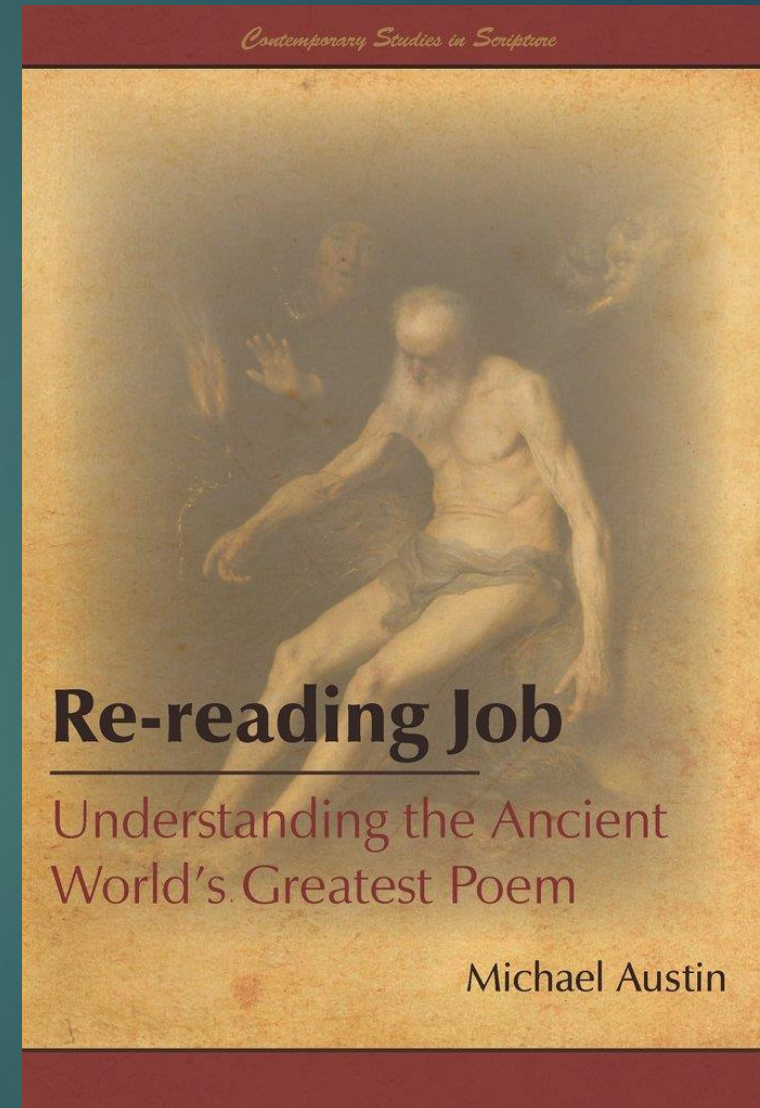
There are 2 parts to the book of Job

The prose frame – Job 1-2 and Job 42:7-16

The poetry center – Job 3 – Job 42:6

The Job poem is hard to read, and it says things that make us uncomfortable. The Job frame, on the other hand, is simple, easy to understand, and it says the kinds of things that we think the Bible is supposed to say.

(Michael Austin, *Re-reading Job*, p. 7)



Job: Two books

There are 2 parts to the
book of Job

The prose frame – Job 1-2
and Job 42:7-16

The poetry center – Job 3
– Job 42:6



A Brief Guide to Job

Prose Frame (Prologue): 1–2

The Wisdom Dialogue: 3–27

Job's Initial Speech: 3

Eliphaz's First Speech: 4–5

Job's Response: 6–7

Bildad's First Speech: 8

Job's Response: 9–10

Zophar's First Speech: 11

Job's Response: 12–14

Eliphaz's Second Speech: 15,

Job's Response: 16–17

Bildad's Second Speech: 18

Job's Response: 19

Zophar's Second Speech: 20

Job's Response: 21

Eliphaz's Third Speech: 22

Job's Response: 23–24

Bildad's Third Speech: 25

Job's Response: 26–27

(Zophar does not give a third speech)

The Hymn to Wisdom: 28

Job's Final Speech: 29–31

The Speeches of Elihu: 32–37

God's Answer to Job: 38–42:6

God's First Speech: 38–40:2

Job's Response: 40:3–5

God's Second Speech: 40:6–41:26

Job's Response: 42:1–6

Prose Frame (Epilogue): 42:7–17



Job – Some challenges

1. The story challenges much of the theology of the Bible.

2. When Job speaks of a גֹּאֵל “Redeemer,” he is not necessarily prophesying of Jesus Christ. He is invoking his right to an **avenger**. The Hebrew root word that Job uses here (and which Christian translators have long translated as “Redeemer”) is *ga'al*, which means something more like “avenger” or “reputation fixer.”

Job – Some challenges

This was someone who had the charge to preserve the reputation of a deceased family member. The role of a *ga'al* varied widely depending on the circumstances. It could require someone to avenge a death with bloodshed or to provide evidence exonerating somebody who died under a cloud of suspicion. But it could also include marrying a deceased man's wife and siring children in his name – as Boaz did with Ruth, acting in his role as *ga'al*. (Austin, p. 9)

Job – Some challenges

3. **The finale of Job**, in which he is richly rewarded for his faithfulness, **is part of the frame, not the poem**, which means that it is part of what the author is trying to undercut. The traditional Job story ends with God restoring Job's health and doubling his property. **If we take this as the ultimate meaning of the Book of Job, we will end up reinstating all of the assumptions about rewards and punishments that the poet worked so hard to get us to reject.** It is crucial, therefore, that we understand that this final scene is part of the frame tale, not the poem, and that one of the most important functions of the poem is to question the ideology of the frame. (Austin, p. 10)

Job – Some challenges

4. Contrary to Job 2.10, Job complains. A lot.

Examples:

Job 7.15-16; 10.1; 19.7-20



Job 19.7

Job claims that God is not just:

הֵן אֶצְעַק חֶמְס וְלֹא אֶעֱנֶה אֲשׁוּעַ וְאִין מִשְׁפָּט

“Look, I scream “Outrage!” I am not answered, I shout and there is no justice.” (Robert Alter translation)

“Dude! I cry out for help due to violence (hamas) and I am not answered, I will cry out and still there is no mishpat/justice/fairness.” (Mike Day translation)

Mishpat, a justly ordered society, is one of the **foundational values of Judaism**. The prophets railed against the absence of mishpat in the days of kings who abused their power. (Mishpat, [The Jewish Chronicle](#))

Job – He does complain!

A complaining Job

3.3-11

6.8-9, 23-24

10:1

19:7-20

30:19-20, 27-30



Job continues...

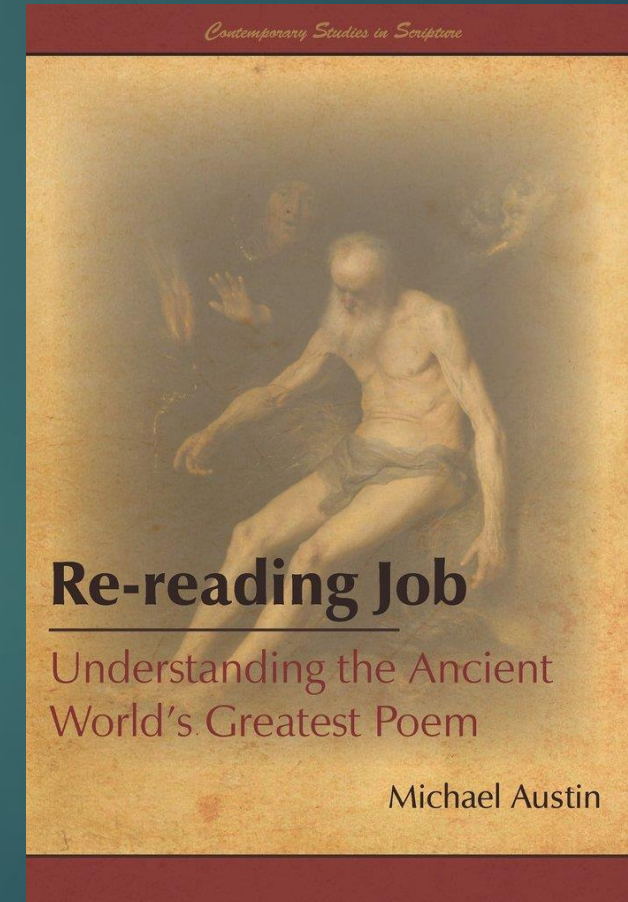
“Know that God has undone me and encircled me with his net... My path He blocked and I cannot pass, and on my ways He set darkness. My glory He stripped from me, and took off the crown from my head. He shattered me on all sides – I am gone. He uprooted my hope like a tree”

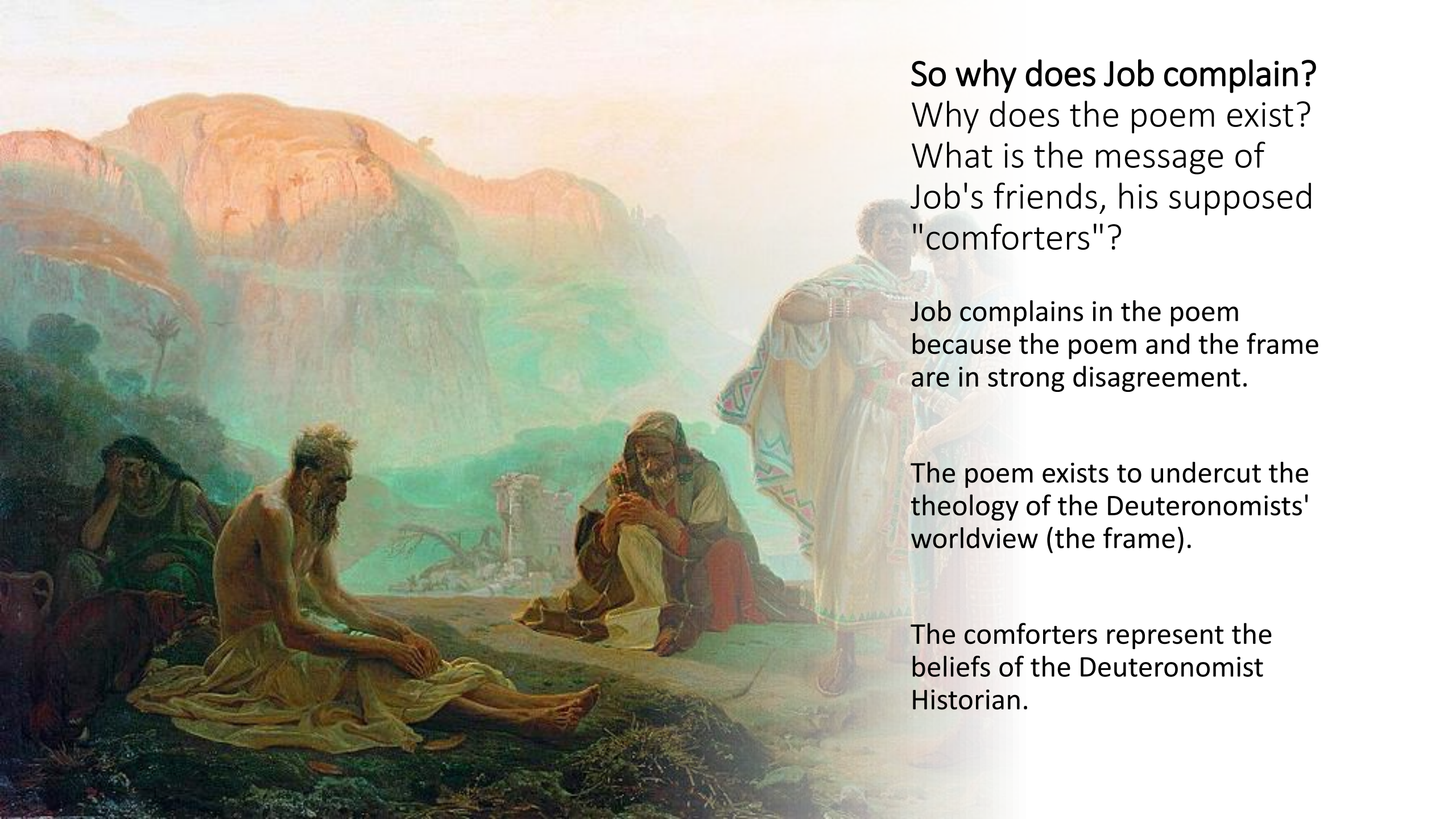
(Job 19.6, 8-10, Alter translation).



Job

The much lauded “patience of Job” ends with chapter 2, after which Job complains almost constantly about God. The phrase “the patience of Job” has become idiomatic among people who have never opened a Bible. Religious materials often collaborate to reinforce this reading by ignoring virtually all of the poem and focusing on the lessons of the frame. This ensures that the Book of Job says the sorts of things that Bible stories are supposed to say. It tells us to worship God in good times and bad – and it warns us against forsaking God and “sinning with our lips.” It gives us a great example of a man who loses everything and remains steadfast – and who is rewarded in the end for his patience and faith. And it allows us to comfort (but really to criticize) those who are complaining about something in their own lives with the allegedly cheery thought that, at least, they aren’t as bad off as Job. (Austin, p. 7)





So why does Job complain?

Why does the poem exist?

What is the message of

Job's friends, his supposed

"comforters"?

Job complains in the poem

because the poem and the frame

are in strong disagreement.

The poem exists to undercut the

theology of the Deuteronomists'

worldview (the frame).

The comforters represent the

beliefs of the Deuteronomist

Historian.



The “Comforters” (Job 2.11) rest nearly all of their arguments on the law of retribution

Elihu says, "Where have the righteous been destroyed?... They that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same" (Job 4.7-8).

Elihu argues similarly in Job 34.10-12

Elihu lays out the argument perfectly

For Job has said, "I'm in the right,
and God has diverted my case.
He lies about my case,
I'm sore-wounded from His shaft for no
crime."

Who is a man like Job,
lapping up scorn like water?
He consorts with wrongdoers
and walks with wicked men.
For he has said, "What use to a man
to find favor with God?"
Therefore, discerning men, hear me:
far be from God any wickedness,
From Shaddai any wrong



Elihu lays out the argument perfectly

For a man's acts He pays him back,
and by a person's path He provides him.
Surely God does not act wickedly,
and Shaddai does not pervert justice.
Who assigned the earth to Him,
and placed the whole world with Him?
Should He set His mind on man,
his living breath He would gather to Him.
All flesh would expire together,
man to the dust would return.
If you understand, then listen to this,
hearken to the sound of my words.
Would one who hates justice hold sway,
would you call the great Righteous One
wicked? (Job 34.5-17, Alter translation)

Elihu lays out the argument perfectly

Discerning men will say to me
and a wise man listening to me:

“Job speaks without knowledge,
and his words are without any sense.”

Would that Job might be tested forever
for responding like villainous men.

For he adds to his offense,
makes crime abound among us,
and compounds his talk against God. (Job 34.34-37, Alter translation)

The “Comforters” offer “Sunday School answers” to Job

The first comforter, Eliphaz, takes his role seriously. He does not (at least initially) suggest that Job suffers because he has sinned. Rather, he says everything that he can to try to make Job feel better. But his suggestions fall flat. **They sound a lot like the kinds of suggestions we might today call “Sunday-School answers”:** pray, read the scriptures, follow the prophet, etc. These are the sorts of answers that one might give about a theoretical person’s suffering (“Yes, Mr. Brown, I know that you have had a bad day with all of your children dying and all, but try to remember that your Father in Heaven loves you”). But these answers do not respond in any significant way to Job’s real suffering. How could they? (Austin, p. 45-46)

The “Comforters” offer “Sunday School answers” to Job

1. Follow your own advice (Job 4.3-4).
2. Trust God! (Job 4.6-7).
3. Nobody is perfect (Job 4.17-19).
4. Keep calm and carry on (Job 5.2-5).
5. Everyone suffers! (Job 5.6-7).
6. Pray (Job 5.8-9).
7. God is testing you because he loves you so much (Job 5.17).
8. It's all going to be okay! (Job 5.22-27).

Eliphaz fails to see the irony in his own remarks... he still sees Job's suffering abstractly enough to read from a script- “things to say when somebody is suffering.” He does not know how to engage with Job as a real, suffering human being. (Austin, p. 46-51)

Job's barbed response to Eliphaz

My brothers betrayed like a wadi,
like the channel of brooks that run dry.
They are dark from the ice,
snow heaped on them.
When they warm, they are gone,
in the heat they melt from their place.
The paths that they go on are winding,
they mount in the void and are lost.

(Job 6.15-18, Alter translation)





Job explains that his
comforters are "miserable"

שָׁמַעְתִּי כְּאֵלֶּה רַבּוֹת מִנְחֻמֵּי עַמְל כְּלָכֶם

I have heard many things of this sort,
Miserable comforters are you all! (Job 16.2)

Note that his friends come to "comfort" him in Job 2.11

Applying the text in our lives

Don't say "at least"... when others are in pain.

It is okay to say, "I'm sorry. I wish I knew what to say. That must be hard!"



Ways we can read the poem

The Job poet ultimately insists that being a good friend is more important than holding firmly to religious orthodoxy- and this, I believe, is the poem's most consequential critique of the Deuteronomist. Deuteronomy tells us that we must reject (often by stoning to death) friends and family members who stray from the faith. It leaves no room for loving people when we think they are wrong (Austin, p. 101).

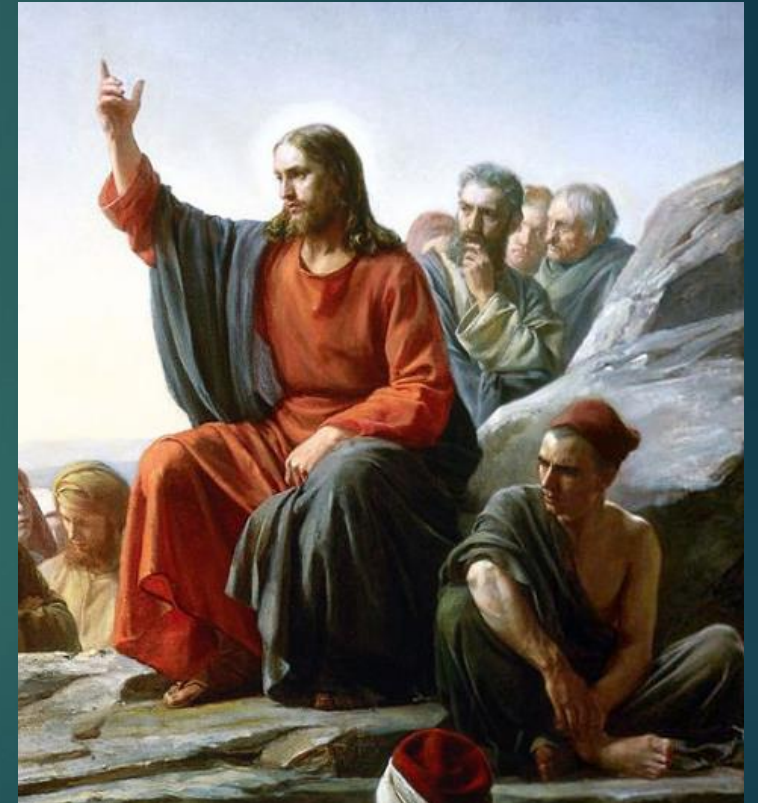
(On Austin's claims that Deuteronomy condones stoning others for their alternate beliefs, see Deuteronomy 13.6-11)

Ways we can read the poem

The Job poet dared to critique, and dismantle, the most powerful religious orthodoxy of his culture by confronting it with a set of facts that it could not accommodate. But beyond refuting this one particular orthodoxy, the poet demonstrated for us in excruciating detail how rigid orthodoxies of any kind can cause us to renounce both overwhelming evidence and basic human decency before abandoning our most cherished beliefs. The most profound readings of Job, I believe, recognize that the great poem is not just about suffering, or retribution, or God, or Satan, or knowing that Redeemers live; it is about how rigid orthodoxies can destroy our relationships and, thereby, our humanity (Austin, p. 101).

Jesus pushed against Deuteronomist thinking

Under the law, with its jealous and demanding God, all bonds of family and friendship must be sacrificed to ideology when a conflict between them occurs... This aspect of Deuteronomistic religion would eventually become the focus of the intense critique that we now call the Sermon on the Mount. There and elsewhere, Jesus argued that we cannot separate our relationship with other people from our relationship with God. Human beings matter, even if they are women taken in adultery, or prodigal sons, or members of foreign tribes—all of whom, according to the Deuteronomist, had to be put to death. Jesus begged to differ (see Matt 25.40). This was perhaps the most important theme of Christ's earthly ministry (Austin, p. 100).



How the frame undoes the center of Job



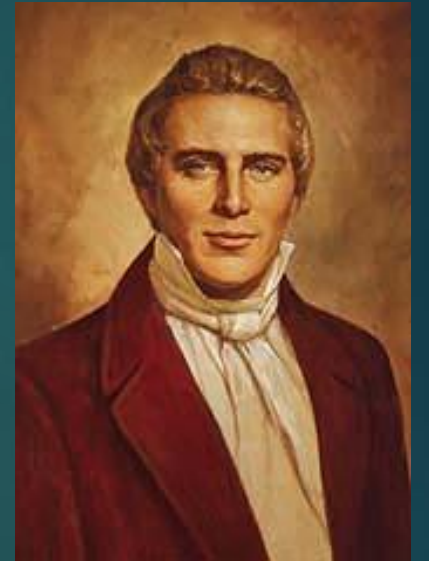
More than anything else, the Job poet wants us to know that the frame tale gets its own moral wrong. By not only restoring, but doubling, Job's material wealth, the frame ends up embracing exactly the theological narrative it should be rejecting. The Job poem is the valiant attempt of a great writer- perhaps the greatest of the ancient world- to set the story straight (Austin, p. 92).

Perhaps the poem and the frame belong together...

Consider this insightful statement from the Prophet Joseph Smith: “By proving contraries, truth is made manifest.” (Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:428.)

And this one from Brigham Young: “All facts are proved and made manifest by their opposite.” (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 433.)

(Elder Lynn G. Robbins, [Tasting the Light](#), 2015 Devotional)



Other ways to read the text: Evil should be challenged

Alma 14 – Alma & Amulek's converts

Abraham 1.10-11 – The Daughters of Onitah

Matthew 27.45-50

Solution: Moroni 10.34; Daniel 12.2-3; Revelation 21.1-4; 22.1-4

I find it noteworthy that **there are many times** in the scriptures that **evil is challenged. Rarely does it go unchecked.** It is as if the Lord is asking us to stand up and be counted, for us to step to the plate and be the good that we seek in the world. In the case of Alma 14, let us not forget Zeezrom, as well as Alma and Amulek taking a stand for truth. It is a good exercise to think of times when evil seems to be victorious and ask the question, "Can you think of people in these situations that stood up for what was right?"

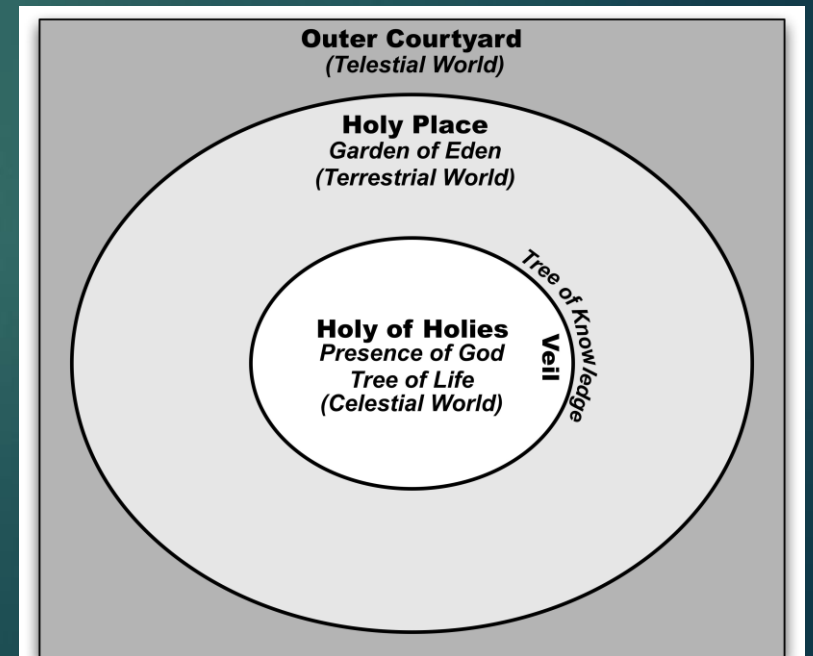
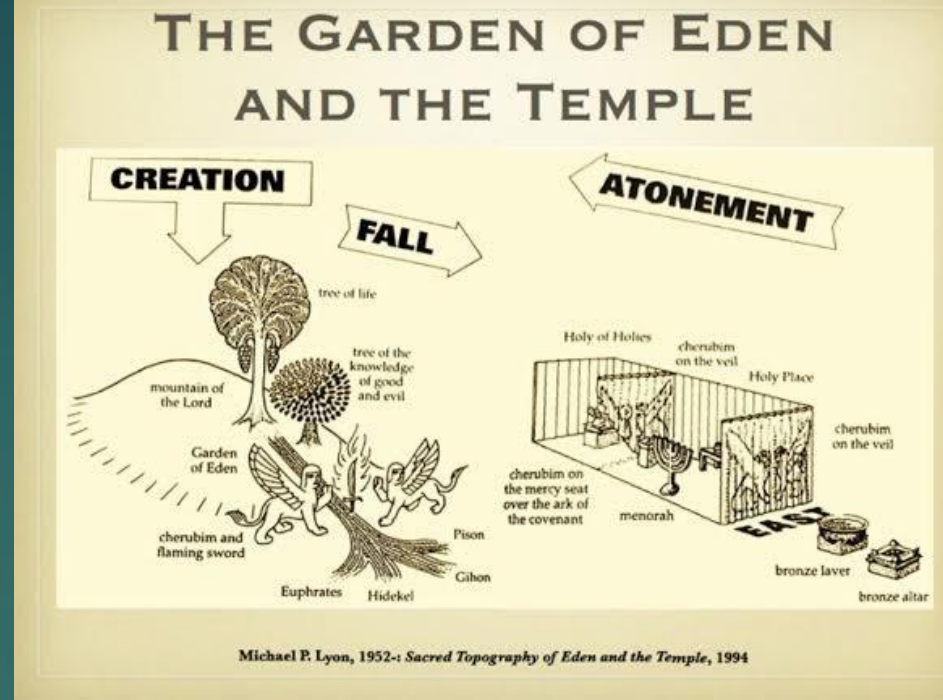
Hymn to Wisdom – Job 28

Where is wisdom? – v. 12

You cannot purchase it with money – v. 14-19

Wisdom is God's possession – v. 23-27

The implication – v. 28, [see also Alma 32](#)





Job's Revelation

Behemoth and Leviathan – Job 40-41

Job's Revelation



Behemoth and Leviathan – Job 40-41

Behemoth: the power of procreation and fertility. Note that he has the “virile strength” in his belly, the “sinews of his thighs” and his “tail”... “Behemoth is the Primal Life Force that gives people the energy to do things and to have an impact on the lives of people for good or ill... Thousands of years after Job, Freud would call it Id and Eros... (Austin, p. 82)

Job's Revelation



Behemoth and Leviathan – Job 40-41

Behemoth is “contained” in the text, “hedged” (Alter) or “embowered” (Austin). The King James translates it as “covered.” God in this text is powerful enough to contain or to hedge the powerful force of procreation.

Job's Revelation



Behemoth and Leviathan – Job 40-41

Leviathan could also embody the power of creation, or violence. This most likely is the awesome chaos creature in Mesopotamian and Canaanite myth, the sea monster that is slain in the act of the creation of the cosmos. God has the power to play with or to subdue this force as one captures a bird for little girls (Job 41.1-7)

Job – The Great Questions

In many respects, the “big questions” usually attributed to the Book of Job – “Why do bad things happen to good people?” – is one of the least interesting things about it. The poet asks much more interesting questions than this – questions like “how can we keep from being miserable in a universe that we can neither predict nor control?” “why do the ideological structures that we create to help us understand the world end up preventing us from acting effectively in it?” and “what is our moral responsibility to other people whom we believe to be wrong, but who desperately need our support and affection?” (Austin, p. 14)

Job – A sod reading of the text

The Testament of Job, which Dr. Hugh Nibley says “lays special emphasis on temple ordinances” – we read, at the very beginning, “Job tells his three virgin daughters and seven sons to form a circle around him (the second sons name is Choros): “Make a circle around me, and I will demonstrate to you the things which the Lord expounded to me, for I am your father Job who is faithful in all things.” (Testament of Job, translated by Hugh Nibley, “Abraham’s Creation Drama,” Eloquent Witness (CWHN 17), p. 466.)

[χοροσ= dance, round dance, ring, chorus.

Χωροσ=area/room/space. Χωρεω/χωρησομαι= to make room or give way] An online translation of the Testament of Job is available [here](#).

Job – A sod סוד reading of the text

The book of Job can be understood as **Job's spiritual journey** in response to questions posed by God. Existential questions arising within God in the Prologue are shared with Job, eventually stripping him of everything dear to him. Job internalizes these questions in his darkened and bitter state during the Dialogues. He holds on, evolving toward a transformed understanding of God and man, and finally reaches God's presence and experiences redemption.

Job – A sod סוד reading of the text

Job, אִיּוֹב ee-yobe, whose name potentially means either “Where is the divine father?” or “the persecuted one,” is a non-Israelite living in an unnaturally idyllic world. He is rich and healthy, has a large and loving family, and is esteemed as the greatest man of his people. Furthermore, he is a member of a community with strong social bonds, a shared religion, and a common language. Job experiences all of this as the presence and friendship of God (see Job 29:2–7) and responds by living blamelessly, serving his fellow man, and defending the poor (see Job 1:1, 29:11–25). Nonetheless, as subsequent events will demonstrate, Job is, as yet, lacking both in self-knowledge and knowledge of God. He has personally experienced only goodness, tasting only the sweet.

[Note that he is from עוֹיָן, the word for counsel, or plan. This word is also associated with the tree: עֵץ, etz. Indeed, the word uz means “wooded.” He is in the garden!]

Chartres Cathedral

Note the labyrinth in the building as one approaches the altar, as well as the center symbol.



Job – A sod סוד reading of the text

Job leaves the garden...

Satan goes out from God, and Job's hedge begins to collapse.

After these experiences, Job proclaims that he is “naked” עָרוֹם, *arom* = uncovered (Job 1:21- see Gen. 2.25), like Adam and Eve in the garden after eating the forbidden fruit (see Genesis 3.7–11).

Job – A sod טוד reading of the text

Job removes himself in solitude to an ash dump, resigning himself to **a dreary waste** (compare with 1 Nephi 8:4–7), while describing his state in terms of **bitterness** (see Job 7:11, 9:18, 10:1, 13:26, 23:2, 27:2) and **darkness** (see Job 16:16, 19:8, 23:17, 30:26). Job has thus gone through a kind of fall, brought about, in some sense, by the machinations of Satan but nonetheless occurring at the initiative of God.

Job – A sod סוד reading of the text

When we look directly at Job's suffering, it is caused either by the sins of other humans or natural disasters, all exacerbated by Job's relative ignorance. Such suffering, which Job experiences to an extreme degree, is part and parcel of life in this created, risky world, which is filled with people who voluntarily abuse others and which is subject to unpredictable natural events. I argue that the book of Job gives no definitive answers to the reasons for innocent suffering. The very ambiguity of the book on these points invites the reader to ponder and question.

Job – A sod סוד reading of the text

The book of Job is **not primarily about suffering**. It is about **a journey** from blissful ignorance through darkness and bitterness to a transformed relationship with God. It is about seeking an ever-stronger connection to God, based on truth, no matter what the circumstances. Job's journey is initiated by God in response to existential questions within God.

Job – A sod סוד reading of the text

The existential questions are then taken up by Job as a result of his suffering as he is driven to wonder what it means to be created in the image of God, why innocent suffering occurs, and what God's relationship is to justice. In this process, Job is proved and tried at God's initiative, much like all humanity:

“We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; and we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:24–25).

Job – A sod סוד reading of the text

The **tearing down of Job's hedge** can be understood as **passing through a veil** — passing from a protected and secure environment to a wild and unpredictable natural world. Job is blocked from returning to his previous life. He corresponds to Adam and Eve after leaving the Garden of Eden, who are barred from re-entry and direct access to the tree of life (God) by cherubim and a flaming sword (see Genesis 3:24; Alma 42:2 3).

Job – A sod סוד reading of the text

After his dialogues with his friends, Job prepares to meet God.

At this point in Job, we reach **a new level or stage** in the drama. Having tasted the wisdom of man (mixed with scripture) and found it wanting, Job has moved beyond dialogue with the friends and waits, instead, on God. In chapter 28, Job will meditate on the nature of wisdom, concluding that it ultimately must come from God.

Job – A sod סוד reading of the text

On **five occasions**, Job invokes self-imprecations — **curses against himself** — if he has not been or will not be true to his oath of innocence. The most explicit of these is Job's statement: "If I have raised my hand against the fatherless ... then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket" (Job 31:21–22, rsv). These self-maledictions are a further expression of Job's self-sacrifice or self-consecration in absolute fidelity to God and his fellow man.

Job – A sod טוד reading of the text- The Elihu dialogue – chapters 32-37

Elihu as a type of the διαβολος = accuser

In three places, Elihu's mask slips completely:

1. “Behold, God is great, and **we know him not**” (Job 36:26, rsv; emphasis added).
2. “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?” (Job 37:19–20, rsv; emphasis added).
3. “God is clothed with terrible majesty. **The Almighty — we cannot find him**; he is great in power and justice” (Job 37:22–23, rsv; emphasis added).

Job – A sod סוד reading of the text – Chapters 32-37

In other words, Elihu (“He is my God”) says that man cannot find, speak to, or know God. Unlike a true prophet who facilitates his listeners’ journeys toward God, Elihu is a false prophet, doing anything he can to stop Job from meeting God.

(David Noel Freedman, “Is it possible to understand the Book of Job?” in *Bible Review* (April 1988), 29. Freedman's view is supported by Elihu's virtual equivalence with Satan in the Testament of Job, a probable Greek-Jewish work written in the first century B.C. or A.D. See James H. Charlesworth ed., “Testament of Job” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* Vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 860-863.)

Job – A sod טוד reading of the text – Job at the Veil Ch. 38.1-42.6

God finally answers Job. But the answer, unlike those of the friends, gives no reason for Job's sufferings. It is as though those sufferings are simply left enshrouded in the mystery of their givenness, their having happened. All God does is to deny Job's charges of dark purpose and indifference to justice and to ask Job **three sorts of questions: Who are you, Where were you? Are you able?** On the face of it these questions are rhetorical and have the specific force of impossible questions to which the proper answers are, **I am nothing, I was not there, and I am not able.** (Janzen, *Job*, p. 225)



Job – A sod סוד reading of the text – Job “contending” at the veil – Job 40.1-5

The image of Job “contending” with the Lord at the veil resonates with several others. **The patriarch Jacob** wrestled all night with a man (God) before seeing him face-to-face and [Page 167]receiving a blessing instead of the requested name of God (see Genesis 32:22–30). **Enos wrestled** all day before God, hoping to experience a remission of sins, before hearing the Lord’s voice and probably seeing His face (see Enos 1:2–8, 19). **Habakkuk, like Job, struggled** with the presence of violence and injustice in the world (see Habakkuk 1:2–4) before hearing God’s voice (see Habakkuk 2:1–4) and seeing God’s glory (see Habakkuk 3:3–6). Job’s experience at the veil is profitably compared with these.

Job – A sod סוד reading of the text – Job penetrates the veil 42.1-6

- 2a. You know that you can do all things,
- b. and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
- 3a. “Who is this that obscures design
- b. by words without knowledge?”
- c. Therefore, I have uttered what I have not understood,
- d. things too wonderful for me which I did not know.
- 4a. “Hear, and I will speak;
- b. I will question you, and you will make me to know.”
- 5a. I have heard you with my own ears,
- b. and now my eye sees you!
- 6a. Therefore, I recant and change my mind
- b. concerning dust and ashes. (Janzen translation)



Job – A sod טוד reading of the text- Entering into God's presence

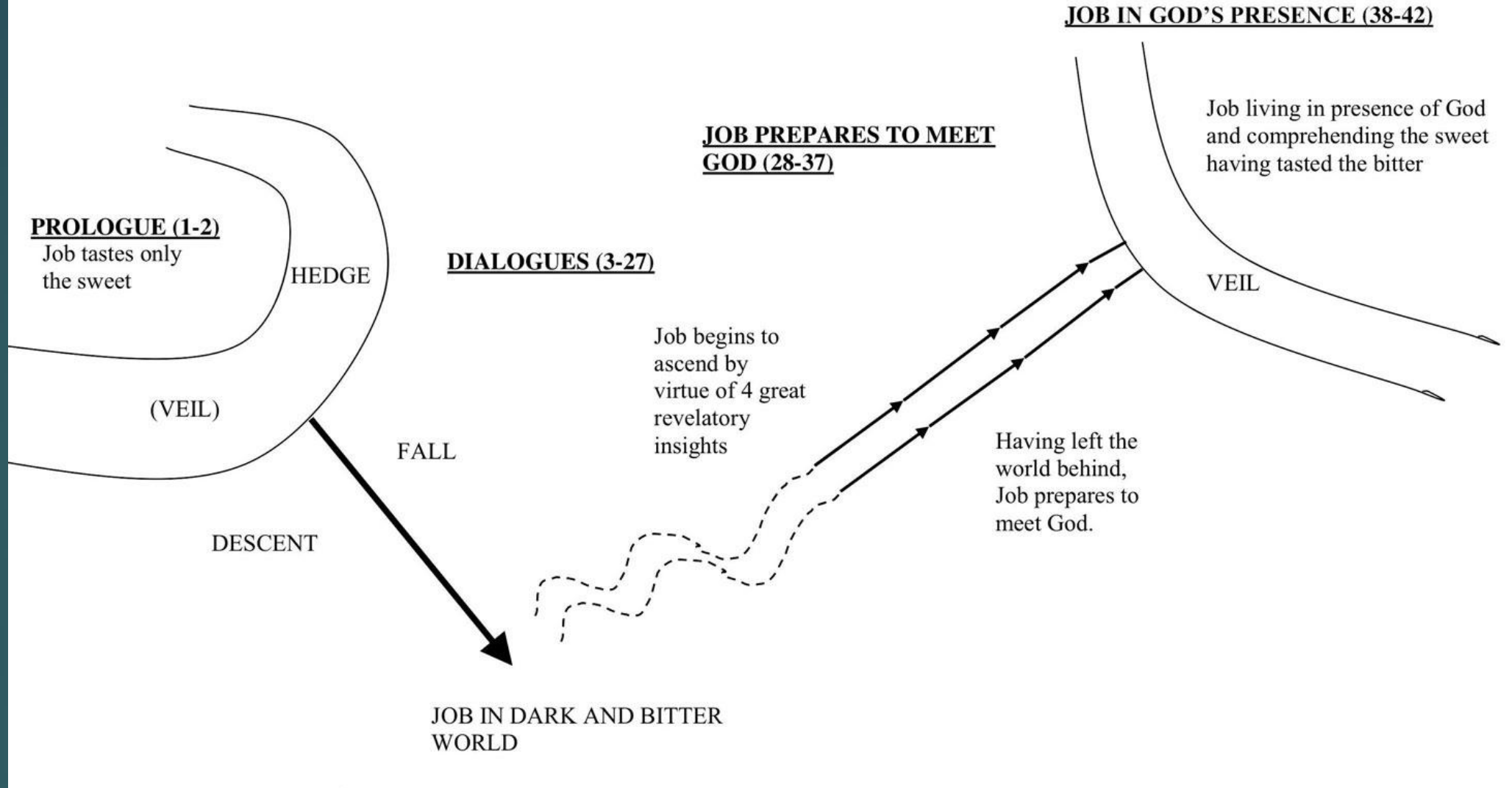
Most translations of verse 6 have Job repenting, self-abasingly, in dust and ashes, illustrated by the rsv translation above. By doing this, these translators align themselves with the friends in suspecting Job of some sin (pride?). However, in my view, such translations distort the meaning of the book of Job. **Far preferable is Janzen's translation, which has Job changing his mind concerning dust and ashes (concerning mankind).** As Janzen says about Job: "Now all his questions and charges are dissolved."

Job – A sod טוד reading of the text- Entering into God's presence

His structures of understanding are melted down in the presence of Yahweh.” As Job's transformation to gold is completed, he understands that **man's vocation is to “take up the divine image through engagement with the partly determinate, partly indeterminate character of the world”** and the potential for innocent suffering that this implies.

Thus, God spoke (in the Prologue), extending His arm toward Job, and has now taken a man (Job) out of the crowd for His name (compare to Deut. 4:34; Exodus 6:6–12). God's covenant grip on Job is eternal.

(See: Stirling, [Job: An LDS Reading](#), *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 12 (2014): 127-181.)



Stage I

Job experiences the blessing/presence of God but with limited comprehension.

Stage II

Job experiences the dark and bitter world but receives 4 great revelatory insights, aiding his quest for the face of God.

Stage III

No longer in communication with the friends/crowd, Job prepares to meet God by binding himself in covenant fidelity and withstanding Elihu.

Stage IV

Penetrating the veil, Job enters into a transformed life in God's presence.

Job – His revelatory insights

After noting that a tree, though cut down, may bud and put forth branches at the scent of water, Job laments that a man dies and rises not again (see Job 14:7–12). But then Job, in a flash of inspiration, suddenly receives his **first great revelatory insight**:

If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed!

If only you would set me a time and then remember me!

If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come.

You will call and I will answer you. You will long for the creature your hands have made.

Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin.

My offenses will be sealed up in a bag; **you will cover over my sin**. (Job 14:13–17, niv)

Job – His revelatory insights

Surrounded by hostile mockers and fearing a violent death (see Job 16:10–15, 17:2), Job realizes that there is no advocate for him anywhere on earth, and he appeals to the earth itself to serve as a witness by not covering his blood nor blotting out his cry (see Job 16:18).

In this awful state, Job receives his **second great revelatory insight**:

Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend. (Job 16:19–21, niv)

In the midst of unrelenting persecution on earth, **Job, in a moment of inspiration, reaches out to a perceived advocate in heaven and prays that God Himself will provide the necessary pledge or witness on his behalf** (see Job 17:2–3). This second revealed insight has a powerful effect on Job. Whereas he had previously yearned for death (see Job 3:1, 11; 6:8–9; 7:16), Job now refuses to yield to the grave or worm by letting go of his hope (see Job 17:11–16). Job has a new kind of hope, born of travail, that transcends anything he could have possessed before his “fall” (compare with Moses 5:11; D&C 29:39).

Job – His revelatory insights

In this turmoil, Job receives his **third great revelatory insight**:

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me! (Job 19:25-27, rsv)

This third insight is more emphatic than the first two, consistent with Job's ever firmer grip on an understanding of God. The idea of physical resurrection and seeing God are clear in the RSV translation above. Less clear is the idea, also contained in the Hebrew, that **the Redeemer/Advocate will be God Himself**. This concept is expressed in the New English Bible: "I shall discern my witness standing at my side and see my defending counsel, even God himself" (19:26-27).

Job – His revelatory insights

Ignoring Eliphaz, Job expresses a fervent wish to find God and present his case in person, reaffirming his previous resolution to seek God no matter the consequences (see Job 23:3–5, cf. 13:13–24). Job's overwhelming desire is a face-to-face meeting with God, not by contrived repentance as recommended by Eliphaz (see Job 22:21–30), but in honesty and fairness.

Pondering meeting God, Job receives his **fourth great revelatory insight**:

Job – His Insights

Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power? No; he would give heed to me. There an upright man could reason with him, and I should be acquitted forever by my judge. Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand I seek him, but I cannot behold him; I turn to the right hand, but I cannot see him. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. (Job 23:6–10, rsv)

Significant changes have occurred in Job. **He now realizes that he can speak to God with reason and honesty** (contrast with Job 9:32). He understands that God will not simply overwhelm him with His greater power and that acquittal can be expected (contrast with Job 9:20, 30–31). Not yet having seen God and despite having awareness of much injustice in the world, Job is now able to trust God's purposes and concern for him. Finally, Job comprehends that his trials have a transforming purpose, which will bring him forth as "gold," as something of great value to God. Job's "golden" soul will be the answer to God's (and Job's) existential questions.

Job – His Insights

Job now considers not just his own suffering but that of others, particularly the poor and powerless (see Job 24:1–12), his suffering having deepened his empathy for others. While Job had always cared for the poor and oppressed (see Job 31:13–23), he now feels their suffering in a new and profound way. Like Habakkuk (see Habakkuk 1:12–13), Job is impatient for God to bring justice to all and put things right. Job reiterates once again the truth that the wicked often thrive at the expense of others, despite the assertions of the friends to the contrary (see Job 24:13–25). (See: Stirling, [Job: An LDS Reading](#), *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 12 (2014): 127-181.)

Job – A sod סוד reading of the text

