5 Elihu and the LORD (Job 32–41)

The third round of speeches disintegrated. Eliphaz accused Job of being a wicked person (chapter 22), Bildad treated Job as a worthless worm (chapter 25), and Zophar gave up on Job. It felt like they were stabbing an open wound. Job's only hope was to have a heavenly court overturn the accusations against him.

Tonight we'll hear the LORD'S response to Job (chapters 38–41). But first, we must hear one more accusing voice. An angry young man named Elihu reacts to the failure of his elders to silence Job's claims that his suffering was undeserved.

5.1 Elihu: retribution can be pre-emptive (chapters 32–33)

Elihu gets the biggest introduction of all the players in this drama:

> **Job 32:1-5 (NIV)**
> 1 So these three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in
> his own eyes. 2 But Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram,
> became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. 3 He
> was also angry with the three friends, because they had found no way to
> refute Job, and yet had condemned him. 4 Now Elihu had waited before
> speaking to Job because they were older than he. 5 But when he saw that
> the three men had nothing more to say, his anger was aroused.

Some Israelites had the name Elihu (e.g. 1 Samuel 1:1), but this guy is from elsewhere—a place named Buz.[31]

Repeatedly, we're told Elihu speaks out of **anger**:

- He's *angry* at Job for trying to clear his own name, thereby shifting the guilt onto God for running the world unjustly (verse 2).
- He's *angry* at the three friends for their failure to prove the case that Job deserved what got (verse 3).
- He's *angry* that the three friends gave up trying to prove Job's guilt (verse 5).

It's already clear that Elihu believes in retribution theology. Elihu is about to fill the silence of his failed elders by unloading multiple speeches while they sit in silence:

> **Job 32:6-13 (NIV)**
> 6 So Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite said:
>
> "I am young in years, and you are old;
> that is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know.
> 7 I thought, 'Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom.'
> 8 But it is the spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty,
> that gives them understanding.

[31] Buz mentioned as a person in Genesis 22:21, and as a place in Jeremiah 25:23. It may have been in Edom.,

9 It is not only the old who are wise,
not only the aged who understand what is right. …

12 "I gave you my full attention.
But not one of you has proved Job wrong;
none of you has answered his arguments.
13 Do not say, 'We have found wisdom;
let God, not a man, refute him.'"

Just like his elders, Elihu sets himself up as judge and rejects Job's plea of innocence. It must be Job, not God, who is at fault:

Job 33:8-12 (NIV)

8 "But you [Job] have said in my hearing—I heard the very words—
9 'I am pure, I have done no wrong; I am clean and free from sin.
10 Yet God has found fault with me; he considers me his enemy.
11 He fastens my feet in shackles; he keeps close watch on all my paths.'
12 "But I tell you, in this you are not right,
for God is greater than any mortal."

Elihu believes in retribution theology, but God does more than react. God knows ahead of time when someone is planning to behave wickedly, so Elihu says God may impose suffering on people as a warning not to sin:

Job 33:16-18 (NIV)

16 "He may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings,
17 to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride,
18 to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword."

It is therefore possible that Job did not do anything to deserve punishment. Maybe God saw Job's heart was wicked, and sent his sufferings even before he did wrong, as a pre-emptive strike against Job's evil heart.

5.2 Elihu: you're guilty, Job (chapter 34)

Elihu rejects Job's "not guilty" plea, accusing him of guilt by association:

Job 34:5-9 (NIV)

5 "Job says,

'I am innocent, but God denies me justice.
6 Although I am right, I am considered a liar;
although I am guiltless, his arrow inflicts an incurable wound.'
7 Is there anyone like Job, who drinks scorn like water?
8 He keeps company with evildoers; he associates with the wicked.
9 For he says, 'There is no profit in trying to please God.'"

Elihu says Job is drinking with the fools who scorn wisdom (verse 7). Psalm 1 says blessing does not come to one who walks with the wicked and stands with the sinners and sits with those who mock divine wisdom. Elihu is convinced Job is a fool who lives to please himself instead of God (verse 9, compare Psalms 14:1; 53:1; 73:22).

But Job never said, *"There is no profit in trying to please God,"* as Elihu claims (verse 9). It was the Accuser who said, *"Does Job fear God for nothing?* (Job 1:9). Elihu has joined the Satan in accusing Job.

It's his attempt to defend God that leads Elihu to condemn Job:

Job 34:10-12 (NIV)

10 "So listen to me, you men of understanding.
Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong.
11 He repays everyone for what they have done;
he brings on them what their conduct deserves.
12 It is unthinkable that God would do wrong,
that the Almighty would pervert justice."

Verse 11 is a definition of retribution theology. Elihu says God *"repays everyone for what they have done,"* that is, God *"brings on them what their conduct deserves."*

Elihu dismisses Job's request for God to hear his case and clear his name. He says God is not required to explain his judgments when he inflicts retribution on people:

Job 34:23-24 (NIV)

23 God has no need to examine people further,
that they should come before him for judgment.
24 Without inquiry he shatters the mighty
and sets up others in their place."

The religions of the ancient world offered a measure of grace if people repented, but feigning repentance to manipulate God into taking away your pain won't do:

Job 34:31-33 (NIV)

31 "Suppose someone says to God,
'I am guilty but will offend no more.
32 Teach me what I cannot see;
if I have done wrong, I will not do so again.'
33 Should God then reward you on your terms,
when you refuse to repent?
You must decide, not I; so tell me what you know."

Metaphorically, Elihu now takes his seat on the judgement throne and condemns Job:

Job 34:31-37 (NIV)

34 "Men of understanding declare, wise men who hear me say to me,
35 'Job speaks without knowledge; his words lack insight.'

36 Oh, that Job might be tested to the utmost
for answering like a wicked man!
37 To his sin he adds rebellion;
scornfully he claps his hands among us
and multiplies his words against God."

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar failed to identify Job's sin, but Elihu believes he has done it. Job's sin is his attitude of rebellion against God. Job needs to submit to God and accept his suffering as deserved even if he doesn't know why. In Elihu's judgment, Job is a guilty rebel because he questions God's right to treat him however he wants.

5.3 Elihu: look beyond yourself, Job (chapters 35–37)

Job 35:1-3 (NIV)

1 Then Elihu said:

2 "Do you think this is just?
You say, 'I am in the right, not God.'
3 Yet you ask him,
'What profit is it to me, and what do I gain by not sinning?'"

Elihu insists Job is not righteous, and God is righteous. Throughout church history, we've heard Elihu's attitude repeated: the absolute justice of God and the absolute sinfulness of humans. This caricature of reality puts ourselves on the judgement throne, aligned with the Accuser (verse 2).

Elihu sets out to defend God from Job's accusations:

Job 36:22-26 (NIV)

22 "God is exalted in his power. Who is a teacher like him?
23 Who has prescribed his ways for him,
or said to him, 'You have done wrong'?
24 Remember to extol his work, which people have praised in song.
25 All humanity has seen it; mortals gaze on it from afar.
26 How great is God—beyond our understanding!
The number of his years is past finding out."

To defend God's glory, Elihu tells Job to stop thinking about himself and look to the heavens:

Job 37:14-15 (NIV)

14 "Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God's wonders.
15 Do you know how God controls the clouds
and makes his lightning flash?"

The clouds are in the heavens, which ancient cultures viewed as the domain of the gods. The Canaanites depicted Baal as riding on the storm. They worshipped Baal

because he brought rain for their crops. They believed Baal was locked in combat with another god named Mot, the god of death. Whenever Mot won, the crops died and the land was reduced to dust. By feeding Baal with their sacrifices, they believed they would make him strong enough to defeat Mot and give them a good year. They quite literally served their god for the benefits they would receive.

But Israel said that YHWH, not Baal, controlled the weather. That's what Elijah was contesting when he said, *"As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word"* (1 Kings 17:1). The prophets of Baal could not get their god to strike their sacrifice with lightning, so when the LORD sent "fire from heaven" the people said:

"YHWH—he is God! YHWH—he is God!" (1 Kings 17:39).

Elihu wants Job to focus on God's majestic authority. His speech is preparing us for the moment when the heavenly sovereign will speak to Job.

But there is also a dark side to Elihu's message as he condemns Job for refusing to accept that God gives everyone what they deserve—Elihu's idea of justice.

Job 37:19-24 (NIV)

19 "Tell us what we should say to him;
we cannot draw up our case because of our darkness.
20 Should he be told that I want to speak?
Would anyone ask to be swallowed up?
21 Now no one can look at the sun,
bright as it is in the skies after the wind has swept them clean.
22 Out of the north he comes in golden splendour;
God comes in awesome majesty.
23 The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power;
in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress.
\24 Therefore, people revere him,
for does he not have regard for all the wise in heart?"

5.4 The LORD begins Job's trial (chapters 38–39)

Finally, the LORD shows up to talk with Job! It's what Job has been yearning for:

Job 9:14, 32

"How then can I dispute with him?
How can I find words to argue with him? …
He is not a mere mortal like me that I might answer him,
that we might confront each other in court."

Job 13:3

"I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God."

Job 19:6-7

6 "… God has wronged me …
7 though I call for help, there is no justice."

Job 23:3-5

3 "If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling!
4 I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments.
5 I would find out what he would answer me,
and consider what he would say to me."

Now the LORD is here. Job finally gets his hearing before the heavenly court:

Job 38:1 (NIV)

Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: …"

Storm (verse 1) is better than *whirlwind* (ESV). Elsewhere the ESV translates this word as *storm* (Psalm 107:29; Jeremiah 23:19; 30:23), *tempest* (Isaiah 29:6; 40:24; 31:16), or *stormy wind* (Psalm 107:25; 148:8; Ezekiel 1:4; 13:11, 13). Job has already expressed his fear that the storm would crush him (9:17; 30:22).

They don't see God, for the God of Israel is invisible (unlike the idols of the nations). The LORD speaks from the storm cloud, as he did when he led Israel from Egypt to Sinai (Exodus 13:21; 19:19-24), his voice resonating like thunder and lightning as he called Israel into covenant relationship (Exodus 19:16-18).

The trial begins

This is the trial of the millennium, but it's not God who's on trial. The LORD says:

Job 38:2-3 (NIV)

2 "Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge?
3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me."

The heavenly sovereign speaks first. Job's attempts to understand divine justice are muddled, *obscuring God's plans*. Divine justice does not work as Job imagines, his *words without knowledge* (verse 2).

The Judge asks:

Job 38:4-7 (NIV)

4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?
Tell me, if you understand.
5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
6 On what were its footings set,
or who laid its cornerstone—
7 while the morning stars sang together
and all the angels shouted for joy?"

Don't let the ancient cosmology stop you from hearing what God is saying. We know earth does not rest on a *foundation*. It has no *footings* or *cornerstone*. There are no *pillars* to hold up the earth (Job 9:6) or the heavens (Job 26:12). The earth is a sphere, held by gravity—whatever that is (a warping of space-time if Einstein was right). The antiquated language of the ancient drama underscores the point: how little we know!

The ancients had stories about the stars too:

Job 38:31-33 (NIV)

31 "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades?
Can you loosen Orion's belt?
32 Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons
or lead out the Bear with its cubs?
33 Do you know the laws of the heavens?
Can you set up God's dominion over the earth?"

The Pleiades is a constellation also known as the Seven Sisters. *Orion* looks like a hunter with a sword hanging from this belt (or perhaps it looks like a saucepan). *The Bear* constellation (Ursa Major) is not visible to us in the southern hemisphere. The point is that Job has no idea how these stars were set in the heaven, or how they represent divine dominion as they pass over the earth.

We tend to think God created the universe for us, but much of creation is beyond our control:

Job 39:9, 26-27 (NIV)

9 "Will the wild ox consent to serve you?
Will it stay by your manger at night?" …
26 "Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom
and spread its wings toward the south?
27 Does the eagle soar at your command
and build its nest on high?"

Job withdraws his case against God (chapter 40:1-5)

The LORD asks Job for a response. How much does Job really understand about what God is doing? Is Job in any position to straighten God out on how to run the universe?

Job 40:1-2 (NIV)

1 The LORD said to Job:
2 "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?
Let him who accuses God answer him!"

God never accuses Job of being morally deficient as his friends have done. God has not changed his mind since declaring Job to be *blameless and upright* (Job 1:8). God simply says Job does not have a broad enough perspective to understand how the maker of the universe cares for his creation and all its creatures:

Job 40:3-5 (NIV)

3 Then Job answered the LORD:

4 "I am unworthy—how can I reply to you?
I put my hand over my mouth.
5 I spoke once, but I have no answer—
twice, but I will say no more."

The whole Book of Job now fits in three statements:

a) Job said, "God, I don't understand what you're doing!"
b) God said, "Job, you don't understand what I'm doing."
c) Job said, "God, I don't understand what you're doing."

God never addressed the content of Job's complaint. God merely questioned Job's claim that God must do what Job thinks is just. Job *covers his mouth* (verse 4), that is, Job withdraws his accusation that God is treating him badly. Job is still not aware of how the heavenly court has been testing whether he serves God only for the benefits, but he now understands that there's much more going on than he's aware of.

5.5 The LORD continues questioning Job (chapters 40–41)

Job has withdrawn his complaint against God, yet the heavenly court continues to press the case that we—Job, his friends, and ourselves as the audience of this drama—do not understand how our Sovereign is managing his creation:

Job 40:6-10 (NIV)

6 Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm:

7 "Brace yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you shall answer me.
8 "Would you discredit my justice?
Would you condemn me to justify yourself?
9 Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his?
10 Then adorn yourself with glory and splendour,
and clothe yourself in honour and majesty."

Again, God gives no moral argument for why he is not providing justice in the way we expect (retribution). Instead, the heavenly judge presents evidence of how little we understand.

Exhibit A: Behemoth

Behemoth is a Hebrew word that means something like "powerful animal." [32]
Since we don't know how to translate it, we just bring the Hebrew word into English.

[32] "bᵉhē·mō̱ṯ" in *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 112.

Job 40:15-24 (NIV)

15 "Look at Behemoth, which I made along with you
and which feeds on grass like an ox.
16 What strength it has in its loins,
what power in the muscles of its belly!
17 Its tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of its thighs are close-knit.
18 Its bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like rods of iron.
19 It ranks first among the works of God,
yet its Maker can approach it with his sword.
20 The hills bring it their produce, and all the wild animals play nearby.
21 Under the lotus plants it lies, hidden among the reeds in the marsh.
22 The lotuses conceal it in their shadow;
the poplars by the stream surround it.
23 A raging river does not alarm it; it is secure,
though the Jordan should surge against its mouth.
24 Can anyone capture it by the eyes, or trap it and pierce its nose?"

What is this creature? It reminds some people of a hippopotamus.

But how does this help? The cynical Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw said:

> "If I complain that I am suffering unjustly, it is no answer to say,
> **'Can you make a hippopotamus?'**" [33]

Whatever *behemoth* is, it's not the sort of creature Job could farm. Sheep, camels, oxen and donkeys were the creatures Job managed (1:14-17; 42:12).

When God established earth under heaven's authority, he entrusted us with responsibility to *"subdue the earth, to rule over … every living creature"* (Genesis 1:28). But instead of participating in how God governs the earth, humans tried to become gods by taking *the knowledge of good and evil* into our own hands (Genesis 3:4-7). Rebellion against God's authority introduced conflict into God's good creation: conflict with the creatures and with each other as creation fights back against our control (Genesis 3:15-19).

This is the story not only of Isreal but of all people. Creation fights back. Job can manage sheep, camels, oxen, and donkeys, but not wild creatures like *behemoth*. So who are we to tell God how to run the world when we can't even manage the dominion God gave us?

Exhibit B: Leviathan

Leviathan is another Hebrew word. It means something like "wreath animal." [34] Again, English Bibles just import the Hebrew word without translating it:

[33] Quoted in J. A. Baker, "The Book of Job: Unity and Meaning," in *Studia Biblica* 1978 (JSOT, 1979) 17.

[34] "liw·yā·tān" in *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 524.

Job 41:1-2 (NIV)

1 "Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook
or tie down its tongue with a rope?
2 Can you put a cord through its nose or pierce its jaw with a hook?"

Is this as crocodile? Spears do not penetrate its hide (verse 7). It has powerful limbs, a coat of armour, and ferocious teeth (verses 12-14). It *churns the deep like a boiling caldron*, and leaves *a glistening wake* as it glides through the water (verses 31-32).

Or is this a mythical creature, more like a dragon?

Job 41:19 (NIV)

Flames stream from its mouth; sparks of fire shoot out.

No one takes this literally, except some young earth creationists who believe (without evidence) that humans coexisted with dinosaurs, and also believe (without evidence) that some dinosaurs were fire-breathing dragons. Is verse 19 poetic, representing the anger of the creatures' reactions? Is there an implicit similarity in Job's angry and demanding attitude compared to these hard-to-control creatures? Or is God using a stylized representation of things on earth that are beyond our control?

Beyond human control seems to be the point the LORD is making:

Job 41:4-9 (NIV)

4 "Will it make an agreement with you for you
to take it as your slave for life?
5 Can you make a pet of it like a bird
or put it on a leash for the young women in your house?
6 Will traders barter for it? Will they divide it up among the merchants?
7 Can you fill its hide with harpoons or its head with fishing spears?
8 If you lay a hand on it,
you will remember the struggle and never do it again!
9 Any hope of subduing it is false; the mere sight of it is overpowering."

If we cannot control the creatures of creation that God did place under our authority, why would we imagine we have the wisdom to know good and evil and judge how God is managing the world? That's what God is saying with Exhibit B:

Job 41:10-11, 33-34 (NIV)

10 "No one is fierce enough to rouse it.
Who then is able to stand against me?
11 Who has a claim against me that I must pay?
Everything under heaven belongs to me. …

33 "Nothing on earth is its equal—
a creature without fear.
34 It looks down on all that are haughty;
it is king over all that are proud."

Why did God make animals that kill people? Since 1980, crocodiles have killed 43 people in Australia.[35] In the last six years, sharks have killed 24 people in Western Australia.[36] Why did God make these creatures?

How do we get justice when animals kill people? Sometimes people call for the death of the crocodile or shark. I'm never sure if it's really about making sure it won't kill again, or if people want retribution.

There were cases in the Middle Ages when animals were put on trial.[37] The BBC Wildlife channel tells of this case:

> On a winter's day in 1386, a crowd gathered in the Norman town of Falaise to watch a convicted murderer led to the gallows. The condemned had stood trial, witnesses had testified, and sentence had been passed. Yet the prisoner waiting to die was not a man, but a pig.[38]

Was this manslaughter or premeditated murder? We have no way to prove the pig's intentions. Normally we don't hold animals ethically accountable in the way to do for humans.

In any case, we don't know why God made deadly creatures that we cannot control. We're no match for such creatures, but they are not beyond God's control.[39]

We've reached the end of God's speech to Job. Did you notice what's not there?

a) God offers no condemnation of Job.
b) God offers no apology for what Job suffered.

(a) sits in strong contrast to every speech from Job's friends. They all insisted—based on equating retribution with justice—that Job must be guilty. The LORD does not say that. Nothing in the LORD'S speeches overturns the judgement God gave earlier, that Job is *"blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil"* (Job 1:8).

(b) is just as curious. God expresses no moral responsibility for ensuring that good people always end up with good outcomes and bad people with bad ones. People expect retribution, but the LORD is not dispensing justice through retribution.

God's point is that people do not understand how divine justice works. If it's not retribution, what is it? The Book of Job does not answer that question. All we know is that our expectations of justice and God's operation of justice don't match. We'll need further revelation to understand what God is doing. More on that next week.

[35] https://crocattack.org/fatal-saltwater-crocodile-attacks-in-australia-1969-present/ accessed 2026-10-21.

[36] https://www.watoday.com.au/national/western-australia/timeline-of-shark-attacks-along-the-western-australian-coast-20170418-gvn5jm.html accessed 2026-10-21.

[37] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_trial accessed 2026-10-21.

[38] https://www.discoverwildlife.com/animal-facts/pig-murder-trial accessed 2026-10-21.

[39] "David's description of God in Psalm 18 contains a stunning parallel to God's description of leviathan in Job 41." — Layton Talbert, *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Bob Jones Uni. Press, 2007), 281.

Job's response (chapter 42:1-6)

Job affirms he has no case against God:

Job 42:1-6 (NIV)

1 Then Job replied to the LORD:
2 "I know that you can do all things;
no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?'
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me to know.
4 "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you shall answer me.'
5 My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.
6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Verse 6 is not a good translation. Job neither *despises* himself (as self-hated), and nor does he *repent* (as if he has done wrong). Anyone who thinks, "Ah, Job finally admits that he has sinned and deserves what he got," has missed the whole point of the book. That interpretation contradicts what God said at the beginning (1:8) and what God says in the next verse, that Job was right about God (42:7).

In the NIV Application Commentary on Job, John Walton explains:

> In 42:5, Job does not suggest behaviour change, but rather wishes to retract his previous statements. He employs the same verb and form used when God "changes his mind" (e.g., Ex. 32:14; Jer. 4:28; 18:10; Joel 2:13; Jonah 3:10).[40]

In the New International Commentary on the Old Testament, John Hartley says:

> The term *recant* (*niḥam*) means to turn from a planned course of action and take up a new course. It implies the strongest resolve to change direction, but not an attitude of remorse.[41]

In the Word Biblical Commentary, David Clines provides this summary:

> In a nutshell, the view that will be argued here is that (1) in a legal sense, Job "submits," i.e., he withdraws his lawsuit against Yahweh, (2) since he has done no wrong, he cannot "repent," but having been in mourning, he now brings the period of mourning to an end by "accepting consolation," for his lost children as well as for the loss of his honour, a consolation that is being offered to him both from the friends and (in his own way) from Yahweh, and (3) the consolation he accepts is "for" the "dust and ashes" that have been the visible expression of his state of mourning.[42]

[40] John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *NIV Application Commentary: Job*, (Zondervan, 2012), 432.

[41] John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, New International Commentary on the O.T. (Eerdmans, 1988), 537.

[42] David J. A. Clines, *Job 38–42*, Word Biblical Commentary (Thomas Nelson, 2011), 1218.

Clines is right about the word meaning *consolation* rather than *repentance* here. Everywhere else the word is used in Job the NIV translates it as *comfort* or *console* (Job 2:11; 7:13; 16:2; 21:34; 29:25; 42:11).

Remember, the context is as a courtroom, and the point is that Job withdraws his case against God, since he now realizes his understanding of divine justice is too limited.

5.6 Conclusion

All we have left is the narrator's epilogue (42:7-17). Next week we'll see how this introduces the justice God will use to restore the world. It is not a retributive justice, based on what we do (our works). It is a restorative justice, based on our trust in the one whom God has appointed to bring the peoples of the earth back under heaven's reign. That's the wisdom of divine justice that restores the world in Christ.

Further Reading

Layton Talbert on why God presents Job with leviathan:

> God concludes His case abruptly. No homily. No moral. No final lesson or application. Job doesn't need any. Remember the divine invitation that opened this second speech? If Job has a mighty arm and a thunderous voice like God's, then let him display his majesty and splendour and righteous wrath by humbling the proud and judging the wicked (40:9–14). As it turned out, even behemoth was better equipped than Job to run the world and deal with the wicked. But leviathan is even more so.
>
> God had invited Job, "Deck thyself with *majesty* and *excellency*," (40:10). But leviathan is already decked with these qualities! His scales are his *pride* [same root as *majesty*] (41:15), and he is superior to those who are *high* [same root as *excellency*] (41:34). The final image of leviathan staring down the high and mighty—"He looks on everything that is high; He is king over all the sons of pride" (41:34, NASB)—echoes God's earlier challenge to Job: "Look on everyone who is proud, and make him low. Look on everyone who is proud, and humble him" (40:11–12, NASB). Leviathan, too, is better equipped than Job to deal with the wicked. Job can't even measure up to two of God's animals, and he wants to challenge God's management of the world?
>
> God closes with words to humble humans who are inclined to file grievances against God. Even this *animal* is stronger than Job and looks down on all those who are proud and demanding. Job cannot stand up to one of God's *beasts*. How can he even dream about standing up to God? Who is Job to critique God's ways and advise God on how He should run things? …

> Some have complained that God's reply to Job, though artistically beautiful and poetic, is so irrelevant to Job's problem as to border on absurdity. Oddly enough, it didn't strike Job that way at all. The problem is not with the Lord's answer. Job gets it. Do we?[43]

John McLaughlin gives this summary of Job:

> The book of Job challenges the traditional wisdom doctrine of retribution, that the good are blessed and the bad are punished in their lifetime. Job himself is a blameless individual who nonetheless experiences great suffering. In keeping with the doctrine of retribution, his three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar as well as the interloper Elihu insist that he must have done something wrong, while Job insists just as strongly that he is innocent and therefore does not deserve what has happened to him. In the end, Yahweh appears in a whirlwind and asks Job about his ability to control various aspects of creation as well as the chaos monsters Leviathan and Behemoth. Job is comforted by his encounter with the divine, who pronounces him correct and his friends incorrect about God.[44]

[43] Layton Talbert, *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Bob Jones Uni. Press, 2007), 215–16.

[44] John L. McLaughlin, *An Introduction to Israel's Wisdom Traditions* (Eerdmans, 2018), 82.