

Job 1 & 2 • Chapter Study

INTRO • 1 Peter 1:3–12

1. As Peter begins his letter, he speaks of things so precious, he piles up the most eloquent words he can muster.

³ Blessed be the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible & undefiled & that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ In this [your certain destiny in glory] you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that [as in “so that”] the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it [your faith] is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, & glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible & full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

[Now watch this...]

¹⁰ Of this salvation the prophets have inquired & searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, ¹¹ searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ & the glories that would follow. ¹² To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things [!] which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—

[here’s the payoff] things which angels desire to look into.

1. Literally = Things angels *crave* to know so intensely, they stoop over in rapt attention.
2. What they’re watching is **US**, as God transforms us from hell-bent sinners to glory-bound saints.
3. Peter’s mention of *trials & angels* clues us he wrote this with an eye to *The Book of Job*.
4. Because Job is a poignant instance when the spiritual realm was watching with keen attention what was happening on Earth.

Background on Job

1. The Intro of many commentaries on Job say its deals w/ the question: “Why do good people suffer?”
2. While that’s certainly addressed, I respectfully disagree with those esteemed commentators.
3. The real theme of Job is *faith*.
4. It aims less at the *Why* of suffering & more at *How* to endure it.
5. Job begins the poetry section of the OT which seems odd to us because in reading it, there’s no rhyme or meter; nothing we associate with poetry.
6. That’s because in Hebrew, poetry is less a matter of the *sound* of words as their *meaning*.
 - a. Hebrew poetry is conveyed by the repetition of an *idea* rather than a *sound*.
 - b. We see that most clearly in Proverbs → Proverbs 1:1–6

¹ The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

² To know wisdom & instruction, To perceive the words of understanding,

³ To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, & equity;

⁴ To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge & discretion—

⁵ A wise man will hear & increase learning, & a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

⁶ To understand a proverb & an enigma, The words of the wise & their riddles.

That's Hebrew poetry >> 6 vs giving 9 ways Solomon imparts wisdom by the proverbs.

Then v7 brings in another poetic device. Instead of saying the same thing with different words, you say it's opposite >>

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom & instruction.

The majority of the Book of Job is written in this poetic verse.

& though it doesn't appear as poetry to us, translators have rendered the text as poetry in the way they type-set it.

Look at ch3. >> From ch 3 to just before the end most English Bibles set the text in *poetic versification*.

Chs 1&2 are your typical *prose narrative* type-set because they're the *backstory* to Job.

But when Job's friends start counseling him & He replies to them, it's poetic.

Job is most likely the oldest book of the Bible.

The vocabulary is archaic.

The customs presented to us suggests a time when Middle-Eastern society wasn't well developed.

The Law of Moses wasn't in place, & Job was the priest of his family.

Scholars put Job at the same time as the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob.

He as a tribal chief who like Abraham had come to faith in the true God, maybe thru interaction with him.

Ch1

¹There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; & that man was blameless & upright, & one who feared God & shunned evil. ² & 7 sons & 3 daughters were born to him.

Best evidence says Uz was an ancient name for a region of Arabia.

It's best to locate it somewhere in modern-day Jordan, which at that time was considered *Arabia*.

Though mostly wilderness, there were oases supporting thriving communities.

The first thing said about him is that he was a genuinely good man.

He was **blameless**; without guilt that would ruin his character.

To be blameless doesn't mean you're perfect. No one's *perfect*. We all sin.

But there's sin, & then there's **SIN**.

Being blame-**less** means you admit you're not perfect & endeavor to give no place to something that would cause others to **see** you as blame-**worthy**.

It means that when blame IS leveled at you, it can't stick because it finds nothing to cling to.

It's the first quality the Apostle Paul says elders must have in 1 Tim 3 & Titus 1.

They must be *blameless*.

If someone *did* accuse them, there'd be nothing in them for the charge to adhere to.

Rather, there'd be plenty of people who KNOW the accused who'd counter the charge.

To be blameless also doesn't mean someone can't or won't issue an accusation or file a charge.

It means once issued, there's no evidence to suggest it's true.

That's what's going to happen with Job.

Satan's going to file a charge against him → That he ISN'T without blame --

That His faith is *mercenary*, bought & paid for by God's blessing.

V1 also says Job was **upright**.

Another rich word meaning *morally sound & concerned with justice*.

A family of 10 children means he was immensely blessed on the home & relationship front.

³ Also, his possessions were 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, & a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East.

This account of Job's wealth means his story is *ancient*.

It wasn't measured in gold & silver; it's counted by the size of his flocks & herds.

The *scope* of his estate grows as we do a little calculating.

Numbers vary but a shepherd usually led about 100 *sheep* // So 7000 sheep required 70 shepherds.

To this day, for the Bedouin of the ME, the center of wealth is located in how many *camels* one has.

3000 camels was a *vast fortune*.

A yoke of oxen is 2, so Job had 1000. That with 500 donkeys & the camels strong suggest Job was the head of a tribe that controlled one of the main oases of the East.

His wealth came from supplying the many caravans who stopped at the oasis for resupply.

He was the ancient world's version of importer-exporter.

Indeed, he's identified as one of the greatest players in the region in that time.

⁴ & his sons would go & feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, & would send & invite their 3 sisters to eat & drink with them.

Job's family was tight.

His adult children had their own families & homes but maintained the bonds of family by a rotating-feast.

These celebrations weren't just a casual gathering for a few hours on a Saturday night.

They were major events spread over a few days →

⁵ So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send & sanctify them, & he would rise early in the morning & offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned & cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did regularly.

Of course the wine flowed liberally at those celebrations & Job knew the effect alcohol can have.

So *just to be safe*, when their celebrations were over, he offered sacrifices to cover any sins or improprieties his kids *may* have committed.

All this gives the impression Job wasn't *just generally* pious.

He was *careful* in his walk with God, a man with a *tender conscience*.

& of course, it's going to play into the story later when his friends attribute his suffering to secret sin.

A question that presents itself at this point is this → Was Job blessed by God **for** his careful piety?

Was Job's prosperity God's reward for being good?

It never says that.

His amazing good fortune *may have been* the result of his savvy business dealings.

Whatever the *actual* source of Job's immense blessing, the text never says God's blessing was a reward.

Now: Scene-shift from Uz to Heaven --

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, & Satan also came among them.

Sons of God is an OT idiom for angels.

That Satan comes with them makes clear that's who we're to understand these sons of God to be = Angels.

That word "present" speaks of some kind of a *formal* presentation.

As we read on, it seems what they present is a report on what they've learned.

God needs no report; He's *omniscient* – knows all // But angels *aren't*. They learn.

& as we saw in 1Pet1:12, 1 of the things they're attentive to is the interplay btwn God & His people.
So they bring Him a report on what they're discovering.

Queued up among them is Satan >> Literally THE Satan, a name meaning *adversary*.

Other passages give us his backstory.

He began as Lucifer, chief of the cherubim, special spiritual beings who surround God's throne as a kind of ceremonial body-guard.

Something happened that moved Lucifer to stage a rebellion & attempt a coup to usurp God's throne for himself.

A 3rd of the angels joined in his rebellion, which was quickly put down.

Lucifer lost his position as cherub to become "*the satan*" = the adversary of God.

The angels who joined him in his failed rebellion became *demons*.

At the point we read of here, Satan still had access to heaven.

& it surprises many to see it, because they've assumed the devil rules over hell.

That's an image drawn more from John Milton, Dante, & medieval artists, than the Bible.

In reality, there's no one in hell – or what the Bible calls The Lake of Fire.

Hell's not even opened until after Jesus returns.

When satan is finally cast there, he's a prisoner, not a ruler of hell.

No, for now, Satan's realm is Earth where he works mischief; & heaven, where he accuses us before God.

Before we move on – a technical note ...

Throughout chs 1&2, the designation "Satan" in Hebrew is "Ha Saw-tawn = The Satan."

Remember that "Satan" means *Adversary*.

This early in history, he's simply "The Adversary."

It isn't till *much later* that the Hebrew word for that, Satan, becomes the label he's assigned.

Some commentators say that this character in Job isn't the devil, that it's his *advocate*.

An angel assigned the task of playing a kind of Heavenly Prosecutor.

I respectfully disagree with that view of the esteemed commentators.

Besides this single reference, there's no such Devil's Advocate in Scripture.

& the placement of the definite article "Ha=The" points to the writer's emphasis that this isn't "an" adversary; it's **THE** adversary = *Lucifer*.

The definitive proof though is that this spiritual entity has a malevolent will toward Job & wants to ruin him.

The only thing that's kept him from attacking Job till this point is God's protection.

When that protection is peeled back, he then attacks.

No – this is Satan, the devil.

& here he is, queued up with the angels giving their report to God.

7 & the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?"

"Where you been? Whatcha been up to?"

Of course, God knew full well. But He's gives the devil an opportunity to speak.

So Satan answered the LORD & said, "From going to & fro on the earth, & from walking back & forth on it."

"Cruisin'." // Though he's playing coy, God knows the devil's going to defame someone.

So He directs his attention to that *standout* human, Job.

This is total speculation, but I wonder if maybe God knew Satan had *someone more vulnerable* in his sights to accuse, so God *pre-empted* the charge by drawing his attention to Job because he knew Satan's accusations wouldn't stick.

⁸ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered [carefully pondered] My servant Job, that *there is none like him on the earth, a blameless & upright man, one who fears God & shuns evil?*"

God asks if Satan's encountered *righteous* Job in his prowling about.

Here's a clue to the cosmic debate going on between God & Satan.

Humanity is critical to its outcome.

The debate centers on the *justice*, God's *fairness*.

That's how Lucifer persuaded a 3rd of the angels to join his rebellion.

He convinced them that God wasn't fair.

It's how he convinced Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. He told her God was holding out on her.

Satan forever defames God, portraying Him as unjust.

So God points to Job who's rejected Satan's lies & clings by faith to the Lord.

⁹ So Satan answered the LORD & said, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"

Is Job's faith *real*? Is it pure & in God alone? Or does Job believe because it *pays* to?

Is Job's faith *mercenary*?

¹⁰ Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, & around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, & his possessions have increased in the land.

Though The Fall handed the devil a measure of authority & influence on Earth, he was still limited by the God's sovereignty.

& God had protected Job so Satan couldn't harass him.

Satan calls it a "hedge" which supplies the terms we often use when praying for protection.

We pray, "Lord, Please *set a hedge* around so & so as they go to school, work, travel, etc."

In Hebrew, the word is "sook." → It referred to a fence built to protect something, like a flock of sheep.

The sheepfold was surrounded by a sook; usually a circular stone wall about 4 ft high topped with thorn bushes.

It was an effective barrier against predators.

If a shepherd led his flock to some wilderness pasture where there was no established fold, he'd gather bramble bushes & stack them in a circle.

We read "hedge" & think of *ornamental shrubbery*. // The British refer to it as, "*trimming the verge*."

Disneyland has some interesting ornamental hedges // **But *this* is not what God erected around Job.**

God had erected a barrier around Job that prohibited Satan's mischief → So Satan issues a challenge ...

¹¹ But now, stretch out Your hand & touch all that he has, & he will surely curse You to Your face!"

God said Job's faith was pure & true.

Satan countered, if God replaced blessing with affliction, Job's faith would crumble & he'd *curse* God.

Satan's says, "Job *only* fears You because You *pay* him to.

You 2 have made a contract: You protect & prosper him *as long as* he worships You.

You have to *pay* people to honor You."¹

¹² & the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has *is* in your power; only do not lay a hand on his *person*." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

¹Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1991). *Be patient*. An Old Testament study. (Job 1:6). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

God says, "You're on! You can have at Job's *stuff*, but not him *physically*." // Job's *health* was off-limits.

Why would God allow this? → That's THE Question that occupies the rest of the Book.

It's the desperate, anguished cry from Job's own lips: "Why God?"

& here's the hard part: We read to the end of the book & discover, GOD NEVER TELLS JOB WHY!

We know, because we're have chs 1&2. // But Job never finds; in the text of the book at least.

Here's where we have to pause & ask, **Who wrote Job?**

It's an ancient work, maybe the oldest in the Bible.

&, did it *really happen* or is it *merely an allegory*; a story meant to teach us how the Faithful handle suffering?

We don't know who wrote it.

Maybe Job did. & God gave him the backstory of chs 1&2.

But Job ended the story *without* the account of his having learned the cause of his suffering>>

Because THAT'S the entire purpose of the story >>

To teach us that → **There are some things we may never** know the reason for this side of Heaven.

But like Job IN the story, we trust God does indeed have a reason.

& not just "a" reason, but a GOOD one.

Okay, here we go ...

¹³ Now there was a day when his sons & daughters were eating & drinking wine in their oldest brother's house;

It was one of their regular family celebrations mentioned in v4.

When we read there was *vino*, we might assume it was a riotous party.

Their drink-menu was limited // They didn't have the abundance of beverage options we enjoy.

Sodas, energy drinks, flavored-seltzers.

They had water, fruit juice & wine // Wine was *for* special meals like this.

¹⁴ & a messenger came to Job & said, "The oxen were plowing & the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ when the Sabeans raided *them* & took them away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; & I alone have escaped to tell you!"

Sabeans were nomadic raiders based in north Arabia.

They staged a raid that took Job's oxen & donkeys, wiping out a large part of his trade.

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another also came & said, "The fire of God fell from heaven & burned up the sheep & the servants, & consumed them; & I alone have escaped to tell you!"

The sheep would have been in a different place from the oxen & donkeys.

So the Sabeans didn't nab them. They were consumed by fire dropping from the sky.

The messenger said it was "fire from God."

No. It was Satan, who Eph 2:2 says in the prince of the power of the air.

¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another also came & said, "The Chaldeans formed 3 bands, raided the camels & took them away, yes, & killed the servants with the edge of the sword; & I alone have escaped to tell you!"

The Chaldeans were *another* Arabic tribe who 1500 yrs later conquered Mesopotamia & founded the Babylonian Empire.

At this point they're like the Sabeans, nomadic raiders.

Like the Sabeans, they're stirred up by Satan to attack, confiscating the core of Job's wealth, his camels.

Far more grievous than the loss of all these animals, was the loss of *all the people* who tended them.

Though technically *employees*, Job's sterling character meant he regarded them as part of his family. Surely their deaths the more serious blow.

But the catastrophe isn't over. // One more piece of horrifying news is on the way >>

18 While he was still speaking,

Note that these 4 messengers all arrive about the same time.

All these reports could have been delivered to Job in as short a time as a few minutes to a couple hours.

If all we have is a summary of each message, with the *actual* report taking longer, then some questioning by Job, it might have taken a couple hours for it all to unfold.

Whether a few minutes or longer, the point is, one message followed another.

But the 4th & last message was most devastating of all.

Job had to be emotionally numb by the time it arrived.

18 While he was still speaking, another also came & said, "Your sons & daughters were eating & drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 & suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness & struck the 4 corners of the house, & it fell on the young people, & they are dead; & I alone have escaped to tell you!"

Satan used both people & acts of nature in his assault on Job.

In a matter of minutes, he lost almost everything.

His property & wealth were wiped out; then his 10 adult children were killed in a freak wind-storm.

Here's why I'm convinced this was Satan's doing – Because it's a clear manifestation of the very thing Jesus said the devil come to do; steal, kill & destroy.

The Sabeans & Chaldeans stole & killed // Fire & wind destroyed & killed.

Now → What will Job's reaction be? **Will he**, as the devil foretold, curse God?

20 Then Job arose, tore his robe, & shaved his head; & he fell to the ground & worshiped.

These are signs of intense emotional turmoil & grief // Job didn't take all this loss stoically >>

Dispassionately.

He wasn't an emotionally cold-fish who didn't really care about stuff so when it all went haywire had a "*que sera-sera*" attitude.

No, he was **devastated** by the losses.

So devastated, he fled to the only place that provided solace – God!

It seemed the only thing left him; *something*, **the only thing** that could **NOT** be taken away.

21 & he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, & naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, & the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."

Job hits on something important here.

Though Satan fomented the attacks, Job knew they could not have happened unless God permitted them.

& **if** God permitted them, there had to be good reason for them.

While this flash of revelation was right on, it's going to be sorely tested.

& Job will spend considerable time *pleading* with God for an explanation.

But so far -

22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

So, the score's >> God -1 / Devil - 0

Satan's charge against Job was groundless.

So he admitted he was wrong, God was right, he left & that's the end of the story.

That's the way it *ought* to end // But it's not Satan's way. He never gives up.

Ch2

Ch2 opens with a close repeat of ch1 ...

¹ Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, & Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. ² & the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Satan answered the LORD & said, "From going to & fro on the earth, & from walking back & forth on it." ³ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is none like him on the earth, a blameless & upright man, one who fears God & shuns evil?*

Then God adds *this* to what He said before →

& still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."

That doesn't mean God was the *direct agent* of Job's losses. Satan was.

Hebrew grammar helps get that the meaning here.

What God says here is simply confirmation Satan *couldn't* go after Job apart from God's permission.

The devil's on a leash // That leash was lengthened in Job's case, not to let the devil get one over of God,

But so that God might prove this all important truth: HE works ALL THINGS together for good, for those who love Him & are the called according to His purpose.

⁴ So Satan answered the LORD & said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.

One of the reasons the devil is so skilled at tempting us is because dying not, he has long experience of human nature >> He knows us *really well*.

So he knows what works & what doesn't.

BUT: & this is crucial, as smart, clever, subtle, sneaky & experienced as he is, he isn't infallible.

He makes mistakes. He errs. He gets it wrong. >>

He does so here when he says, "All that a man has he will give for his life."

Satan thinks that people will do ANYTHING to survive.

& generally speaking, he's right. But only *generally*, not *incidentally* or *specifically*.

History's filled with martyrs, people who died for others or a cause they deemed more important than their own life.

& there have an endless number of others who didn't die for others, but who lived for them – who's entire lives were SPENT in the cause of blessing others or seeing some noble cause advanced.

So, Satan is just WRONG here.

Remember, Satan's challenge & charge. >> If Job suffers, his blessing of God will turn to a curse.

Yet even after the devil is given permission to go after his health & does so by afflicting him with intense physical torment, Job says, "Though God slay me – Yet I will trust Him." [13:15]

So, operating under the error humans would do ANYTHING to avert physical pain, the devil says ...

⁵ But stretch out Your hand now, & touch his bone & his flesh, & he will surely curse You to Your face!" ⁶ & the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he *is* in your hand, but spare his life."

God peeled back another layer of Job's protection, allowing Satan to go after his health.

The only prohibition, was killing him.

Vs5-6 make clear who's responsible for Job's torment. It's Satan, not God.

Yes, God gave permission, but Satan was the *active agent* of the harm done Job.

Let's be clear here: God's permission didn't **MAKE** the devil go after Job. That was Satan choice.

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, & struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 & he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes.

Those ashes were part of mourning over the loss of his children.

This is lovely! Job's covered head to foot with pus-filled boils.

To get relief from their pressure, he scrapes himself with edge of a piece of broken pottery.
If you've every had a boil, you know how painful it can be. >> Job's **covered** with them.

Enter the Missus >> Job's wife.

9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God & die!"

Because this verse is the basis for Sunday's msg, we'll leave off much comment tonight.

Other than to say, Mrs. Job too often gets knocked about by Bible teachers.

While Job suffered immensely, her suffering was nearly as great.

It wasn't just *his* fortune & family that was destroyed, *it was hers too*. → Those were **her** children.

& every loving spouse knows how hard it is to watch your beloved suffer with physical pain.

Especially when it's chronic, lingering torment, as Job's was.

The challenge set us by her counsel is that she seems to mouth the very thing Satan was trying to get him to do – "Curse God."

One of the most important things her comment reveals, & we see backed up by Job's 3 friends who are about to arrive & add their counsel, →

Is that they all identified what was happening to Job as having its origin in the spiritual realm.

They didn't chalk it all up to coincidence, or some kind of weird fluke of monumental misfortune.

They didn't simply look at Job & say, "Wow Dude! Sucks to be you."

None of them had a "*Stuff Happens*" bumper sticker on their camel's rump.

No – They all understood that Job was the object of events having their genesis in the spiritual realm.

The lesson from that is one we'll elaborate on Sunday.

For now, let me just say that as the People of God, it's wisdom to process the things that happen on earth from a spiritual perspective.

No. Not everything that happens on Earth is the result of some cosmic debate between God & Satan.

A demon's not responsible for every little thing that happens.

BUT, the spiritual plays a much larger role in things than most of us recognize.

It would serve us well to *simply be more* spiritually aware as we go through our day.

More attentive to the leading of the Spirit.

More sensitive to that voice of discernment.

More inclined to turn our thoughts toward God & pray.

We'll leave further comment on v9 for Sunday // Here's Job's reply to his wife's counsel ...

10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, & shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Though in pain, Job's *diplomatic*. // He doesn't call *her* foolish, only that her words *imitate* a fool's.

Job knew he'd done nothing deserving divine displeasure.

All he **DID** know was that something **MUST BE** happening behind the scenes.

He *refused* to accuse God of something unworthy of Him.

Job *knew* God was good. That He was *just*.

& what Job was suffering in no way squared with God's justice.

So, a simple calculation brought Job to an undeniable conclusion →

There was a reasonable explanation for all that had & was happening to him.

But being that God was infinite & Job, finite – Job could not see what God did.

Job made a firm decision to never surrender what he knew for certain to uncertainty.

He would not let established facts be supplanted by questions or doubts.

Where Job's faith shines thru as *truly great* is that he took as an unimpeachable fact, as rock-solid reality, God's Word. His promise.

It was more true, more real, than his circumstances.

Because while circumstances *change*, God doesn't.

¹¹ Now when Job's 3 friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, & Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come & mourn with him, & to comfort him.

This was the custom.

When someone lost a close relative, friends came & mourned with them for a few days.

Job's mourning lasted longer than usual because he lost all 10 of his kids.

Eliphaz, Bildad & Zophar = get used to these guys because they play a major role in the following chs.

Eliphaz was from *Teman*, a region of Edom on the East side of the Dead Sea.

Bildad was from *Shuah*, on the NE of *Teman*.

Zophar was from *Naamah*, a region of *Midian*.

All 3 of these guys were most likely Bedouin princes who knew Job because of their business connections.

They would have provided Job with some of his livestock, as well as safeguarded the caravans that passed thru their regions – an arrangement Job had worked out with them.

Those caravans used Job's oasis as a stopping place for supplies & to work out safe passage through the area.

By paying Job a fee, they were ensured their journey through this entire region was unmolested.

Job then paid *Eliphaz, Bildad, & Zophar* to ensure no harm came to the caravans.

That was just the way of things in the ancient Middle East.

¹² & when they raised their eyes from afar, & did not recognize him, they lifted their voices & wept; & each one tore his robe & sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven.

As they approached Job, a terrifying spectacle confronted them.

Being *the* important man of that entire region, Job was usually well-dressed & attended.

According to Eastern custom, he was the epitome of warm hospitality.

But the man who met them now was dressed in sackcloth, sat on the ground in a pile of ashes, covered with scabs & angry red, oozing blisters.

Flies were certainly bussing round.

They'd come to console a friend in his mourning. → But they begin to lament over HIM!

They're ruined just *seeing* him.

¹³ So they sat down with him on the ground 7 days & 7 nights, & no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.

They were *speechless* for a week! // Sad they didn't stay that way, as we'll see.