

Jon B's extra notes.

Big Themes of Job

Themes:

- The mystery of suffering
- God's sovereignty and wisdom
- Innocence and injustice
- The limits of human wisdom
- The value of lament
- Restoration and hope

Big Questions:

- Why do good people suffer?
- Can we question God?
- Is suffering always the result of sin?
- What does it mean to truly trust God?

Where Was Uz?

The exact location of **Uz**, the land where Job lived (Job 1:1), is not definitively known, but scholars have a few educated guesses based on biblical and historical references:

Possible Locations:

- 1. Edom (Southern Jordan/Northern Arabia)**
 - **Lamentations 4:21** mentions “the land of Uz” in parallel with **Edom**, suggesting a close connection.
 - **Edom** was located southeast of Israel, near the Dead Sea and in the territory of modern-day **Jordan**.
- 2. Northern Arabia**
 - Some believe Uz could have been in **northern Arabia**, perhaps in or near **Tema** or **Dedan**—regions mentioned alongside Job's friends' origins.
- 3. Syria or Mesopotamia (Aram)**
 - A few scholars point north toward **Aram/Syria** or **northern Mesopotamia** (modern-day Iraq/Turkey) based on genealogical links in **Genesis 10:23** and **Genesis 22:21**, where **Uz** is mentioned as a descendant of Shem and Nahor.

□ What This Tells Us:

- **Job wasn't an Israelite.**
 - His story is set outside the traditional boundaries of Israel, which shows that God's justice, sovereignty, and care extend beyond ethnic or national lines.
- **The message is universal.**
 - The themes of suffering, divine justice, and wisdom are relevant to *all* people, not just those within the covenant community of Israel.

🔍 Identity of the Sabeans:

The **Sabeans** (Hebrew: *Sheva*) were likely:

✅ A nomadic or semi-nomadic tribe of raiders

- Known for **plundering and raiding** (as in Job 1:15).
- Possibly camel-riders and traders in spices, gold, and incense.

🌍 Possible Geographic Origin:

There are **two main views** about their location:

1. Southern Arabia (modern-day Yemen)

- The Sabeian kingdom of **Sheba**, famous for its wealth (think: the Queen of Sheba in 1 Kings 10).
- Known for its **spice trade**, impressive architecture, and alliances with other ancient kingdoms.
- This kingdom peaked later than Job's time, but the people group may have existed earlier in smaller nomadic forms.

2. Northern Arabia or the Syrian Desert

- Some scholars suggest a **northern tribal group** of raiders using the same name, separate from the wealthy Sheba kingdom.
- These Sabeans may have been more like **desert bandits or raiders**, consistent with the brief mention in Job.

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- **The Sabeans were desert raiders**, known for violence and theft—likely from **Arabia**.

- They appear in Job as **one of the external forces that destroy his wealth**, showing how **suffering came not only from supernatural forces but also human evil**.
- Their attack emphasizes how Job was hit from **every angle—earthly, spiritual, natural, and human**.

12 34 Numbers in Job 1 – Symbolism and Meaning

1. Seven Sons & Three Daughters

“He had seven sons and three daughters...” (Job 1:2)

These are not just random numbers—they reflect **biblical patterns of completeness and wholeness**.

- **7** is the number of **perfection or completeness** (think of the 7 days of creation).
- **3** often symbolizes **divine order or harmony** (e.g., the Trinity, or 3-part blessings).
- **Together (7 + 3 = 10)**: a number of **totality or completeness**—Job has a *complete* and *ideal* family in the eyes of the culture.

👉 **This shows that Job’s life was “perfect” by human standards**—he had everything a man of integrity could desire: many children (especially sons), wealth, and status.

2. Livestock and Servants

“He owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 donkeys, and had a large number of servants.” (Job 1:3)

These numbers aren’t just about wealth—they signal that Job is **blessed beyond measure**:

Animal	Symbolic/Practical Meaning
7,000 sheep	Extreme wealth (used for clothing, sacrifices, food) – 7 again reflects fullness.
3,000 camels	Luxury and long-distance trade (camels = long-range transport).
500 oxen (yoke)	Strength, agriculture, and food production. A yoke = 2 oxen → 1,000 total.

Animal	Symbolic/Practical Meaning
500 donkeys	Transportation and status (especially white donkeys in ancient Near Eastern texts).
“Many servants”	Social power and infrastructure to manage such wealth.

👉 The numbers are likely **rounded and stylized** to communicate **just how complete and prosperous Job was**.

3. First and Last Chapters Mirror Each Other

At the end of Job (42:12–13), **God restores Job’s fortune**—but with a fascinating detail:

- He receives **double** the livestock:
 - 14,000 sheep (from 7,000)
 - 6,000 camels (from 3,000)
 - 1,000 yoke of oxen (from 500)
 - 1,000 donkeys (from 500)
- **But the number of children remains the same: 7 sons and 3 daughters**

📖 Evidence That Job Lived in the Patriarchal Era

1. Lifespan

- In Job 42:16, we’re told that Job lived **140 more years** after his ordeal — suggesting a life span **well over 200 years**, which is **consistent with patriarchal figures**:
 - Abraham lived to **175** (Gen 25:7)
 - Isaac: **180**
 - Jacob: **147**

☐ This long lifespan fits a **pre-Mosaic** or **early patriarchal time**, before lifespans began declining.

2. No Reference to Israel, Law, or Priesthood

- There’s **no mention of Moses, the Law, the covenant, or Israel**, which are central to later Old Testament books.

- Job acts as **his own family's priest** (Job 1:5), offering sacrifices on behalf of his children — a custom **typical of the pre-Levitical period** (like Noah, Abraham, and Melchizedek).
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3. Wealth Measured in Livestock

- Like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Job's wealth is measured in **flocks, herds, and servants**, not silver or gold (compare Gen 13:2).
 - This pastoral, patriarchal lifestyle points to the **early Bronze Age** or **Middle Bronze Age** — the time of the patriarchs.
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4. Names and People Groups Align with Patriarchal World

- Job's friends (Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite) have **names and tribal references linked to Abraham's descendants**:
 - **Eliphaz** is the name of **Esau's son** (Gen 36:4).
 - **Teman** is Eliphaz's son — so Eliphaz the Temanite could be a descendant of Esau.
 - **Shuah** was a son of **Abraham through Keturah** (Gen 25:2) — Bildad may be from this line.
 - These connections suggest **Job lived in the broader Abrahamic world**.
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Group 1: Eliphaz – The Voice of Experience

 **Job 4:1–8; 5:17–18; 15:1–6**


Questions:

- What does Eliphaz believe about suffering and why people suffer?
- How does he view Job's character and situation?
- What truth might be in what Eliphaz says? What's missing or unhelpful?

SOAP Focus:

- **S:** What verse stood out to you?
- **O:** What is Eliphaz's underlying belief about God's justice?
- **A:** How do we sometimes fall into similar thinking today?
- **P:** Ask God for compassion and wisdom when supporting those who suffer.

Group 2: Bildad – The Voice of Tradition

 **Job 8:1–7; 18:1–21**


Questions:

- How does Bildad use tradition or past wisdom to explain Job's suffering?
- What assumptions is Bildad making about Job and God?
- How would you feel if you were Job listening to this?

SOAP Focus:

- **S:** Which verse challenged or irritated you?
- **O:** What kind of view of God is Bildad portraying?
- **A:** When might religious tradition cause harm instead of healing?
- **P:** Pray for discernment to honour God's truth over human tradition.

Group 3: Zophar – The Harsh Accuser

 **Job 11:1–6; 20:1–9**


Questions:

- How is Zophar's approach different from the others?
- What is his tone toward Job? What does he want Job to do?
- Is there any truth mixed with error in what he says?

SOAP Focus:

- **S:** What verse made you stop and think?
- **O:** What kind of theology is Zophar preaching?
- **A:** How can harsh truth without grace damage people?
- **P:** Ask God for both courage and gentleness when speaking truth.

Group 4: Job's Responses – Wrestling Honestly with God

 **Job 3:1–11; 7:17–18; 13:23–24; 19:23–27**


Questions:

- What emotions and questions does Job express to God?
- What is Job holding onto in 19:23–27?
- What can we learn from how Job processes pain and faith?

SOAP Focus:

- **S:** What verse expresses your heart?
- **O:** What do you notice about Job's honesty and hope?
- **A:** What permission does this give you in your own faith journey?
- **P:** Pray honestly to God like Job – bring both your pain and your hope.

Group 5: Elihu – The Young Voice with Fresh Insight

 **Job 32:1–9; 33:12–30; 36:22–26**


Questions:

- What does Elihu say is wrong with the older friends' approach?
- How is Elihu's view of suffering and God's purpose different?
- Does he speak more helpfully than the others?

SOAP Focus:

- **S:** What truth stood out from Elihu's speech?
- **O:** What is Elihu trying to communicate about God's greatness?
- **A:** What does this teach us about listening to younger voices or fresh perspectives?
- **P:** Pray for humility to learn from those who challenge us in the right way.

Group 6: The LORD Speaks – Divine Perspective

 **Job 38:1–18; 40:1–9; 42:1–6**

Questions:

- What kind of questions does God ask Job?
- What is the message behind God's speeches?
- How does Job respond and what can we learn?

SOAP Focus:

- **S:** Which verse deepened your view of God?
 - **O:** What does this reveal about God's wisdom, power, and presence?
 - **A:** How does this affect the way you see your own suffering?
 - **P:** Praise God for His greatness, even when you don't understand His ways.
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Group 7: Conclusion – Restoration & Revelation

Job 42:7–17

Questions:

- What does God say about Job and the friends?
- How does Job's story end? What surprises you?
- What does this final chapter teach us about suffering, repentance, and grace?

SOAP Focus:

- **S:** What verse gave you hope?
- **O:** What do you observe about God's justice and mercy?
- **A:** How does this affect the way we walk with others through suffering?
- **P:** Thank God for His faithfulness and healing power, even after great trials.

Job 1

Prologue

1 There once was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless—a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil. **2** He had seven sons and three daughters. **3** He owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 teams of oxen, and 500 female donkeys. He also had many servants. He was, in fact, the richest person in that entire area.

4 Job's sons would take turns preparing feasts in their homes, and they would also invite their three sisters to celebrate with them. **5** When these celebrations ended—sometimes after several days—Job would purify his children. He would get up early in the morning and offer a burnt offering for each of them. For Job said to himself, "Perhaps my children have sinned and have cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular practice.

Job's First Test

6 One day the members of the heavenly court^[a] came to present themselves before the Lord, and the Accuser, Satan,^[b] came with them. **7** "Where have you come from?" the Lord asked Satan.

Satan answered the Lord, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on."

8 Then the Lord asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil."

9 Satan replied to the Lord, "Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God. **10** You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is! **11** But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!"

12 "All right, you may test him," the Lord said to Satan. "Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don't harm him physically." So Satan left the Lord's presence.

13 One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting at the oldest brother's house, **14** a messenger arrived at Job's home with this news:

“Your oxen were plowing, with the donkeys feeding beside them,¹⁵ when the Sabeans raided us. They stole all the animals and killed all the farmhands. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.”

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: “The fire of God has fallen from heaven and burned up your sheep and all the shepherds. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.”

¹⁷ While he was still speaking, a third messenger arrived with this news: “Three bands of Chaldean raiders have stolen your camels and killed your servants. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.”

¹⁸ While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: “Your sons and daughters were feasting in their oldest brother’s home. ¹⁹ Suddenly, a powerful wind swept in from the wilderness and hit the house on all sides. The house collapsed, and all your children are dead. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.”

²⁰ Job stood up and tore his robe in grief. Then he shaved his head and fell to the ground to worship. ²¹ He said,

“I came naked from my mother’s womb,
and I will be naked when I leave.
The Lord gave me what I had,
and the Lord has taken it away.
Praise the name of the Lord!”

²² In all of this, Job did not sin by blaming God.

Job 2

Job’s Second Test

2 One day the members of the heavenly court^[a] came again to present themselves before the Lord, and the Accuser, Satan,^[b] came with them. ² “Where have you come from?” the Lord asked Satan.

Satan answered the Lord, “I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that’s going on.”

³ Then the Lord asked Satan, “Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil. And he has maintained his integrity, even though you urged me to harm him without cause.”

⁴ Satan replied to the Lord, “Skin for skin! A man will give up everything he has to save his life. ⁵ But reach out and take away his health, and he will surely curse you to your face!”

⁶ “All right, do with him as you please,” the Lord said to Satan. “But spare his life.” ⁷ So Satan left the Lord’s presence, and he struck Job with terrible boils from head to foot.

⁸ Job scraped his skin with a piece of broken pottery as he sat among the ashes. ⁹ His wife said to him, “Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die.”

¹⁰ But Job replied, “You talk like a foolish woman. Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?” So in all this, Job said nothing wrong.

Job’s Three Friends Share His Anguish

¹¹ When three of Job’s friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and travelled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. ¹² When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³ Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. No one said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was too great for words.