Reflections [27 October – 2 November 2024](https://www.rootsontheweb.com/lectionary/2024/133-september-october-2024-b/proper-25)

[I had heard, but now I see](https://www.rootsontheweb.com/lectionary/2024/133-september-october-2024-b/proper-25)

**Bible study on Job 42:1-6,10-17**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Lord God, you are awesome beyond measure  
and we are so small in comparison,  
yet you welcome us into your presence.  
Reveal yourself to us today:  
help us to see who you are.  
As we bow down before the God of the universe,  
the God of love beyond our understanding,  
help us to worship you.  
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

**Job 42: 1-6, 10-17**

**42**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.”

**10**After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. **11**All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the Lord had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=job42&version=NIV#fen-NIV-13934a)] and a gold ring.

**12**The Lord blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. **13**And he also had seven sons and three daughters. **14**The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. **15**Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job’s daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers.

**16**After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. **17**And so Job died, an old man and full of years.

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

Hurray, a happy passage in Job! So, all’s well that ends well. Or does it? Might this passage taken at face value reinforce a prosperity (and beauty) theology? And is the acquiescence to God’s perceived omnipotence healthy or helpful? The questions continue! In verse 2 and following, Job accepts God’s power – which he has done throughout. What matters to Job is the sense that he has met God. He still maintains his innocence in all things other than questioning God’s rule of the world. This is one of the points when we might want to question if this is a good thing. After all, a large proportion of Scripture is lament with recurring questions of why and how long.

The restoration of Job’s fortunes is not a reward for good behaviour. It is God’s gift and it is restoration, even if it goes beyond what Job possessed at the beginning. One little note of significance is that the daughters are given a share of the inheritance. At the time daughters could only inherit if there were no sons. The restoration of Job still leaves the big question: What is the purpose of the book? CS Rodd argues ‘If in the end we are unwilling to remain with mystery, as the writer of Job left us, placing fellowship with God above intellectual understanding of the problem of suffering and being satisfied with the religious encounter, then the value of soul-making [or character formation] explanation remains the best resort. From a moral aspect it has to be asked whether the extent and severity of the suffering can ever be regarded as the necessary cost for the making of souls, especially when many souls seem to be crushed under their sorrows rather than lifted to heroic virtue. Only a cross and a wounded God remain for us to cling to’. We may wish to add that we also have the risen Christ to cling to.

**Reflection**

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**Questions**

* What is your favourite image of God? Why?
* Which images of God do you find unhelpful? Why?
* Can you describe a vivid moment in your faith journey – when things became clearer for you?

**A prayer to end the Bible study**

Go with God and search for his wonders.  
Go with God and look for his glory.  
Go with God to proclaim his greatness.  
Go with God as your Lord and your friend.  
**Amen.**