

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

## I had heard, but now I see

The Book of Job concludes with Job's second response to God and his realisation that he has come to a deeper knowledge of his place within God's creation. There is a rebuke for Job's friends and their counsel. Job's fortunes are restored, there is an inheritance for his daughters and he dies at a great old age.



## 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? 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.

## First impressions

- 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?



# LISTEN



Listen to 'Still Holding my hand' from *Matilda the Musical*. Reflect on how God is with you in everything.

# LOOK

Look at some optical illusions. You can find many examples on the internet. Can you just see one image or can you see more? How do these optical illusions help us think about God? Do our expectations of God shape what we see?

# PLAY

Take some play dough and mould and play with it, as you think about how knowing God changes you.

## A sending out prayer

Lord God, when I look at the sky at night, I see that you are...  
When I look at the world around me, I see that you are...  
When life is hard, help me to see that you are...  
Today I know that you are...  
Help me tomorrow to see new things about you.  
Amen.

# CREATE

Create a word art of Job's story and then think about the ways God was always with Job and is always with you.