Bible Study by Ed Miller

Editing and Contributions by John J Scalzo

# Reading TOB to Know God

What is the message of Job? What is the main purpose of Job? Why did God give us Job? If Job was removed from the Bible, what would be gone that no other book could give me in the same way?

You would be amazed how many different ways commentators have approached the book of Job. Some say the book of Job was to show patience. Some say it is to show the power of faith. Some say it is to show the blessings of affliction and suffering. Some say it is to display the providential workings of God. Some say it is to illustrate the human depravity of the best of us. Here is Job, a righteous and perfect man, and he ends up repenting at the end of the book. Some say it is just an object lesson to teach us the final conquest of Christ over Satan. Some say it is a picture of Christ, the righteous sufferer, and Job is a type of the Lord Jesus.

A student of the Bible is tempted to wring his hands and say, "is anything clear?" Everybody has all these different approaches. One thing they all seem to share is that Job addresses this question: Why do the righteous suffer? But that is only part of the greater truth. If you except that as the theme of Job, I think you will miss a great deal in your study of the book.

The goal of everything you go through and of everything that comes into your life is that you might get a fuller **vision** of God. The mysteries of life, including the sufferings of life, take their rightful place when you can join Job and proclaim "I had **heard** of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eyes **see** You. Therefore, having seen Thee, I repent in dust and ashes". New Birth! New Vision! New Life! New Blessings! New intimacy with God that is transforming us into His likeness!

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# "Reading JOB to Know God"

This book consists of edited transcripts of Bible studies done by Ed Miller. Ed has been teaching the Bible diligently since the 70's and in our opinion is one of the most anointed, Christ-centered teachers that the Lord has given to His Body. Ed will not teach a book unless the Lord sheds His light and understanding on it. His goal is always to see God's heart in the book and the special revelation of Christ that would be missing without it. The purpose of Bible study is **not to know the Bible** but to **know God**. It makes a powerful difference when you follow our Lord Jesus Christ's admonition in Matthew 11:29

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

True rest for your soul comes only by giving up your burden and coming deeper and deeper into a real relationship with the Lord who loves you more than you will ever be able to comprehend in this life.

Having come to know Ed personally over many years, we can attest to his high standard of honesty, integrity and unrivaled passion for our Lord Jesus Christ. He holds to standards, we believe, that are head and shoulders above most. He never solicits money nor has he charged anyone for a single tape or speaking engagement. He truly believes and lives trusting that the Lord will finance a work if He has ordained it.

The long and fruitful life of Ed and his dearly loved wife Lilian are a true testimony to lives sold out to the Lord Jesus Christ. They have mailed out thousands of teaching tapes and who but Ed would make all of his teachings freely available on a website for anyone to access.

We, the brothers and sister in Christ of Central Jersey, believe that these teachings are more valuable than silver, gold or any precious stone.

This Book and the others to follow are never to be sold but will be made freely available to any who see their value.

### THE INDISPENSABLE PRINCIPLE OF BIBLE STUDY

There are many principles that are helpful in the study of the Bible but there is only one **indispensable principle** of Bible study. Among the helps, we can name Bible commentaries, dictionaries, atlantes, sound critical texts of the original languages, lexicons, concordances, grammars, sermons on special passages, and the like. We are truly thankful to the Lord for the many aids He has given to assist earnest Bible students in their handling of the Word of God. However, there is only one indispensable principle of Bible study.

The indispensable principle of Bible study is "total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit". The Holy Spirit, who first inspired the Book, is the very One who must reveal Christ to the hungry heart through its pages. Academics alone will never reveal the precious treasures in God's Word. No labor of mere research can discover the Lord to the heart. Only God can reveal God. The purpose of all Bible Study is to come to a heart-knowledge of the Lord through the Holy Spirit's progressive unveiling of the Lord Jesus in the Scriptures.

The Bible, like the Lord Jesus, is both human and divine. We do not glorify ignorance! We clearly recognize the need to apply sound hermeneutical principles if we are to rightly interpret the human side; but we also recognize the need to come as dependent babes to the Holy Spirit if we ever hope to receive insight into the divine side. The revelation of the Lord is in His hands and He sows light spontaneously into the bosoms of the humble and needy. If all we get through our study is the human side, God have mercy on us! We will only become proud, for knowledge puffs up. We will end up with a chilling orthodoxy without a living Savior. Scriptural truth in the abstract, however profound and extensive, will leave the heart barren and the affections cold. We must behold the Living Word in the Written Word or all of our study is in vain. Christ Himself is the spirit and life of the Bible; He is the very essence and substance of sound doctrine.

Because of the great importance of the indispensable principle of Bible Study, and because of its sad neglect among very earnest students of the

Scriptures, we are going to underscore this truth over and over again from many different portions of the Word of God.

Allow me to wrap up these comments by calling attention to several verses from the Bible. John 6:45 says, "It is written in the prophets, "AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD ." Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me." If a heart is not "taught of God" it will never come to the Lord; if a heart is "taught of God" it will always come to Jesus. To come to Him in faith is the proper end of all Bible study. II Corinthians 4:6 says, " For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. " When we behold Him in His light we are transformed into His likeness. The changes that we experience by beholding Him are redemptive changes. Any change or reformation that comes into our lives in any other way than as the fruit produced by beholding Him is an unreal change and is destined to perish with all flesh. This is why we lay such tremendous stress on the indispensable principle. The final verse I lay before you is part of the Apostle Paul's prayer for the believers in Ephesus: Ephesians 1:15-18a "For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened." This is the prayer from all of us at Bible Study Ministries for you. May He unveil Himself to your heart in a living way, as you study the Scriptures under the guidance of the dear Holy Spirit.

For complete access to a lifetime of Christ-centered teachings go to:

# biblestudyministriesinc.com

If the Lord puts it on your heart to donate to Ed's ministry you can find the contact information on the above website.

To contact the brothers and sisters in Central Jersey you can email John:

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John Scalzo has done the editing and added his own comments as he felt led by the Holy Spirit.

# SOME SUGGESTIONS THAT MIGHT HELP:

- 1: **READ THE BOOK OF JOB-** Try to read the Book of Job through in one or two sittings. This will give you the feel of the Book. Experience it like a movie or play. Having this sense of the Book will pay incredible dividends as we slowly study it.
- **2: TAKE IT SLOW-** This is not intended to read like a novel but is an edited transcript of "live" Bible studies by Ed Miller.
- **3:** HAVE YOUR BIBLE BY YOUR SIDE- You will find it much more rewarding to actually turn to the suggested Scriptures as mentioned and read them yourself. It will help you familiarize yourself with their locations and give you a more personal experience with the Scriptures.
- **4: TAKE NOTES-** As the Holy Spirit lights up your spirit and speaks to your inner man it would be beneficial to keep a Spiritual Diary as insights and questions flood your mind.

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# Chapter 1 Reading JOB to Know God

Introduction to the Whole Book

I will ask you to open to the book of Job. We are going to study the book of Job together and as usual, the first lesson of any study is an introduction lesson. Our purpose for this initial look is to get the main idea, the main theme of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. So before we begin digging into the book itself, we will sort of fly over it and get a bird's eye view of the whole book.

I am always using that expression, "bird's eye view". I mean more than just an aerial view. The Lord has so engineered the bird's eyes that they are more efficient than any other animal on earth. It is truly incredible the way it is curved and shaped so it can instantaneously bring into sharp focus any object that it is looking at. Birds even produce a special oil in their eyes which super enhances their ability to differentiate colors with extraordinary precision. They found that in some species the difference between the male and the female's coloring is so insignificant that they need this skill to recognize who their lover is. God has given us better eyes in our hearts to be able to see Him as the Beloved Bridegroom of our soul.

They also have something called monocular vision. Mono means one or single. But because their eyes are fixed on the sides of their heads rather than in front they possess panoramic peripheral vision. With it they can see great expanses around them including the whole landscape. The miracle doesn't stop there because they also have binocular vision. Binocular vision means that when they focus on something, the image becomes magnified. That is how the eagle dives down from thousands of feet in the sky and catches a field mouse. As it is coming down it actually focuses its eye as if it were a telescope.

So we are going to take a bird's eye view of the book of Job. Now I hope a bird's eye view means a lot more to you. We are going to take a monocular view to see the whole landscape. Then with a binocular view we will focus in on the specific things the Holy Spirit leads us to.

### THE BIBLE'S LOGICAL ARRANGEMENT

If you look in your Bible you are going to find that Job is the beginning of a section of books. I do not know if you are familiar with this, but the more you study the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the more you are going to see that every book in the Bible is arranged in the order that God wanted it. It is **intentionally** arranged. For example, Job is the oldest book written. Chronologically that would make it first not eighteenth. We will see that God

has a reason for that.

Let me show you how it fits. The first seventeen Books, from Genesis through Esther, are called Historical Books. As a matter of fact, when you come to Esther you have come as far as the Old Testament takes you in history. As far as the record goes, Malachi does not take you any further than Esther does.

Then you have a group of books, five of them, called the Poetical Books. Job is number one on that list. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. The Old Testament ends up with the Prophetical Books that run from Isaiah to Malachi. The Poetical Books add the color commentary, the emotional landscape to the history of the redemptive experience. We have the Poetical Books to reveal the heart of God which you might miss just reading the history.

You say, what does all this mean? Well, here is where you get your answer. You have the exact same pattern in the New Testament. You also start with the Historical Books from Matthew to the book of Acts. Then you have your Epistles which are your Poetical section, the fully developed revelation of The Lord's heart. It takes you from Romans all the way to Jude. The Prophetical section is the book of Revelation which ends the whole Bible. So the Old Testament and the New Testament are in the exact intentional order.

In the Old Testament the Poetical books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs Ecclesiastes and Songs) explain the history of redemption in what I like to call "seed form". The truth of God and His redemptive plan is presented in embryonic, picture form. The Lord uses seeds in which He hides His miraculous wisdom, both in His Bible and throughout His creation. So perhaps we've answered the famous question "What came first the chicken or the egg?" From God's point of view, from a developmental perspective, the egg/seed always comes first and the chicken/matured creation is manifested last. So all the "seed principles" of God which are abundant in the Old Testament find their fulfillment in the New Testament. Mark 4:26-28 "And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

So when you come to the New Testament the Epistles reveal the same emotional colorings as the Poetical Old Testament Books but now in fully-developed, fully manifested form. The truths that were colorfully and dramatically demonstrated, in creation and Israel's history, find their full expression in the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The revelation of Jesus Christ is the **meaning**, **purpose and reason** for everything.

God gives us Job first among the Poetical books, so it becomes the primary seed bearer. The Book of Job contains all the truths we will ever need to understand God's message of redemption. Job answers the question, "Why?". The soul crying out in the confusion of the tempest, "Why me?" You see, when you come to Psalms, then you are going to ask the question, "How?". How can I enter into all of this? Psalms tells you how. And then Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon tell you "What". What will happen in your life if you really turn your eyes to the Lord, what will be the result of intimate union with the Lord?

I point out from time to time that **Genesis 3:15** is the key verse of the entire Bible. Genesis 3:15 is the **First Prophecy** in the Bible, and it says that the serpent, Satan, and his seed, will constantly be at war with the woman and her seed, which is Christ and His followers. So Christ and all His followers will be at war with Satan and his minions. The verse goes on to say that Satan and his followers will have a partial, **temporary** victory. But Christ and His followers will end up with the **ultimate** victory. That is clearly shown in the figure of the "bruised heel" and the "crushed head".

#### THERE'S A WAR GOING ON

The life of Job **illustrates** Genesis 3:15. You do not have to know hardly anything about Job to realize that the seed of the woman is at war with the seed of the serpent. Job is the Bible's great illustration of that. In Job the conflict between God and Satan is brought from behind the scenes right onto the big stage. So the first major theme in God's explanation of redemption is; there's a **battle** going on. We see in dramatic biblical prose the partial, **temporary** victory of the devil. Boy, it looks like Job really went under for a while. You know, in the New Testament it says, "You have heard of the patience of Job and seen the end of the Lord." The truth is it looks mostly like the end of Job. But he comes out on top. He eventually triumphs victoriously as an object lesson for us all. Now let's fly again and try to see the book as a whole.

Let me give you the outline. Chapters 1 and 2 are the prose introduction. Now I call attention to the fact that it is prose because prose simply means "not poetry". That's interesting! We are studying the poetical section, and it begins with prose. God gives a partial explanation in the first two chapters of why the righteous suffer. He doesn't give the full answer. Then in chapters 3 through 42:6 the bulk of the book, you have the poem. The poetry we find here is both elegant and gut wrenching.

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First of all, from chapters 3-31, you have the debates of the three friends of Job. Now, God calls them friends, and He says "Pray for your friends". Job did not exactly have that same opinion of them. He called them "miserable"

comforters", and they were. Job's friends try to explain to him why he is suffering. You see, God has given a partial answer, Satan. But remember, Job did not have access to the first two chapters. God gave them to us, but Job was unaware. He started in chapter 3 when the bottom fell out of everything, and he did not understand that Satan had gone before the Throne of God. That God had given Satan permission to pull the fence down, take the hedge away and to strip him to the bone. He did not understand that. So they are trying to figure out what is going on. And these three "miserable comforters", try to explain his dilemma. They try but they don't, in fact they make things worse.

Two of them speak three times and one of them speaks twice, and in between Job answers them back. At one time one of them went forward and spit in Job's face and at another time one went and slapped him across the face. These were red hot discussions. He was lying in his sickbed and they pummeled him with their accusations and worldly wisdom. Have you ever been down and confused and been surrounded by such wonderful counselors. Unfortunately in the Body of Christ there are more "miserable comforters" than you can shake a stick at. They love to connect your pain and suffering to your actions, church, beliefs, lack of prayer etc. etc.

Then in chapters 32-37, there is a man I really like. His name is Elihu. Elihu was a fourth friend (Like the fourth man in the fire we see in Daniel). I think the principle is when 3 dimensions fail, we must turn to the God of the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension. He came along and although he did not give the right answer either, he did get Job looking in the right direction. He was a lot closer than these three miserable comforters who really missed the mark. Job, in defending himself, missed the mark himself. Elihu comes along and he says, okay, which one of you have said, "where is God?" You see, they had left God out of the whole discussion and that was the main point. After Elihu prepares the way, can you guess who ends it?

God Himself begins speaking in Chapter 38 and it says He answered Job from the whirlwind, from a tornado. And when God speaks, He fires seventy-two questions at Job in a row. Seventy-two questions that the scientists have still not answered to this present day. They are still scratching their heads over it. Tremendous section! Okay, then the book ends in chapter 42:7 through the end. This is the great conclusion which shows the results of all his suffering. Those are the basic facts of the book which really doesn't do much for your heart, but at least it gives you an idea of what the book is about.

### THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE

Now let me give you the **Spiritual Outline**. It begins the same way, with the first two chapters which gives God's **partial** explanation of the mysteries of

life. Now, I call it mysteries in the sense of that which is unrevealed or not **yet** known. I used to say the book of Job told about the sufferings of life, but it is **bigger** than that. It tells about the **mysteries** of life. That includes suffering. Why do the righteous suffer? But that is only part of it. It also answers the question: Why do some righteous prosper?

You see, that is another part of the mysteries of life. Why are some Christians rich? Some are exalted and others are not? So we will call it the **mysteries of life**. It begins with God's partial answer, and the book ends with God's full answer to the mysteries of life. Notice how the book starts. It starts with God. Notice how the book ends. It ends with God. And you can guess what is sandwiched in between. In between is man's futile attempt, chapters 3-37, to figure things out himself.

Now one of the joys I had this week was reading the book of Job in two sittings. It was a little long for one sitting, so I did it in two sittings. And as you go through it, and especially as you go through this section, how rational, how reasonable, how logical their arguments **seem. Yet** how far short they fell, from God's real answers.

The book begins with God's key; the book ends with God's key. And, in between, man is trying to open the door with a thousand keys that don't fit! He is trying to figure out the combination. Why does this happen to the righteous? What have I done that this should happen to me? And man's keys never seem to turn the latch, never open the door. Reminds me of Luke 11:52 "A curse on you experts in the law, because you have taken away the Key (Jesus) to the door of knowledge! You did not go in yourselves, and you kept out those who tried to get in."

So chapters 1 and 2 – God's partial answers to the mysteries of life – Satan is the answer. We will get into that in some detail. That is part of the explanation. And then man's key that never works. And then God's full answer, the skeleton key, the combination that unlocks God's vault of truth.

### **GOD FOSSILIZES HIS TRUTH**

Now before we get any further into Job, before I go through what I believe is the theme and the main burden on my heart. Let me tell you why I think God used Job's life to give this message. You see, He could have put this message in David's life or Samuel's life or Solomon or Isaiah or Paul or Peter. But He did not. He chose Job instead. The Lord needed to demonstrate this primal truth forever in one man. This reminded me of the phenomenon we call fossils. We all know that a fossil is an impression of some kind of life. Either plant or animal life that is usually extinct and found preserved in a rock. It might be a tree or a

leaf or a fern. It might be the skeleton of an insect, a fish, or a dinosaur. The point I am trying to make is the fossil gives value to the rock. The rock has no value except for the **impression** made on it. But embedded in that old stone is an image we call a fossil. The image is priceless. We search for these ancient impressions as valuable **evidence** of life lived long ago.

Just so the events and people in the Bible were **chosen** by God. It is not that they are anything in themselves. Job was nothing. There have been a thousand Jobs that never made the pages of the Bible. He's not the only one who ever suffered, nor was his suffering the greatest of all time. There are other David's and other Peter's, who have trusted in the Lord but never made the Bible. Job is in the scriptures because God fossilized a truth in the rock of his life. Now, everybody knows Job. And all of the events in the Bible are the same way. That is why there is no such thing as an uninteresting passage in the Bible. It cannot be! Because if your heart is right and you are seeking the Lord, you will find fossilized principles and precious truths in every historical event. Proverbs 25:2

## "It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out."

Let me suggest why I think God gave us this message through this man Job. Why it couldn't be David or Peter or somebody else. Almost as soon as you say the name Job, everybody seems to know that his book is the oldest book in the Bible. That is a fact everybody seems to know. In fact it **might** be the oldest book in the world. There is not, according to many experts, an older book to be found anywhere than the book of Job.

I am not going to attempt to prove that, but let's look at some evidence that has led historians in this direction. In the last verses of chapter 22 of Genesis it shows that one of Job's relatives was Abraham's brother Nahor. He happened to have two sons that show up in the book of Job. So it appears that he lived around the time of Abraham. The fact that he was offering sacrifices as the head and priest of his family is consistent with that time period as well. It says that he lived one hundred and forty years after his trials. Living an inordinately long lifetime was common in those days. So that dates him way back.

Also the fact that his wealth was determined by the number of sheep and camels reinforces the theory. In all of his speeches as well as those of his four friends there is never any reference made to the nation of Israel. Not one time is there any mention of Mosaic Law or the Mosaic Dispensation. It is amazing to be silent about all that, and so we presume the Book of Job took place before all these things.

God took the antiquity of Job to make the fossilization of this message so very precious. The first thing it shows me, and I am going to mention two things, is God's wonderful provision for Old Testament saints. Isn't that amazing? I used to feel sorry for those poor Old Testament saints because they did not have the whole Bible. I was living in the full meridian of the completion of the Canon. I was living in the blazing light of God's completed Bible, and they weren't. They did not have Romans, Galatians or Ephesians or any of the New Testament books. So I said, oh, poor David, he had so little. Poor Daniel, he did not have what I have. Well, I was very wrong about that. They had everything we have! They had it in picture form. They had the whole oak in the acorn, in the seed. I am going to show you how much knowledge Job had. Do not forget that at this point Genesis has not been written. Exodus is not written. No book in the Bible is written. As a matter of fact, the Book of Job is not written. Job is just living. Check out this list of Bible principles I have found in the wonderful Book of Job:

The Omnipotence of God: 5:9, 6:4, 6:14, 9:5. The Omnipresence of God: 11:11, 21:22, 23:10.

The Eternal Nature of God: 10:5, 27:2.
The Holiness of God: 4:17, 15:17, 25:5.
God the Creator of all things: 10:8 and 35:10.
Satan's sphere of influence: 1:12 and 2:6.
The creation of man from dust: 1:21, 30:23.

Man's utter moral depravity: 4:17, 5:6-7, 7:20, 9:20, 14:1, 21:33.

Jehovah, His covenant name: 1:21, 12:9.

That's enough. Do you see what I am doing? A whole Bible of theology is found in the oldest book in the Bible. That is an amazing thing! I point that out to show that these Old Testament saints were privileged. Do not think that you have something they did not have. They had it all.

### **GOD'S WORLDWIDE HEART**

But there is something even more wonderful than that. I never knew this until my study of Job. Not only does it show God's provision for Old Testament saints, but by choosing Job as the instrument rather than Abraham, He reminds us of His love for Gentiles as well as Jews. You see, Job was not a Jew. Job was not a Hebrew. He did not dwell in Canaan. He was from the East. He lived in Arabia. Job and his friends were not Hebrews. They were Gentiles. You talk about missions in the Old Testament. This is amazing. What a picture! Not only of how much God has given the Jews, but how much light God gave mankind way back in the days of Abraham. Boy, I tell you, this is tremendous!

God has always had a **worldwide heart**. I used to read the Bible and think that the Israelites were God's pets, that God favored them. They never were. They are not God's favorites. They are **children of His favor**, but that is not the

same as being His favorite. God chose the Jews as a channel to get the Gospel to the whole wide world. God's heart is for missions. Job will live forever as the one who has set this principle of God's heart in stone. Job will stand forever as the witness of how much God revealed to mankind before Moses, before the Law, before the Levitical system. Job was a priest, but he was not a Jewish priest. You see, he was a Gentile priest. He was a priest of the universal family of mankind.

It astonishes me how this book was received into the Hebrew Bible. Doesn't it thrill your heart to see a Gentile described by God as a perfect and upright man? One that feared God, hated evil, and was not a Jew. He was acknowledged by God Himself in the presence of the angels, as to have no equal, to have no match on the earth. Right from the beginning God opens the message to our hearts that Jesus Christ is the "Son of all mankind". He is a God for all people, and His love and His care and His forgiveness and His fellowship is not limited to anyone in any age, in any place, at any time. It is always "For whosoever will." Acts 14:16-17 says:

"In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without a witness." Boy, is Job proof of that.

One thing I get out of this is that it refutes the notion that paganism and idolatry is an outgrowth of primitive religion. Well, Job shoots that argument right in the head, and puts it to rest forever. Paganism and idolatry are **not** an outgrowth of primitive religion. How much more primitive can you get than the book of Job? People, in actuality, turn to idolatry and paganism because they are turning **from** the true and living God. Turning **from**, the light of the Bible. It is a defection from the truth; it is a corruption of it. The ancient religion, if we can call it religion, was the truth of God. That truth is primal and has not changed even to this day.

So God chose Job, over anybody else, to present this message as an all-inclusive foundation that all who follow might rest upon. The fact that God always wins the battle over Satan gets illustrated in Job's body and in his life. That is the great message of the whole Bible, and so He gives it to us in picture form right at the beginning. Sometimes it looks like Satan is winning, but he is not.

### THE INVISIBLE WORLD IS THE REAL WORLD

Some have called Job the great battlefield on which God and Satan are fighting. And since Job was a representative man, every Christian is a literal "war zone". Now with this in mind, let me suggest that there are two worlds, the visible world and the invisible world. A world of matter which we can see, taste, feel

and touch with our senses. And then the invisible world. The world of spirits, angels and demons, i.e. "God's world". That invisible world and this physical world have a relationship with each other. The things that go on up there affect the things that take place down here. I used to believe that what we call the visible world was the "real world". I still say the visible world and the invisible world are closely related, but I have come to see that it is the invisible world which is indeed the "real world".

Now that goes contrary to what we generally think. It goes contrary to what the natural heart of man believes. The natural man believes that this is the real world. Where I can touch things and taste things. It is not! God created this world to illustrate the spiritual world and so we live is a world of shadows. The spiritual world existed long before the physical.

Hebrews 11:1-3 "Now faith is the assurance of the things we hope for, the proof of the reality of the things we cannot see. By faith we understand that the worlds were created, beautifully coordinated, and now exist, at God's command; so the things that we see did not develop out of things that appear." The invisible first, then the visible.

The invisible wisdom and purpose of God has existed from eternity past. Our world including the Earth, the Solar System and indeed the entire known cosmos was created by God to picture/manifest His things. Women have babies in order to illustrate the new birth in Christ. To be "Born Again", to be "Born from above", came first. God says, how shall I picture that? And He created a mother bearing a baby. This demonstrates a love seed being nurtured in a dark hidden place. And at the time of God's choice, delivered into a new world. Why did God create the soil? He created the soil to show the nature and character of men's hearts. Some are rocky; some are rich and tilled; some are wayward and some are thorny. It always shows the condition of man's heart. Why did He create the vine? Why did He create water? Why did He create food? Why did He create the sunshine? Why do we walk down something called a path? Why is there such a thing as a rock or a fortress? They are all three dimensional pictures of four dimensional reality. Everything in this physical creation was created to manifest spiritual truth.

Now let me draw one application and then we are going to try to get more tuned in on the message of Job. You are living here in the unreal world, the world of pictures, shadows and types. In this world there is a war going on between God and Satan. And you are the battlefield on which that war takes place. Do not be surprised if you do not always understand what is going on in your life. You really shouldn't be surprised at all. As a matter of fact I would be surprised if we understood one hundredth of one percent of anything that goes on in our life. We are rarely aware of the effects of the spiritual world!

God has a program of redemption! God is using us, and would you have ever dreamed that you would be teaching angels! We are showing them the many colored manifold wisdom of God. Ephesians 3:10

"God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

You cannot even begin to know what is going on in your life and why God allows some things to happen. God might bring something into your life today that He will use forty years from now. Then in forty years you will meet someone that God will bless with your experience. His ways are mysterious as Psalm 77:19 says "His ways are on the water in order that His steps may not be known" That is one of the great messages of Job.

# Chapter 2 Reading JOB to Know God

Who was this Special Man Job?

The first five verses of the book answer three questions about Job. Verse one answers who he was. "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil."

Verses 2 and 3 answer the question, what did he have? "Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east."

Verses 4 and 5 answer the question, what did he do? "His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, 'Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.'"

There is no question about it, when you read just these first five verses, that Job was a rare specimen of a man. Job was an exceptional man of God in any age. Chapter 1, verse 8, when God speaks to Satan. The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." Now that is not human opinion. That is what God says about Job.

And then again chapter 2, verse 3: The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause."

Here was a man that was God-fearing. He loved the Lord. He hated sin, and his earthly cup of bliss was full. It almost sounds like a fairy tale. It starts off so good, but there was a fly in the ointment; more like a snake in the garden. There was something wrong. A hidden parasite. One commentator calls it the "worm of his nature".

Even though his heart is open before God, and he is walking in the ways of God. Even though God calls him a God-fearing man, and there is not an equal

on the earth like him. Yet there is something in his heart like a cancer, something that is constantly eating away. Something so deep and so embedded in his nature, so hidden in his life, that God has chosen Job as the example for all mankind in every age to illustrate this one thing.

The problem Job had is hinted at in the first five verses. It is so subtle, that if it were not for what was stated later in black and white, I would never suggest it was so. In verse five he says: "Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." You say, well, that is an example of a godly father concerned about his children. It is an example of a family priest who is burdened about his own family. Perhaps, but perhaps more than that. Perhaps when he said, "Maybe my sons have sinned," it never entered his mind that maybe Job had sinned. Was he trying to say that it's not a possibe that I could have sinned, it must have been my kids.

I know for sure, later on, that this root of self-righteousness comes to the surface. There is no question when you read the book of Job that way down in the depths of this man's heart was self-righteousness. God loved Job very much, and He loves us the same way. He does not have any pets, so He will not allow that root to stay in our hearts either. It seemed that Job never really got that message until the end in utter ruin and total depravity.

So when you read the book it looks, at least on the surface, like God begins the work of breaking, stripping, and plowing this man under. It looks like Job is being mercilessly wrung out in the hands of Almighty God. I am going to ask you to turn to Job chapter 29:1-17

"And Job again took up his discourse and said, 'Oh that I were as in months gone by, As in the days when God watched over me; When His lamp shone over my head, And by His light I walked through darkness; As I was in the prime of my days, When the friendship of God was over my tent; When the Almighty was yet with me, and my children were around me; When my steps were bathed in butter, and the rock poured out for me streams of oil! When I went out to the gate of the city, When I took my seat in the square, The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men arose and stood. The princes stopped talking and put their hands on their mouths; The voice of the nobles was hushed, And their tongue stuck to their palate. For when the ear heard, it called me blessed, and when the eye saw, it gave witness of me, Because I delivered the poor who cried for help, And the orphan who had no helper. The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me, And I made the widow's heart sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to

### the needy, and I investigated the case which I did not know. I broke the jaws of the wicked and snatched the prey from his teeth."

And it goes on and on. I, I, I, I, I yay yay!!! . You can glance at Job 31 and see more of the same – even worse. You see here the deep root of self-assuredness. There is not one word of brokenness. Not one word of helplessness. No evidence at all of a contrite spirit. Nothing about conscious weakness. Nothing about failure.

You go through this book and see Job who was in the summer of prosperity, now in the cold dark winter of adversity! Under the awful pressure of divine, satanic and human oppression, Job began to utter many things from the depths of his heart. He started saying things he would never have said in the beginning of the book. Take chapter 30, verse 1. Boy, you could see his heart here.

### "But now those younger than I mock me, whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock."

He is bitter now. He says, "Now look at the people who are mocking me. Why, I wouldn't even employ their fathers to watch over my dogs, and they are mocking me". Now don't get me wrong. This is not the theme of Job. The theme of Job is not how to get rid of self-righteousness, how to get rid of subtle pride. For years I had a real shallow view of the book of Job. I thought that the message of Job was to reveal that hidden root of self-righteousness we all have. I thought that, was the message of the book. I have self-righteousness in me and God will pull the rug out from under me so that it will be revealed.

That is not the point at all, and that is not the message of Job. The fact is, stripping a man externally of all his pleasures will often lead to despair. Taking his prosperity, his family, his friends, his reputation and his health do not lead to righteousness and to God. It most often leads to hopelessness and bitterness. It is utter despair that makes Job write chapter 3. If you are ever going to a birthday party, read chapter 3. Now there's the worst Happy Birthday song you will ever hear! The whole chapter is a lament. Verse 3

"Let the day perish on which I was to be born, And let the night which said, 'A boy is conceived.' May that day be darkness; Let not God above care for it, Nor light shine on it. Let darkness and black gloom claim it; Let a cloud settle on it; Let the blackness of the day terrify it."

He had a high regard for his birthday, didn't he?

"As for that night, let darkness seize it; Let it not rejoice among the days of the year; Let it not come into the number of the months. Behold, let that night be barren; Let no joyful shout enter it. Let those curse it who curse the day, who are prepared to rouse Leviathan. Let the stars of its twilight be darkened; Let it wait for light but have none, and let it not see the breaking dawn."

Why?

"Because it did not shut the opening of my mother's womb, or hide trouble from my eyes. Why did I not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire? Why did the knees receive me, and why the breasts, that I should suck? For now I would have lain down and been quiet."

He said, cursed be my birthday. I just hate the day I was born. You see; bitterness, desolation and despair. Someone says, well, the message of Job is patience. Everybody knows Job is "the patient man". Consider the patience of Job. Look at chapter 1, verse 21. After he was stripped, he said:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD. Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God."

Chapter 2:10 his wife tells him to "Curse God and die", but he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this, "Job did not sin with his lips".

Job was patient, at least at first. Later on in the book he becomes very inpatient, but he starts off seemingly at peace. God gave it; God took it away; "Blessed be the name of the Lord".

It almost doesn't seem possible, but the kind of deep rooted self-righteousness of Job can often be **strengthened** and more deeply set by outward displays of patience. Being or acting patient, while all hell is breaking lose, can **appear** to be great virtue. "What a great man!" He was great in adversity. He was great in his fortunes. And now he is great in his misfortunes. When the blessing came on him he was a great man. He said God gave me all this. Then it is all removed, and he is still a great man. He says look how patiently I am bearing all this. I am a great man of God. So patience actually bolstered his self-

righteousness. God had to take him beyond that, and Job had to go through some deeper waters.

#### THE TRUE THEME OF JOB

All of these dealings, with all of the severity in Job's life, brought him to two conclusions. If you miss these conclusions you may never get the true theme of Job. Number 1: **I am righteous.** I have not done anything wrong. I do not deserve what is coming upon me. I do not deserve this trouble. Number 2: **God is my enemy**. He could not be my friend and do all of this to me. Now let me show you a couple of verses to back this up. Chapter 30:21. Job says:

"You have become cruel to me; With the might of Your hand You persecute me."

Then chapter 33, verse 10

"Behold, He invents pretexts against me; He counts me as His enemy. He puts my feet in the stocks; He watches all my paths."

Chapter 31, beginning at verse 35. Same thing.

"Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written, (He's referring to God) surely I would carry it on my shoulder, I would bind it to myself like a crown. I would declare to Him the number of my steps; Like a prince I would approach Him."

Do you see what he is saying? If my enemy would just come out in the open, but He is hiding up there in heaven someplace. If He would come out, I would walk right up to Him, I would put my forehead against His and I would say: "Why is this going on in my life? What have I done? I do not deserve this". He is my enemy. Those are his conclusions. Job thought it all through, reasoned with his philosopher friends, and concluded, I do not deserve this; God is my enemy.

The shell of Job was very hard, and God had to crack that impenetrable crust of self-righteousness. God had to go deep. He needed a stripping. Job needed to see his depravity. He needed to see his self-righteousness, but if the book ended there we might as well not have it in the Bible! God was going to show him much **more** than that. What he needed was to see God! He needed a vision of the Lord.

#### YOUR KEY TO THE WHOLE BOOK

Do you see what God is doing? The whole book of Job is about **seeing God**. It is about a vision of God, and **anything** in my life that hinders that vision of God, God will blast! God will **remove**. Look at chapter 42. This is your key to the whole book. Verse 5

### "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You."

Did Job's physical eye see God? No, his physical eye did not see God. He is talking about the eye of faith. "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes." It took the whole book to get him to say that. I have heard of Thee God, now I see Thee, therefore I repent.

How is a man going to repent? **First he has to see God**, then, he repents. All of the beating, and stripping, and breaking happened so that he would get a view of El Shaddai, the God who is more than enough. That he would see Him, and by seeing Him have a corresponding view of himself. See himself in the pure light of God and see his own self-righteousness. He was not ready to say "I am vile, I am dirty, I am self-righteous", until he saw God.

### **BIBLE DOESN'T TEACH INTROSPECTION**

Now this is the exact opposite of the psychologists today who talk about self-examination. This idea of introspection. Look into your heart. Look into your life. See your feelings. See your motives. **That is against the Bible**. The Bible does not tell you to do that. The Bible says **look** to the Lord, and then you will **see** your heart. Otherwise, you will get discouraged. There is a cesspool down there. It is not pleasant at all to look inside your heart. It frustrates. It drives people to buildings and bridges.

David cried out in Psalm 139:22-23

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting".

Let the Lord who is infinitely more wise and kind than you do the surgery. The enemy will help you dig and find all kinds of stuff the Lord is not quite ready to deal with. "When you see Him, you will be like Him." Did Job see his self-righteousness? He sure did. But not, by discussions on human depravity. Nobody sees their self-righteousness by discussing theology or by psychological examination. Job saw his self-righteousness when he saw his God.

Now he says, "My eyes seeth Thee; therefore I repent." And now I see myself, but through Your eyes.

After he saw God, two things changed. He did not say I do not deserve this, and he did not say God is my enemy. You see, after he saw the Lord he realized that God was the best friend he ever had. God was the bridegroom of his soul. God was the lover of his heart. So the answer to the mysteries of life, God's full answer, is not to make you patient. It is not to show you how vile you are, to teach you depravity, to show you the possibilities and the propensities of your wicked heart. Not at all! And it is not even to prove some silly thing to Satan. That is not the purpose of Job. The purpose of Job is to reveal El Shaddai. To see the love of God.

You can apply it in a million and one ways. God will never allow anything in your life for a better reason than that you might **know** Him. Know Him as the God who is **more** than enough. Galatians 3:7-8

"But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,"

He always presents Himself as the God who **over** answers prayers (Ephesians 3:20). Glorious results will follow as by-products. Trials are going to build your character. Tribulation is going to teach you patience, and you are going to have blessings for sure. It will be used in your life to minister and assist others. And you are going to abort Satan in your life. You will finally cry out, "O wretched man that I am!" But the main thing is to see God. All of those other things are **BY-PRODUCTS**.

So, if God put you in the grinder. If God has done abrasive things in your life. If God has engineered your steps so that the bottom falls out and leaves you empty. I do not know all the little details, but I know the full answer. I know why. People say, why did God allow this in my life? I know why. Job tells me why. So you might see God as El Shaddai, as the God Who is more than enough. You see, God does not enjoy people suffering. Lamentations 3:33 says that. He takes no delight in it at all! He is not sadistic. He has no joy in needless suffering. He doesn't relish seeing you squirm. He does not sadistically excavate your nature to get down to the root. But He surely enjoys revealing Himself. Manifesting His own dear Son. And Job ended up seeing God. "I have heard of Thee (he said) but now my eyes seeth Thee; therefore I repent in dust and ashes."

# Chapter 3 Reading JOB to Know God

Partial Answers to the Mysteries of Life

Before we look at the first two chapters which we have called "God's partial answer to the mysteries of life", let me say a word or two about the sufferings of Job. Now, I think even the most uninstructed person in the Word of God hears the name Job and thinks suffering. Job was one of the world's great sufferers. Now, he was not the greatest sufferer. Who was the world's greatest sufferer? **The Lord Jesus**. As far as the record goes, the Apostle Paul suffered much for the Lord. There have been tens of thousands tortured for Christ through the ages. At least this much is sure. Job was up there with the best of them. Let me name three things that show the severity of his suffering. The first is the time element. Chapter 1:13

"Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, and the Sabeans attacked and took them away. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

Now notice verse 16:1 While he was still speaking, (he did not even get it out of his mouth) another also came and said,

"The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep And the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

Then look at verse 17: another also came and said,

"The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

Verse 18: While he was still speaking, another also came and said,

"Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

The bottom dropped out of everything for Job. Psalm 42:7 says, "Deep calls unto deep at the sound of Thy waterfalls, and all Thy breakers have rolled over me." Boy, if that doesn't describe Job. "All Thy breakers have rolled over me". That's the idea of waves coming relentlessly one after another. Here comes one, then another, and they just won't stop. "All Thy breakers have rolled over me". One calamity after another, in quick succession. One person is telling of a problem and while he is still talking, someone else comes. You have lost your flock; you have lost your children.

Do not despise it when a quick succession of calamities comes your way. That gives God the opportunity to get great glory in your life. Don't get me wrong, I cry like a baby even when slight things come into my life. My heart cries out, "Lord, get me out of this!" Help me find the way of escape. I cannot imagine severe trials, like he faced, coming from every direction at the same time. But it happened to Job.

I read an article about the fall of the stock market. They say when the stock market fell, many people lost their life savings, investments and their fortunes overnight. When people lost their money, they ran to buildings and bridges and they took their own lives, because they lost everything. Job did not take that path. His stock market fell. His tragedies happened quickly and they were incredibly numerous.

A second thing I see is that he had no context to understand what was happening to him. Job did not have the book of Psalms. Job did not have any part of the Bible. One of my favorite books, when I am going through any kind of little trouble, is Isaiah. Boy, there are so many blessed verses in Isaiah. Job did not have II Corinthians, Paul's diary of struggles and how he experienced the all sufficiency of Christ. Job did not even have the book of Job. He had no part of the Bible. Perhaps we take this Book for granted when we are going through things. God has given us so many sustaining promises in His Word. Job did not have any of that, and that added to the severity of his suffering.

A third aspect of his trials was their all-inclusive nature. I think it is pretty accurate to say this. Job suffered in every way that it is possible for a human being to suffer, this side of the grave. I believe that is accurate. Now let me try to illustrate it for you. Chapter 1:3, mentions his possessions – 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen and 500 female donkeys. Look at verse 14 and 15 again. When the Sabeans attacked, they wiped out his oxen and his donkeys. He lost his possessions and his means of support. Remember, that was what he was doing. He was a farmer. It wiped out his paycheck. That is what he was talking about. This was his means of support. What would your attitude be if God took away your livelihood and your paycheck?

Not only did he lose his possessions, but look at verse 18 and 19. He lost his children. In one tragic accident, he lost all ten children. Now I have six children and I cannot imagine losing one. What would I do if the news ever came to me that all six were dead at the same time. I have no way to imagine or deal with that. And frankly I don't care to. Job had no idea whether or not his children suffered in the collapse of that building. Sometime we take comfort from the fact that death is swift and immediate. Someone says, "Oh, he was killed, but he did not know what hit him. He had no idea". Or else they say something like: "At least he did not linger. At least he died right away. Death was swift and peaceful". Well, I think Job must have suffered mentally because he had no idea how long they suffered before they died.

Not only did he lose his possessions and his means of support, not only did he lose his loved ones, his children, but he also lost his health. Look at chapter 2, verse 7 and 8

"Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes."

Men are generally sissies when it comes to pain. It seems like women can take a lot more of it than men can. If I have one boil on my body, that is enough to supply me with a topic of conversation for about a week, and it can supply my family with a full time job for about two weeks. I do not know what kind of boils these were, but verse eight implies that it was an intolerable itching. Now, itching can drive you crazy. I do not know if you have ever had poison ivy or some kind or a rash. I have itched before, but I have never scrapped myself with a broken piece of pottery. What a restless irritation it must have been to seek relief in that kind of a way.

Now chapter 7, verse 5, tells that the boils were oozing. All these graphic details. I assume it was a repulsive sight. Chapter 2:12. Evidently, these were three of his closest friends, and the Bible says when his three friends came to see him they did not even recognize him. And when they saw him they just wept, because he was so sick.

Now, adding to this fact, the fact that he had boils from head to foot, chapter 7, verses 4 and 5

"When I lie down I say, when shall I arise? But the night continues, and I am continually tossing until dawn. My flesh is clothed with worms and a crust of dirt, my skin hardens and runs"

There is a real suffering that comes with restlessness – tossing and turning all night long, not being able to sleep. Verse 4 and 5 show that he suffered all night. I do not know why it is, but it seems like suffering at night is unusually keen, and it seems to hurt a lot more. Maybe it is because you are not thinking about other things or there is nothing to interfere with your thoughts. Expositors are not dead sure what this disease was that Job had. There is all kind of conjecture. But so many graphic details are given in the book, like verse 20 of chapter 19. It says that he was escaping death by the skin of his teeth. He was constantly at death's door all the time. In chapter 30:17, it says that he never had a moment's intermission from pain. You know, sometime you say, the pain is gone now for ten minutes, and I have a break. Job did not have a ten minute break; it was relentless. It buffeted him all the time.

Chapter 30:30, said that on top of everthing he also had a high fever which, of course, weakens you. Then the Bible says that the effect of it was to dry up his skin and turn it black. From these and other descriptions, Bible scholars are almost unanimous in saying that Job had what was called "black leprosy". You know what the Bible teaches about leprosy? You know what leprosy is? How it eats your body away? You have probably read books about elephantitis. It is that disease where the limbs swell up. Black leprosy is a combination of elephantitis and leprosy together. His body was constantly swelling and oozing and filled with boils, and he was being eaten away at the same time. And so he lost his health.

He not only lost his possessions, his paycheck, his children, and his health, but he lost the spiritual support of his life partner. Look at chapter 2, verse 9, Then his wife said to him;

# "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"

This woman did what Satan accused Job of doing. Satan told God that if He removed his blessings, Job would curse Him and die. Well, Satan was describing his wife's religion, but not Job's. Job did not do it, but his wife did. I cannot imagine what it would be like to lose Lillian's (Ed's wife) spiritual support. That would be harder than anything I could face. I thank the Lord so much that God has given me a life companion who is agreed on the things of God, and we see eye to eye in the ways of the Lord. I just cannot imagine the suffering that would be caused in my life if I would lose the support of my life's companion. That is exactly Job's fate, and I am sure this is one of the severest of all of his trials. When those that are closest to you cave in around you, it is a very, very hard suffering. Turn, please, to chapter 19, beginning at verse 13. In your mind, just look at the people that departed from him in this section of verse:

### "He has removed my brothers far from me, and my acquaintances

are completely estranged from me. My relatives have failed, and my intimate friends have forgotten me. Those who live in my house and my maids consider me a stranger. I am a foreigner in their sight. I call to my servant, but he does not answer; I have to implore him with my mouth. My breath is offensive to my wife, and I am loathsome to my own brothers. Even young children despise; I rise up and they speak against me. All my associates abhor me, and those I love have turned against me.

So he lost everything. His brothers, his acquaintances, his relatives, his intimate friends, his maids, his servants, his wife, the young children in the neighborhood and all of his former associates. Everybody went against him. And, in addition to that, he suffered physical attacks. Chapter 30, verse 9 and 10. You see, we do not have anything like this today. If a man is sick in bed, we either stay away or we visit him cautiously. They went and visited him and argued with him and tried to accuse him of hypocrisy. And, according to chapter 30:9-10, some people went up and spit in his face. Well, that is an amazing thing. Spitting in someone's face is a lot worse than slapping someone in the face. It is a disgraceful thing. Disrespect. But there is one more suffering that he underwent, that I think is more severe than all the others combined together. It is in chapter 23:3

"Oh that I knew where I might find Him, That I might come to His seat! I would present my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would learn the words which He would answer, and perceive what He would say to me. Would He contend with me by the greatness of His power? No, surely He would pay attention to me. There the upright would reason with Him; And I would be delivered forever from my Judge. Behold, I go forward but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; When He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him.

He lost the sense of God's presence. I looked to the right and He is not there. I looked to the left and He is not there. Everywhere I look, I cannot find God. Oh, I will tell you, that is the most severe kind of suffering. There is a false idea going around today that the highest form of spirituality, the highest kind of faith, is when you have a deep sense of the presence of God. If someone says I feel God so near to me, that is supposed to sound spiritual and that is supposed to be good. But that is not faith at all. Faith rests in fact. When your soul is as dead as midnight, when God seems a million miles away, then you know by cold blooded faith that He is still there. He said He is going to be there whether you feel it or not, whether you sense it or not. Faith rests on the fact of His presence, not on the sense of His presence. Feeling abandoned by the Lord is the deepest

most primal fear we have. All other fears are just symptoms of the fear that He is not there or He does not care. We can be deceived by becoming over-dependent on the felt presence of God. Many become depressed and many have left the faith because they couldn't feel what they thought they felt at some time in their spiritual journey. As we see with the eyes of faith, and become intimately familiar with His nature, demonstrated by His Son the Lord Jesus Chris, we can accept periods were our soul and flesh feel empty of sensation. There is a knowing that goes deeper than the mind which assures us that if He cannot be felt right now, it is for our spiritual benefit.

Before I leave this section, let me make one other observation. The events that we have described, like the onslaught of Satan and the persistent condemning and judging of his three friends, were designed to break Job's shell. Someone might ask, "Well, how can God call Job perfect, upright, fearing God, if he was harboring the sin of self-righteousness in his heart? That would make God a liar. God said he is a perfect man". Job was walking in the light that he had. You see, Job did not know he was self-righteous. That issue was way down deep. He was open to all God's will, and he was walking in what he knew God's will to be. It took the kind of an earthquake that Job went through to show him he was self-righteous. But as soon as he saw it, he repented. So he lived up to the light that he had.

Perfect in the biblical sense does not mean without flaw, unless we are speaking of God. The Greek word for perfect "telios" has been the ruin of many an honest seeker of the Lord. The word actually means to come into the fullness or maturity, to bring to fulfillment what the Lord has but inside you. When the Lord looks at you it's as if He looks at an acorn and speaks to the oak tree. We live in the potential of all that He put in us. People seek something they call "faith", thinking they can get it through strenuous believing or fact finding. But Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:8

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God lest any man should boast".

And in Romans 12:3 "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith". The Lord sees His perfect seed of faith in you and knows what that seed will become in it's maturity. He calls for that which He put in you, the potential to have union with His spirit and become a Son/Daughter of God. Check out Romans 7:4 (How we bear fruit)

Here is a second thing I get from all of this. Do not think that because a man is stripped, whether it is of health, of possessions, of family, of paycheck, whatever, that he is broken. That is entirely a different thing. It looks like Job

was broken in chapter 1, when all of these waves came in one after another. He stands there saying: "Naked I came from my mother's womb. And naked I shall return there. God gave and God took away. Blessed be the name of God." It looks like he was broken then, but he was not.

### DON'T CONFUSE A SUFFERING CHRISTIAN WITH A BROKEN CHRISTIAN

Broken health does not mean broken spirit. Do not confuse a suffering Christian with a broken Christian, because it is not the same thing. Many Christians suffer, but they are not broken in their heart of hearts. As a matter of fact, those two things might be millions of miles apart. A person is never broken by losses or crosses. A person is never broken by adverse circumstances. Never is! He is broken by seeing God. The word broken we are using here is actually weak in that you might miss its true meaning. The breaking of our soul and flesh brings us to "losing confidence in the flesh" and prepares us to see God when He appears. It is really a dying to the illusion of this reality, so that you can seek and cling to the Kingdom of God. We must forsake our adulterous relationship with this world and our addiction to control our environment. Christians quote the Bible and pray not knowing that they are using spiritual things to manipulate God and nature. God crushes you so that you will look to Him! Then, looking to Him, you die to this world and become alive in Him. Until you look to the Lord, you will never be broken in spirit and contrite in heart.

So the cherubim look at God, and the Bible says they veil their eyes. So Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, and then he said: "Woe is me! I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips." So Daniel looked at God and said: "My comeliness is turned to dust." So Peter looked at God and said: "Depart from me, O, Lord, for I am a sinful man." So John looked at God and fell on his face as a dead man. So Job looked at God and said: "I have seen Thee with the seeing of the eye; now I repent in dust and ashes." First John 3:2 says, "When we see Him, we will be like Him." That has a present truth as well as a future.

What is God's partial answer to the mysteries of life? It can be summarized in these questions. Why do the godly suffer? Why are there mysteries in life? Why do circumstances go against me? The first two chapters give the answer in a single word. Satan. That is the partial answer. Why do these things happen in your life? Because there is a **real** devil. Because there is a real Satan who hates your guts. He hates the Lord Jesus Christ, and he hates the Lord's beloved. We would have the shock of our lives if we could ever get even a passing glance of how much Satan hates us.

Job, chapters 1 and 2 give more about Satan than any other place in the Bible. Therefore, since it is the full mention of Satan in the Old Testament, we are going to study Satan in a Christ-centered way. Now do not study Satan in a Satan-centered way. That is what people are doing today. They take their eyes

off the Lord. Everything the Bible says about Satan is designed to turn your eyes to Christ, so we are going to look at Satan in a Christ-centered way.

There are thirty-five different titles for Satan in the Bible, and none of them are bogeyman. From the time we are nursing we are taught to think of Satan as some kind of hideous, disgusting creature – a contemptible person. Misshapen, with a half human, half animal body. Sometimes, with the limbs and appendages of animals. Frightful, with a grimacing face. Bright red, and a pitch fork in his hand. A compound of everything that is ugly. And he just stands around stoking the fires of hell and stabbing sinners and stuff like this. That fabulous image that registers in our mind bears the mark of Satan's own creation. That is what he wants us to think. He wants us to believe that we can outgrow him, and we throw it out as fantasy, and so we throw him out as fantasy.

We are going to ask questions. Who is Satan? What does he do? Where is he now? How can he do what he does? Our next chapter will look carefully into these questions.

# Chapter 4 Reading JOB to Know God

What the Bible says about Satan

Fourteen times in Job chapters 1 and 2, his name is called Satan. Fifty-two times in the whole Bible he is called Satan. Sometime you will see the word, devil, in the Bible. As a matter of fact, thirty six times in the Bible he is called devil. Now, as far as the meaning of the word is concerned, there is no difference between Satan and devil. The fact is, devil is the Greek form and Satan is the Hebrew form, but it is the same word. The word Satan means adversary, enemy, accuser.

The first question is: Who is Satan? Here is the answer. He is the accuser. He accuses in two directions. First of all, look at verses 9 and 10 of chapter 1. Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land." Satan accused Job of being religious because of what he got out of it. The pie in the sky.

In other words, Satan is an accuser, and the first one he accuses is man. He accused Job. He said, Job's idea of God is that He is a cosmic bellboy. That is, he runs all His errands. When he wants anything, he says, give me this, give me that, do this for me, do that for me. When he is in trouble, he says, rescue me out of this trouble. Satan said "If You were not a benefactor for him, if You would not do so much, he would never serve You. He would curse You to Your face".

He says Job regards God as a patron saint, one who gives gifts. A saint, that you could pray to when you lose your purse, when you lose your wallet. Somebody that will help you find it. Some kind of a good luck medallion to hang around your neck. Some kind of a magnetic image to put on the dash of your car to prevent accidents. Job served God because of what God does for him. That is Satan's accusation. That God was a glorified Santa Claus. That God gave him gifts. That God was watching over him. He kept a list and checked it twice to find out who is naughty and nice. That is what Satan was saying about Job, that he is selfish.

The word that is used to describe that kind of a thing is mercenary. He says Job is a mercenary. He married God for his money. The Bible word for mercenary is hireling. You see it in John chapter 10. A hireling is one who does anything for pay. And he says, Job is just a hireling, he is just for hire. He is

surrounded by a hedge. Here is Satan's reasoning. He says, when the sea is all glass, and the pastures are all green, and the cupboards are all full, and the bellies are all satisfied, and the bills are all paid, and the job is well-secured, and everything goes well, and you have an invisible shield around him, no wonder he trusts You! Anybody would trust You if You did that for them.

But look at verse 11; "But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face." Look at chapter 2, verse 4 and 5. Satan is speaking. "However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face." Oh, verse 4, I missed it. Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life."

Who is Satan according to these two chapters? He is the accuser. He looks at Job, and he accuses Job. He says he is selfish; he is a mercenary; he is a hireling; he married You for Your gifts; he married You for Your money; he would curse You if You took Your hand off him, if You removed the hedge.

Now, I realize we are looking at God's revelation of Satan, but I cannot leave chapter 1, verse nine, since God applied that in my own life. I have got to get personal on this verse. Satan says, "*Does Job fear God for nothing?*" Now, remember, Job is the representative Christian. What Satan said of Job, he says of every Christian. Satan comes before God the same way. Let me fill in the blanks.

Does Job fear God for nothing? Does Bill fear God for nothing? Does Jim fear God for nothing? Does Sue fear God for nothing? Does Pat fear God for nothing? Does Ed fear God for nothing? Do you see the impact of this accusation? The accusation is that Job is subjective. That is, we will serve the Lord, we will love the Lord, we will worship the Lord, we will praise the Lord, we will abide in the Lord, we will trust the Lord IF He gives us gifts, and IF He puts a hedge around us, and IF He does good things for us.

### WHY DO YOU SERVE GOD?

Now there is a heart searching question. Satan asked it. Does Ed Miller serve God for nothing or does he do it for something? Do I serve Him because of all He has given me? It is a heart searching question. I do not know how I would have fared in Job's shoes. I do not know my full reaction if God removed my hedge. I have a hedge around me, and it is a glorious hedge. If He took away His gifts, I wonder if I would trust Him for nothing. If He never did anything for me, would I still trust Him? Would you?

Now, let me just illustrate it through the spiritual gifts and then through the natural. What if God took away the sense of His presence from your life. So that you never felt that He was near. What if God took away the blessed revelations that thrill our souls from His Word? I love to study and teach the Bible more than anything else on earth. I don't know how I would survive. This illustration I suppose is foolish because it can never be, but if God were to deny me heaven. That is, He said, "Ed Miller, you cannot go to heaven, but instead I will let you choose some experience on the earth and I will let you have that experience forever". What would you choose if God denied you heaven?

I thought about that. At first, I thought I would choose the times when I am teaching. I love to teach. Going on conferences and all that is a real blessing, but I would not want that forever. That is not what I would choose. And I would not choose soul winning. I have had the privilege to pull in the net and see people get saved, but I would not choose that forever. And I would not choose fellowship with believers, as wonderful as that is. And I would not even choose the social occasions I have had with my dear family. I love my family, but if I had to choose one thing forever, do you know what it would be? It would be the times that I have spent studying this Bible and having revelations of God. That is the best time in my life – when I am studying and **God shows His face**. If He were to hide His face from me, I do not know what I would do. That is the best thing in this life that I have ever experienced.

What if God never answered another prayer of yours? Would you keep on praying? What if God never showed you one evidence that He has ever used you or will use you in life? You never had a chance to witness to anybody. No one was ever touched by your life. No one was ever touched by your testimony. You never had any fruit at all that you could see! What if you never had any peace in your heart, ever, from now on until you die? Would you still trust in the Lord? That is what Satan was accusing Job of saying.

The only reason that Job served God is because he has everything provided for him. He has peace. God has given him promises. Everything is going right. He has a family. He has health. He has riches. He has abundance. Everything is good. Would you serve Him for nothing?

Now, I have only mentioned spiritual things. What about physical things? What if He took your health? What if He took your family? What if He took your home, your job, your security? What if you went blind or deaf? You went senile? Your mind was deranged? You see, it is easy to be critical of Job. What God is saying is Satan is an accuser, and he does not have many ways to accuse. He always accuses the same way. He always says, "Does Job serve God for nothing?" So that is the first area of his accusation. Satan is an accuser of man.

But here is the other side. Included in that accusation, was an insinuation toward God. He not only accused man before God, but he accused God before

man. Now let me illustrate that for you. Chapter 1, verse 11. It says: "He will surely curse You to Your face." Chapter 2, verse 5: "He will curse You to Your face." It seems to me as I read this that Satan was not as concerned to see man squirm around in suffering and poverty as he was to see God cursed. I think that is the thing that he wanted. He wanted man to curse God to His face. Do you know what is implied in verses 9-11? Let me read them again. Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side?" You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

"But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face." I believe what Satan was saying about God was this. "You are not wonderful enough, apart from Your gifts, for anyone to trust You. You are not precious enough just in who You are, to have anybody trust in You". You need Your gifts. If You did not bless people so much, You would never be trusted. Nobody would ever turn to You, God. That is the insinuation there. There is not enough in Your personal beauty to have man serve You for who You are.

Now, once again, we are not discussing the accusation. We are just trying to say, who is he? He is the **accuser**. But again, what a penetrating application can come from this. How would you respond if those accusations were made about you? Now they are made about you every day. Satan always goes before God and says, if it were not for gifts you would never serve Him. And He is not good enough, by Himself, to be served, to be worshiped, to be praised, apart from His blessings.

One of the things that God is going to demonstrate when He allows Satan to tear down your hedge, is that He is lovely enough to be loved apart from anything that He does or anything that He gives you.

### WHAT IS WORSHIP?

One thing that is lacking among God's people today, more than any other single thing, I think, is worship. God's people do not know how to worship. Here is what most people think worship is. When they praise God for what He has done. They think that is worship. "God died for me on the cross. Praise His Holy Name. He shed His blood for me". Or else they will get up and give a testimony and it can range from anything, like, God guided me, God used me, God delivered me, God helped me, God sustained me, God chastened me, God taught me, God showed me in His Word. Blessed be God! Look what He has done for me. Is that worship?

You see, that is a part of worship, but a very small part of worship. That

praise, that thanksgiving. There is a place for that. But that is subjective. It is subjective to the core. That is what God has done **for** me. He leads me; He guides me; He helps me; He delivers me; He opens the Word to me; He saved me. Praise His name. Look what He did for me. Me, me, me, me, and more me.

Worship, true worship, Bible worship, is praising God for **Himself**, apart from my **experience**. If He never provides for you again, is He still the provider? Yes or no? Sure He is. He needs to be praised because **He is the provider**. I do not care if you ever get provided for or not. He needs to be worshiped because He is the provider. If He never guides, if He never delivers, if He never answers your prayer or helps you: He is still the Guide, the Deliverer, the Prayer Answerer, and the One who sustains and keeps all things. All by Himself. Everything He continues to be apart from our experience.

Real worship praises God for Himself. Isn't that the nature of the enemy's original accusation? Satan was saying, "God, You are not wonderful enough, by Yourself, for anybody to serve You. You have to be giving gifts all the time or they would never come to You. They would never trust in You because You do not have what it takes. Just You by Yourself. You are not lovely enough".

You see even the best Christians in the world, those who have hungered the most after the Lord, know only a tiny bit about God. You cannot even begin to understand how minuscule your experience has been. Because God is infinite! We can only touch an infinitesimal portion of Him. We can only scratch the surface. And most people's worship is based, not on the revelation of God, but on their experience of God. And what a flimsy worship it is because we have experienced so little. Our praise is sad and pitiful, if it is only limited to what we rely on our senses to show us. Unfortunately this is what is happening among Christians today. They are praising the **God of their experience**, and since they have not experienced much, their worship is more shallow than deep.

I have never experienced God as the joy giver for dying martyrs. Anybody know why? Simply because I am not a dying martyr. So I have never experienced God that way. I have never known God as the healer of broken hearts. As far as I know, I have never had a truly broken heart. Maybe I did and didn't know it. Can I praise Him that He is the healer of broken hearts even though my heart has never been broken? You see, that is real worship. **Praising God for what He is** apart from my own experience.

I have never experienced Him as the orphan's friend. You see, I am not an orphan. I have never experienced Him as the One who is close by in the "valley of the shadow of death". As far as I know I have never been that close to death. God can preserve your life and you do not even know about it. But as

far as I know, I have never been in the "valley of the shadow of death". I have never lingered on a death bed. I have never been in a serious accident. Can I still praise Him for the One who walks with me in the valley? Surely I can.

Do you see what I'm saying? I have never been diseased. I have never been surrounded by ten thousand men. I have never been in a raging storm. I have never been demon possessed. I have never been raised from the dead. And yet, this book presents Him as the One who does all of that. And so I am to praise Him for all of those things. Satan is the accuser. He accuses men of being **subjective** (all about themselves) and God of being **unworthy** of worship. He always does the same thing because it seems to always work. God is intrinsically wonderful. He has, in Himself, everything you need to worship Him.

## Editor's note:

If you look up the word "worship" you will find that it is derived from and Old English word that meant "worth ship". It was completely intended to describe the value of the one to be praised. Both the Hebrew and the Greek words for worship picture prostrating oneself at the feet in reverent submission to the glory and honor of Diety.

Have you ever done this, in so many words, just bowed before God and praised Him for all the goodness you have not tasted yet? For all the grace you have not tasted yet? For things He will show you tomorrow that you have not seen today. Thank You, Lord, for what You are going to show me next week. Thank You for what You will never show me, but is still true. That is worship. Until you can get away from the subjective – He did this for **me** – and just say, "He is wonderful", objectively, all by Himself, you will remain a target for Satan's accusations. I do not know how you feel about it, but I am glad that I have the New Testament and the revelation of Jesus as the Advocate of my soul. He is my lawyer when the enemy accuses me. How could I ever stand if Jesus didn't stand up for me and plead my case.

So this is our first conclusion. Who is he? He is the accuser. He accuses men before God; he accuses God before men.

### WHERE IS SATAN?

Okay, where is he? Where is Satan? You say, well, everybody has read that popular little book by Hal Lindsay. Where is he? "Satan is alive and well on the planet Earth." Is that true? Yes, that is true. That is **part** of the answer. It is not the whole answer, but it is a part of it. Look at chapter 1, verse 7 "The LORD said to Satan, 'From where do you come?'" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." Chapter 2: verse 2 "Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Where have you come

# from?'" "Then Satan answered the LORD and said, 'From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.'"

You do not really get the impact in the English of this Hebrew word, "walking around, roaming around". In the Hebrew, it literally means "violent action". One translation actually translates the word Satan as "the busy one". That is his name, the busy one. It means rushing madly back and forth. That is what Satan is doing. That is the opposite of what many people think about him. They say, where is Satan? Many people have this idea that registers in their heads. Why, he is in hell with a pitchfork, and he is the monarch of hell presiding over everyone else in hell. That is not what the Bible says.

Where is Satan? He is on the planet Earth not in hell. Now, there will be a day when he will be in hell. Not on a throne ruling over others in hell. In hell, he will be hell's worse sufferer. He will be in hell someday. But why is Satan rushing back and forth madly, wildly, violently, on the earth? Well, I think the simple answer is this. He is not omnipresent. God is omnipresent. That just means present everywhere. Since God is infinite, His presence knows no boundaries. There is no place beyond Him for anything else to be, because He is everywhere. God surrounds and fills His whole creation.

Here is how the theologian describes God's omnipresence. Now I am quoting: "God is over all things, under all things, outside all things. He is within, but He is not enclosed. He is without, but He is not excluded. He is above, but He is not raised up. He is below, but He is not depressed. He is wholly above, presiding, wholly beneath, sustaining, and wholly within, filling. That is where God is. He is everywhere."

But not Satan. Satan cannot occupy two places at the same time. Now I gather from Ezekiel chapter 1, and verse 14, which describes the cherubim, it says: "The living beings ran to and fro like bolts of lightning." I have an idea, though Satan is not omnipresent, he has motion quicker than a fox. And like a bolt of lightning, since he was a cherub. He is an angelic being, a fallen angel. He can go faster than lightning, faster than the speed of light, any place he wants to be on the earth. Can you imagine yourself in another part of the world. As fast as you can think of being elsewhere Satan can be there.

Now watch. Just as fast as I thought of Connecticut, I went there in my mind. Satan can go to Connecticut in his body, in his spirit. He just goes back and forth. That is where he is. On the planet Earth darting back and forth all over the place. He has a great army, according to the Bible, of zealous followers. They are well-trained to execute his wishes. He just sort of leaves all of his devilish schemes to them so that they can execute it, and then he speeds to the ends of the

earth to pursue some other mischief. Where is Satan? Number one, he is on the earth.

You know, Hal Lindsay ought to write another book to answer the second part, where is Satan? He is alive and well on the planet Earth, but look at chapter 1, verse 6 and 7 "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them." Chapter 2, verse 1 "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD."

Where is Satan? He is not only alive on the planet Earth, but he has access to heaven, into the presence of God. He not only runs around this planet, but he reports to God in heaven. Now, this is not only taught in Job. I will give you these references. I hope you will look them up. These verses teach that Satan has access to heaven. Zechariah 3:1 and 2. Revelation 12:7 - 12. Ephesians 6:12. Daniel 10:13, 20, 21. I Kings 22:19 - 22. II Chronicles 18: 18 - 21.

Now in the middle of the Tribulation he will be cast out of heaven and he will not be allowed back anymore. Now, as you are reading this, Satan is not only running all over the earth like lightning, but he can also go up to the throne of God. He has access that way as well. Of course, there he gets his orders, and he is told what he is allowed to do and what he cannot. It has always been a great mystery to Bible students, and I confess it is a mystery to me, how God could allow Satan into His presence in heaven. I do not have an answer. I just know that it is so. I do not understand why He would allow that.

Where is Satan? There are two answers. He is on the earth, and he has access to heaven. I do not know how often he goes up there. One commentator suggested he has to report every morning for his list of orders. I do not know if that's true. So he is not in hell. Not yet. You glance at these verses as I give you the principle. I will just give you the facts first, then I will give you the principle. Satan was given permission by God in verse 15 to use evil men. In verse 16, to control nature, lightning, the wind, a storm. Chapter 2, verse 7, he was given power to touch the body. Verse 11, through the friends and loved ones of Job, especially as we come into these next chapters. I do not know if you have ever noticed this, but every once in a while there will be a great gulf between you and a close Christian friend, and you will not even know what happened. You will say: "What in the world happened?" What did I do? What did I say to make this great division? Satan uses Christian friends against each other.

#### THE POWERS OF SATAN

Now here are more amazing things. Satan has power over armies. When you hear about all these thunder storms and terrible earthquakes we are tempted to say that it's from God. Look what God is doing over there. The Bible says Satan has power over the weather also.

Editors Note: In Mark chapter 4 it says "a great storm of wind" came and the disciples thinking they were about to perish woke Jesus up. Verse 39 says: "And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, 'peace, be still'." He would not have rebuked something that was from His Father. He scolded the work of Satan.

And then our bodies. He touched Job's body. In the New Testament we read about Satan's power over the flesh. He was able to quench sight, and close the hearing of men. He was able to fetter the tongue and paralyze the limbs. He was able to distort the body, possess it and madden the brain. Satan had all that power. Then we find that he was able to take life. He actually took the life of Job's ten children. Some people say: "Well, God will let him touch your life, but He will not let him take it". Satan had power to take a life. He took Job's ten children.

Now we are creatures of extremes, you know. We give Satan credit if we have some petty little annoyance that keeps bothering us. We say, "Oh, that is Satan! The devil made me do that", you see. Or, if there is extensive injury, then we will give Satan credit for that. Hitler and Stalin, the abuse of communism or the awful corruption in our society. We give Satan credit for that. But somehow, we seem to shun as a silly fable or superstition, that Satan is constantly and systematically busying himself with our concerns. That he is involved in our thoughts, in our words, and in our deeds. That, by artful suggestion, through his unnumbered hosts, he is causing us to be tempted every day.

Satan's work is to resist Jesus Christ. Now if that means to start a national movement against Christ or if it means to take a child and turn his steps from the path of righteousness, Satan is against Christ. He does not have the prerogatives of God. He does not have foreknowledge. He does not have omnipresence. But he has thousands of years of experience with men. He has a perfect acquaintance with all the knowledge that is attainable to created intelligence. He knows anything anybody knows. He knows more than all of men combined. He has the knowledge of angels. He is both a master psychologist and a religious fanatic. He knows the Bible far better than you, and will use it against you everyday. Matthew Chapter 4. Read all the scripture the enemy uses against the Lord Jesus.

Many times we think that it is our own corrupt nature that causes us to sin. Let me give you four or five Bible examples. First Chronicles 21:1 says "Satan moved David to number the people". Second Samuel 24:1 tells the same story, and do you know what that one says? It says "God moved David to number the people". It is the same incident. One time it says Satan caused him to number the people, and another time it says God caused him to number the people.

According to Luke 22:3, what do we learn about the nature of Judas? Judas was a thief. He was already a thief, and then he sold his Savior for thirty pieces of silver. Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of selfishness, greed and desiring filthy lucre. Now, what I am pointing out is this. If the Bible did not tell us that Satan was involved in David's sin, if the Bible did not tell us that Satan made Judas, Ananias and Sapphira do what they did, we would have never guessed. We would have said "That's just like Judas to do that. That doesn't surprise me". That is exactly like Ananias to try to hold back money. That was his nature; that was his old sin nature, just like his wife.

We see the same principle operating in Job's calamities. You read the first chapter, and if you didn't know Satan was there, you could have referred everything that happened to the predatory nature of his Arab neighbors. They always attacked. That was just like them to do that. Here is the point. The Bible says Satan had a part in it, but it is so natural you would never guess it. What does Satan do? He attacks godly people, and here is how he does it. He watches the proclivities of our evil natures and then he provides us with opportunities to gratify those things. So in one case, one man is tempted to steal, and Satan puts that in front of him. Another man is tempted not to trust the Lord, and Satan provides the opportunity for him not to trust.

I will mention this now, but I think this will become clearer as we go further in our study. It does not make any difference in your life, no difference whatsoever, if you can figure out who is the cause. Is this from circumstances? Is this from my old sin nature? Is this from Satan? Is this from God? It makes no difference at all. Behind it all, is God. The fact is, God is not the author of sin. But you would never be able to give thanks in all things, if you did not believe God was behind everything. Now that will make more sense as we go on. What does Satan do? He attacks godly people.

## WHEN DOES SATAN WORK

The next question. When does Satan work? There are two answers to this question. Satan cannot work anytime he wants to. Satan is limited; he is confined; he is restricted. Look at chapter 1:1 "That man was blameless, upright, fearing God (now notice this next phrase) and turning away from evil."

In chapter 1, verse 8, the Lord says the same thing "He was turning away from evil."

Satan has no compulsory power over man. What I mean by that is Satan can suggest, stimulate and provide the occasion. Satan can work in the children of disobedience to accomplish their own ruin. But Satan **cannot force you to sin.** He cannot force your will. He cannot compel anybody to transgress. Man is not a helpless machine. Satan can blind, deceive, hold captive, only those who want to be blinded, deceived and held captive. God has given man a will, and it takes that act of volition to constitute actual sin. Eve tried to pass the buck. Eve tried to say "The serpent made me do it". She would have been guiltless **if** the serpent grabbed her by the throat and jammed the fruit down her throat. But the serpent didn't because he can't. The Devil can't make you do it.

So in answer to the question: **When** does he work? The first answer is when you **let** him. And Job did not let him. Job turned from evil. Satan can only put the evil there. He can only suggest. He can only tempt. That is why James 4:7 is so powerful. "**Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**" Satan dreads man's resistance. That is what that verse teaches. Man can take a stand. That is why Satan is so cunning, and that is why he is so **silent**, and that is why he "**masquerades as an angel of light**". Because man can say "no" to his temptation. So the first answer to the question "When does Satan work?" **When we let him!** 

For the second part of the answer. Look at chapter 1, verse 12 "Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." Chapter 2, verse 6

"So the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life." When does he work? When you let him. When does he work? When the Lord lets him. Satan has to get God's permission before he can touch a single hair on Job's head.

If you compare chapter 1, verse 12, with chapter 2, verse 6, it looks like God is giving progressive permission. Now I don't know if it thrills your heart to know that God says to Satan, "this far and no further". You can go this far, but you cannot take another step. **Satan can't lift a little finger against you unless God gives him permission.** I think the greatest example of that is Mark chapter 5 in the New Testament. Satan comes begging for permission to go into the herd of swine. He cannot even go into a pig unless he has God's okay.

Let's give Satan the benefit of the doubt. It is his circumstances. It is his storm. It is his diseases. The devil brings these things. He arranges adverse circumstances. But watch. When he does, it never goes beyond God's sovereign

control. When can Satan bring a storm in my life? When Jesus Christ my Savior, lets him. When can Satan bring disease in my life? Only when Jesus Christ my Savior, the lover of my soul, lets him do it. He **must** get God's permission. When the devil brings a storm into my life or into my family's life, it is never for a lonely second out from under God's sovereign control.

Let me put it very clearly and say this. Satan never attacks you by accident. He never does. God has said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Pat? Or Jim. Or Bill. He always does it that way. Some people have this idea that Satan just hates God, and so he arbitrarily attacks all of His children. It is not so, not in a million years. God is the One who loves you so much. God brings your name up to him. The way some Christians grieve about Satan, you would think that God had nothing to do with their lives. You would think that God had nothing to do with what is happening.

#### WHY DOES SATAN WORK?

All right, let's move on to the fifth question. Why does Satan work? The answer to this question goes a little beyond the first two chapters. Actually, it includes the whole book of Job. Why does Satan work? Let me give it to you in the words of James 5:11, "You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and merciful." Personally, I like the King James better. "You have heard of the patience of Job and seen the end of the Lord." "The end of the Lord". If you read Job, it looks like you have seen the end of Job. What it means is we have seen the end that the Lord had in mind.

Why does Satan work? Here is the answer. **To accomplish God's purposes.** That is why he works. I love to relate the end of the book to the beginning of the book. Was Job a better Christian before Satan did his work on him or after? The answer is an unabashed **after!** Without fear of contradiction, Job was far better AFTER Satan worked then BEFORE. I like to put it this way and say: "God makes Satan sweat to make me a better Christian".

Editor's Note: Many years ago when I came out of what many of my friends and family called, a "Job experience", I asked the Lord about His boasting of Job. Many believers have all kinds of opinions on the book of Job but really have never taken the time to actually read it. You will find Job to be anything but patient and quite mad at God. I could relate very much with his combative attitude and in some ways it helped me accept my own bad behavior. The Lord spoke to my spirit and simply said "When I was bragging about Job I wasn't talking about Job in the beginning of the book. I was talking about Job at the end." He showed me that He sees the past, present and future all at once and

cannot see us without seeing our entire lives. When He spoke to Adam and Eve He saw us and all who would come after us. The New Testament confirms this in I Corinthians 15:22

"For just as all men die by virtue of their descent from Adam, so all such as are in union with Christ will be made to live again." Often we and the enemy are confused by the Lord's view of eternity!

I think one of the neatest verses on this would be in II Corinthians 12:7-12 The "thorn in the flesh" Paul was caught up into the third heaven and saw great revelations of God. And then he said that he received the "thorn in the flesh", and he called it "a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him." Now watch. It was a messenger of Satan, but what was the purpose of that thorn in the flesh? To keep him humble. Humility is not the message of Satan; that is the message of God. It was a messenger of Satan, but it was the message of God. God makes Satan work hard in order to make better Christians out of His own children.

So why does Satan work? To accomplish God's purposes. God knew Job; Satan knew Job, but you would have never known Job, and I would have never known Job. Mankind would never have known Job, unless God allowed this to take place. That is why we are studying Job.

We sing songs like this: "Count your many blessings; name them one by one," and people preach about the idea – number your blessings. Do not count sheep going over the fence when you are trying to sleep! Count your blessings. Did you ever hear anything like that? I think if you went to the most instructed group of Christians, those most trained in the Word, and asked them to list their blessings; I don't think you will find Satan on their list. But perhaps he should be at the top. Think about it for a moment. I would. I think one of the greatest blessings of my life is Satan. I really do. I could not say that in many places and I wouldn't say it without and explanation. Would you be a better Christian if there were no personal devil? Truth is, you would not. Proverbs 17:3 "The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold: But the Lord tries the heart."

If you can receive this, listen. I believe the greatest soul winner that ever lived was Satan. I really believe that, because of Genesis 50 and verse 20 "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." Satan means it for evil. He is going out trying to destroy. And everything he does, God turns around for good. Thousands of people have come to Christ because Satan meant them evil and God turned it to good. Satan is working night and day in the service of the Lord.

Someone says, well, if he is as wise as you say he is, then why doesn't he know that it is turning out that way? The only answer I can come up with is because he is proud, and **pride blinds**. He is compelled by his hatred for God to blindly lash out. But this is what the Bible teaches. Satan has limited authority;

God has unlimited authority, and the reason he does everything is to accomplish God's purposes.

The final question is: How can I **overcome** Satan? Now we are going to spend a lot of time on that. I will just give you the shell. The first part of the answer is, **I cannot**. There is no way I can overcome Satan. The distinctive title of God in the book of Job is "El Shaddai", the God who is more than enough. Now there is victory in El Shaddai, in God. Thousands study Satan in a Satancentered way. Everything the Bible says about Satan is designed to turn your eyes to God, to the Lord.

I remember when I was a student at Columbia Bible College there was a great man of God who was the president of the college. His name was Dr. Allen Fleece. Once he preached a sermon entitled, "The Wonders of Jesus." Oh, what a sermon it was! Someone came up to him after the sermon and said "It seemed to me like you belittled Satan in your sermon. You almost made nothing of him". The whole idea was, look to Jesus, look to Jesus, do not worry about the devil, look to Jesus. And someone came to him and gave him a warning, and said: "I think for every ten looks at Jesus you ought to give one look to the devil. What do you think?" Dr. Allen Fleece said, "No, thank you. I'd rather just take all eleven looks at Jesus". Well, I like his answer.

Do you realize this? We are reading Job 1 and 2, but Job did not have these chapters to read. From the beginning to the end of the book he had no idea that Satan was working in his life. He never knew about Satan, but he saw God. Did he have a victory over Satan? He sure did. Not by fighting Satan, because he did not even know he was around. He got his victory by seeing God.

Daniel's in the lion's den. What does he need? A six week course on how to fight lion's? He does not need to study lions; he needs to study his God, and when he studies his God, he knows how to take care of the lions. We do not ever need to study witchcraft or demonism or Satan. We do not need to look at them at all! All eleven looks to Jesus!

And then the second part of the answer. Not only a full vision of God, but the simplicity of faith. Do you remember in the New Testament in Luke chapter 22:31-32, Jesus said to Peter "Peter, Satan has desired to take thee and to sift thee like wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Ephesians 6:16, when it talks about fighting the devil. It says, "Take the shield of faith wherewith you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one." And in Matthew 17, the Disciples were puzzled, and said, "Why couldn't we cast out this demon?" It was unbelief. So you put those two things together, a full vision of God seen with the simplicity of faith. That is how to overcome.

Picture a bridge over a huge body of water, and tied to that bridge is a wild, ferocious, mad dog. You could see the saliva, and you could see the teeth, and you could hear the snarling and the growling. And that dog was chained to the fence. There was enough space for you to walk with just inches between you and that dog. You were assured that the chain could not be broken. Would you be afraid as you walked by? You have only inches. Would you be afraid as you walked by that mad dog? You would be until your faith in the strength of the chain overcame your fear of the dog.

All right, Jesus is the One who holds Satan. He is going to crush him under our feet shortly. He said, "I will put enmity between you and his seed." God puts it in there. That is why I am an enemy of Satan. God put it there. He said, "Do not be afraid". He will bark, and he will growl, and he will look ferocious, but he cannot touch you. He cannot touch the Christian. It is a shame for Christians to fear Satan. Greater is He that is in you, a million times greater, than he that is in the world. He is all done. The cross has ended his regime. Colossians 2:15-16 "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it".

"It is finished."

James 4:7 "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

# Chapter 5 Reading JOB to Know God

Introduction of Job's Friends

Job chapter 2 beginning at verse 11

"Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, they came each one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite; and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him. When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky. Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great."

As we get into this section, Chapters 3-31, man's futile attempts to explain the problems of life, I am going to be brutal on Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. I think they deserve to be criticized, and I am going to hit them with both barrels. I was interested to read a little book by G. Campbell Morgan entitled, "The Answers of Jesus to Job," and in that book (and he is the only commentator I ever read that did this) he gives three reasons why he likes Job's friends, and they are worth mentioning.

He said, I like these three men because they **cared** enough to come and see an afflicted friend. According to the record, all of his other acquaintances, even his family, even his wife, forsook him. Proverbs 17:17 says, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." You do not have to go too deeply into life, especially the Christian life, to realize that adversity is an acid test of friendship. When you are in trouble, then you see who your real friends are. Even in the world they have that proverb. You can tell who your friends are when you're down and out. There is some truth to that. Real friendship, and I am talking about Bible friendship, is a mighty miracle of God, and it is based on love, which is the fruit of the Spirit. That is why I like to relate it to Song chapter 8:6 and 7

"For love is as strong as death, many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it."

If it is real, it is going to stick through thick and thin, even though in Job 16:2, Job calls these friends "miserable comforters", or the New American

Standard Bible calls them "Sorry comforters are you all." He was not happy with these men, but as Morgan points out, at least they came. At least they came to see him and to sympathize with him. So I suppose we should credit them for that.

The second thing G. Campbell says is that they shut up for seven days and seven nights. They sat in **silence**. Verse 13: "Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him." I do not know why they sat for seven days and seven nights. Perhaps it is because seven days and seven nights was the official Bible time for mourning the dead. Maybe they thought he was right on the brink of death. You get that from Genesis chapter 1, verse 10, and also First Samuel 31:13.

We often say or think something like this. I hope I said the right thing. I hope I didn't say the wrong thing. Well, it is a lot deeper than saying the right thing or saying the wrong thing. It is a special work of grace that makes us say nothing at all and keep our mouths shut. I like First Thessalonians 4:11 "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life." If you have the King James it says, "Study to be quiet." It is not easy to be quiet. "Study to be quiet." Unseasonable words are often an aggravation and an abrasive acid inside the wound of those who are suffering. And so we need to walk softly before the Lord. Silence in the will of God may be a great balm of healing.

I am convinced that for every Christian who needs to trust God for boldness to speak, at least ten Christians need to trust God for the grace to **shut up**. I believe you will find that to be true. That is a great proof of God's grace. One reason that it is an illustration of grace is that it goes against our nature to be quiet. Morgan points out that they ought to be praised for that. Being silent in the will of God is a mighty work of God.

However, it didn't last too long. Seven days and seven nights. For example, look at chapter 13:4 and 5. Here is Job's estimation.

"But you smear with lies; you are all worthless physicians.

O that you would be completely silent, and that it would become your wisdom!"

He said I appreciate that you were silent for seven days, but I wish you never said a word. Oh, if you would only be completely silent because you are worthless physicians. So even though it did not last long, I guess we can commend them with Morgan for being quiet.

And then the third suggestion G. Campbell Morgan makes is this. They are to be praised because what they had to say they said right to Job's face. These

men can be criticized for many things but at least you cannot accuse them of backbiting. They had a lot to say. They had a lot to unload, but they unloaded it right to his face. I will not develop it now, because this is not a topical study on backbiting. Paul calls backbiting cannibalism in Galatians chapter 5:15. The church is full of cannibals today. They backbite. They devour one another. They eat each other up. These men did not do that.

All right, that brings us then to chapters 3-31, man's futile attempt to answer the mysteries of life. In this section we have these three men – Eliphaz, great-grandson of Esau, Genesis 36:10-11, Bildad, great-grandson of Abraham, Genesis 25:2, and Zophar. We do not know his family because he is named after the place he lived in southern Arabia. But we have these three men, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, debating on the purpose of suffering. Why do people suffer? Why does God allow pain in the world?

Now, each of these sections can be very confusing because they are arguments. Confusing, but rather easy to outline because they were orderly debates. What I would like to do now is take chapters 3-31 and get a bird's eye view of the whole thing. I am becoming more and more convinced that unless you get the bird's eye view first, then you are only going to be confused going forth. If you just start in chapter 1, verse one, and go through, you will get a lot of individual blessings, but you might miss the point the Holy Spirit desires to highlight. The main principle the Lord is trying to teach. So what we are going to do is fly over these chapters and keep dipping down as we come upon significant principles.

Let me give an outline for this section in terms of the facts. When we go through it debate by debate, we will go through it in terms of the principles. Chapter 3 is the foundation. How I love chapter 3. We will not get into that now. It looks like he is bewailing his birthday, but he is not. What you have is three cycles of debates. Chapter 4-14 is the first cycle. Chapter 15-21 is the second. Chapter 22-31 is the last cycle of debates. Eliphaz is the first to speak. He speaks in chapter 15, and then Job answers him right away in chapter 16 and 17. Then Bildad speaks in chapter 18, and Job answers him in chapter 19. Then Zophar speaks in chapter 20, and Job answers him in chapter 21. Chapter 32:1, is the end of this debate:

# "Then these three men ceased from answering Job because he was righteous in his own eyes." So they stopped.

Before we look at the details of these individual philosophies, let me show you the one basic error they all had. They had many similarities, but they all taught one thing that was wrong. They all had the same underlying error.

They taught that **all suffering is because of sin.** Do you see the idea? Those who sin, suffer. Those who sin a lot, suffer a lot. Those who are great sufferers are great sinners. They looked at Job and they saw a great sufferer, so they had only one conclusion. Job was a great sinner. All three had that one idea in common. All calamities, everything that went wrong in your life, all adversity, was inflicted as a penal retribution of a holy God. God was angry, and God punished sin in this life.

You see, that is what shocked them so much when they saw the severe condition of Job's suffering. When they saw how tremendously he was suffering, they could only draw one conclusion. What a heinous sinner this is. He must be a real rat. They had no idea at all about the positive side of suffering. It never even entered their mind that God might use suffering to wean a person from his pride and self-righteousness. That God might use suffering to crowd a person to Christ and detach a person from material things. To cure us of things temporal and help set our affections on things above. They had no idea at all that God might use suffering to **strengthen** faith.

That approach automatically undermines the cross, undermines the resurrection, and undermines future judgment. You see, there is no need for the cross if God punishes sin in this life. The fact is, it not only hurt Job, but it was subtlety hurtful to them as well.

You see, if it is true that all suffering is because of sin, then the sufferers are sinners and those who are not afflicted are innocent. They have not done anything wrong. Job was suffering, they said, because of sin and we are not suffering because we are not sinners. Such a view, which is still held by many Christians, is self-deluding and self-destructive. Now let me illustrate this for you from the mouths of these men. Let me show you at least one verse from each debate. The first from Eliphaz. Chapter 4:7-9

"Remember now, whoever perished being innocent? or where were the upright destroyed? According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity and those who sow trouble harvest it. By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of His anger they come to an end."

That is what Eliphaz said. Look at chapter 15:20.

"The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, and numbered are the years stored up for the ruthless."

You see, Eliphaz says I know why you are in that awful situation. I know why you have lost your family, and you have lost your crops, and you have lost your job, and you have lost the support of your life companion, and you have lost

the sense of God's presence, and you have lost your health, and you have come into these awful straits. It is because you are a wicked man. You might be hiding your sin and not admitting it, but you are a sinful man. Eliphaz speaks again 4:22

"Is it because of your reverence that He reproves you, That He enters into judgement against you?" (Haughty hypocrite!) Is not your wickedness great, and your iniquities without end?"

Now watch what he accuses Job of.

"For you have taken pledges of your brothers without cause and stripped men naked. To the weary you have given no water to drink, and from the hungry you have withheld bread. But the earth belongs to the mighty man, and the honorable man dwells in it. You have sent widows away empty, and the strength of the orphans has been crushed. Therefore snares surround you, and sudden dread terrifies you, or darkness, so that you cannot see, and an abundance of water covers you."

Oh, I tell you, this Eliphaz was brutal. He comes right out and he accused him of all kinds of things. Look at verse 23 of the same chapter.

"If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored; If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent."

You are a wicked man, Job. Eliphaz believed that suffering was because of sin. Listen to Bildad. Chapter 8, verse 6

"If you are pure and upright, surely now He would rouse Himself for you and restore your righteous estate."

That is what Bildad said. If you were pure, if you did not do anything wrong, then God would restore you. Look at verse 20

"Lo, God will not reject a man of integrity, Nor will He support the evildoers."

That is why you are in that trouble; you are an evildoer. Look at chapter 18. I will only read one verse, but you can glance at the whole chapter, because from verse 5 all the way to the end he describes the wicked. He is describing Job, but he describes it in the terms of the wicked. Verse 5

"Indeed, the light of the wicked goes out, and the flame of his fire gives no light." Then the rest of the chapter describes the wicked, and he says, Job, didn't that happen to you? That is what happens to wicked men, and that is why you have got it because you are a wicked man. "The light of the wicked goes out." Chapter 25, you see the same thing. Verses 4-6

"How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman? If even the moon has no brightness and the stars are not pure in His sight, how much less man, that maggot, and the son of man, that worm!"

What right do you have Job, says Bildad, to say that you are righteous? The wicked suffer. You are suffering. Chapter 11, verse 11

"For He knows false men, and He sees iniquity without investigating. An idiot will become intelligent when the foal of a wild donkey is born a man. If you would direct your heart right and spread out your hand to Him, if iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, And do not let wickedness dwell in your tents; Then, indeed, you could lift up your face without moral defect and you would be steadfast and not fear."

And so Zophar accuses him of the same thing. Look at verse 20

"But the eyes of the wicked will fail, and there will be no escape for them; And their hope is to breathe their last."

And so he throws him in with the wicked. Zophar speaks again. Verse 5

"That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the godless momentary? Complete darkness is held in reserve for his treasures, and unfanned fire will devour him; It will consume the survivor in his tent. The heavens will reveal his iniquity, and the earth will rise up against him. The increase of his house will depart; His possessions will flow away in the day of His anger. This is the wicked man's portion from God, even the heritage decreed to him by God."

And he looks at old Job, and he sees him suffering, and he says it is all because of sin. Now for a moment, let me follow that philosophy to its logical conclusion, and then apply it to a movement that is sweeping through the church today. I am speaking about the "healing movement". People are being healed they say. This healing movement, as I understand it, is very much akin to the

philosophy of these three men – Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar.

They teach, and I am quoting now from their own writings, "healing is in the atonement." That is how they state it. "By His stripes you are healed." That is, Christ died for our sins, and Christ died for our sicknesses as well. And just as you can claim by faith forgiveness of your sin, you can claim by faith healing of your diseases. Healing happened at the cross, and if you do not claim healing the same way you claim forgiveness, then you are in unbelief. Your lack of faith has made, and is keeping you sick. In other words, it is a sin to be sick. That is what they are saying, almost exactly what they were saying in Job's day. It is a sin to be sick and the only reason for suffering is sin. With that philosophy in your heart it is impossible not to judge anyone who is sick or disabled as faithless or wicked. I'd like to ask these people how many amputees grew arms and legs when they received Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior? I haven't even seen bald men get hair after they got saved unless they bought a wig.

Editor's Note: Isn't it interesting that forgiveness of sin which is definitely in the atonement is received by faith but the experience of sin and the consequences of sin remain in our lives. We can just as easily choose to sin after receiving Christ as before. We have the Holy Spirit to discipline us but also have the full effect of our free wills operating. Look at Peter who walks on water and denies Jesus three times. He is the perfect example of what is called "progressive sanctification". Peter received much but it took over 30 years of walking with the Lord for him to be able to write his epistle on suffering and it's value. He had to be rebuked by Paul for hypocrisy long after his mighty experience on the day of Pentecost. God can be glorified by our sickness and by our healing. Only He knows which is the better way.

We tend to confuse the natural and the spiritual and forget what the Lord Jesus spoke to the woman at the well as she tried to show off her spiritual credentials based on her honored ancestors well. John 4:21-23 "Jesus said to her, 'Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans do not know what you are worshiping; we Jews do know what we are worshiping; for salvation comes from the Jews. But a time is coming-indeed, it is already here – when the real worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and reality, for the Father is looking for just such worshipers.'"

Now is there an element of truth in the phrase, "healing is in the atonement"? The answer is yes, there is an **element** of truth. The fact is, if it was all a lie it would not stand up at all. Nobody would believe it. Error has to borrow from truth in order to support itself. Error cannot stand on its own two feet. It needs some truth to stabilize it. But the element of truth in this statement,

"healing is in the atonement", is this. Healing is **based** on the atonement; it is not **in** the atonement. What we mean by that is, every good thing God has ever done is because of the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Everything, is established on the atonement. Every good and perfect gift that God gives is because of the cross. I just wanted to point out that this error, "suffering is because of sin", is still very much with us.

But don't worry because the arguments that these men produced before Job did not bear any convincing weight with him. Job was not blind, and he gives two reasons for rejecting that whole philosophy. The first reason is in chapter 21 starting at verse 7

"Why do the wicked still live, continue on, also become very powerful? Their descendants are established with them in their sight, and their offspring before their eyes, their houses are safe from fear, and the rod of God is not on them. His ox mates without fail; His cow calves and does not abort. They send forth their little ones like the flock, and their children skip about. They sing to the timbrel and harp and rejoice at the sound of the flute. They spend their days in prosperity, and suddenly they go down to Sheol. They say to God, 'Depart from us! We do not even desire the knowledge of Your ways. Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him, And what would we gain if we entreat Him? 'Behold, their prosperity is not in their hand; The counsel of the wicked is far from me."

And so Job says "I am not blind". You say, "The wicked suffer". I look out my window and I see a lot of wicked men, and they are not suffering. How come? If your philosophy is true, if God sent suffering to the wicked, then how come I see so many drunkards? How come I see so many wicked men and wicked women and they are prosperous? They have good jobs, and they have good health, and they have children, and their gardens grow and everything goes right for them. And so he says I cannot accept your philosophy, because from my own experience, from my own observation, it is not true. The very first chapter of the Bible refutes their silly lie. Who was righteous? Cain or Abel? Who died? The righteous one did! Who lived on in prosperity? The wicked.

Then he says there is a second reason I don't agree. He says not only do I observe that the wicked do not necessarily suffer but also I don't believe that I have not done anything wrong! All the way through the book, Job insists upon his own righteousness. He insists that he has not done anything to deserve what is coming down on him. Chapter 6: 1 and 2 is an illustration of that.

Chapters 29-32 have been called by Bible expositors the most "self-righteous"

chapters in the entire Bible. You read Job chapter 29, 30, 31, 32, and you will see it. We read in chapter 29, Job's testimony of how he behaved when everything was going well. So you can pat him on the back for that. Chapter 30, he tells how he behaved when everything went wrong. He says I did not deny God. I continued to hold onto my faith. Chapter 31-32 is sort of a general boast of his greatness. Chapter 31:5-30 Notice all these "ifs."

5: "If I walk with falsehood." 7: "If my step has turned from the way"

9: "If my heart has been enticed by a woman." (But it has not)

13: "If I have despised the claim of my male or female slaves."

16: "If I have kept the poor from their desire."

19: "If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing."

20: "If his loins have not thanked me, and if he has not been warmed with the fleece of my sheep."

21: "If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan."

24: "If I have put my confidence in gold."

25: "If I have gloated because my wealth was great."

26: "If I have looked at the sun when it shone."

29: "Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy, Or exulted when evil befell him?"

30: "I have not allowed my mouth to sin by asking for his life in a curse."

And look at verses 35-37. Let me give you a summary statement of these verses. Job looked up into the face of God and before these three witnesses he says "all my life I have behaved like a prince, in adversity and in prosperity.

"Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; Let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my Adversary has written. Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, I would bind it to myself like a crown. I would declare to Him the number of my steps: Like a prince I would approach Him"

He said, even if **God** came up to me, I would walk up to Him like a prince, and I would tell Him how righteous I am. Marvelous, huh? And so Job disagrees with his adversaries and insists that he has done no wrong. That is how he refutes their philosophy. And so he says it is not logical what you are saying. Whether or not it is the revelation of God, I am not sure, God is not even talking to me these days. But, he says, it is not logical because it is not what I have observed and it is not true in my own life.

He did not know any more than they did. They were wrong; they were very wrong. They were wrong about God. They were wrong about God's dealings with Job. They were wrong in their own methods of talking to Job. They were wrong about the wicked, and they were wrong about Job. But notice, their

wrong, did not make him right. Job was just as wrong as they were. Sometimes we think someone else is wrong, so I must be right. No, you might be wrong too!

Here was Job's error. They said only the wicked suffer. Job said that is not the explanation. I have the explanation. God is **unfair**. That was Job's explanation. Job ended by **blaming** God. Chapter 1, verse 21 and 22

"The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the LORD.

Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God."

He did not blame God at the start. Satan tried circumstances to force Job to curse God. It didn't work. Satan tried Job's wife to jeer him into cursing God. No dice. Satan tried these miserable comforters to argue Job into cursing God. That did not work either. But he came very close to cursing God, by blaming God. It doesn't take much to go from blaming God to cursing God. Chapter 4, verse 6: from Job's lips

"For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, their poison my spirit drinks; The terrors of God are arrayed against me."

That is not really blaming God. That is acknowledging that God is the source of his suffering, but that is not blaming God. Chapter 7, verse 20

"Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, so that I am a burden to myself?"

Just think of this now. He is talking to God.

"Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why are you setting me as Your target?"

He is still not blaming God, but he is getting closer. 9:13

"God will not turn back His anger; Beneath Him crouch the helpers of Rahab. How then can I answer Him, and choose my words before Him? For though I were right, I could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge. If I called and He answered me, I could not believe that He was listening to my voice. For He bruises me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause. He will not allow me to get my breath."

He is getting closer to blaming God. "He multiplies my wounds without cause." He has no reason to do this. Verse 24 of the same chapter

"The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, then who is it?"

If I cannot blame God, then who is doing this to me? Chapter 10: 8 - 10, the same kind of thing. Look at verse 10

"Did You not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese."

Now that's graphic! "And knit me together with bones and sinews."

Chapter 13: 24 - 28, the same thing

"Why do You hide Your face and consider me Your enemy?"

This is an amazing thing. Look at his view of God. It sure has changed. "The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." "Though He slay me, yet shall I trust Him". Now he says God is my enemy. He set me up as his target. He is shooting at me without a cause. No reason. Look at chapter 19, verse 6

"Know then that God has wronged me and has closed His net around me."

Is he blaming God? Chapter 30, verse 21

"You have become cruel to me; with the might of Your hand You persecute me."

Do you see my point? Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar had one theme they kept pushing. You are suffering because you are wicked. Job says, no, I am suffering because God is unjust, because God is unfair. God wanted someone to pick on, and He chose me. God wanted a target, and He found one in me.

So these men were wrong, but so was Job. I will not develop it now, but let me just say this. Those two errors have not disappeared in the last six thousand years. Have you ever heard anyone say something like this? I am suffering because God is punishing me for something in my past. Did you ever hear anything like that? You have already been punished for every sin in the Person of Jesus Christ your substitute. You will never be punished again...... Ever! No

matter what, you can't be punished again or God would be collecting for the same debt twice, and that would make Him dishonest. Jesus took the wrath of God and was punished, our mistakes now enter the laws of sowing and reaping and are used for correction and maturation.

People still say "God is unfair". Well, they might not come right out and say He's unfair. He set me up as His target, and He is shooting at me. Did you ever hear expressions like these? Bad luck. Adverse circumstances. Misfortune. Ill fate. Everything has befallen me. You see, the whole idea is that there is no wisdom, there is no plan and there is no love. There is no reason behind what is going on in my life. There is no real God who cares and who loves me and who engineers every step.

No person can live under the weight of the lie, God is my enemy. Boy, if you really believe that, it will lead you to despair and suicide. It would have to. That unbiblical philosophy can only lead to nihilistic fatalism.

What do we read instead? Romans 8:31: "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son but gave Him up for us, how will He not with Him freely give us all things" He has not set me up as His target. God is for us. All right, that is the first thing I want to point out in this section. The basic error of the three men, along with, the basic error of Job.

Another observation I want to make about this section is that it is one of the most negative sections in the whole Bible. It is a large section. It is from chapter 3 all the way to chapter 31. One practical way to study negative sections of the Bible is to take warnings from them. What I would like to do is take all these chapters as a whole and give the great warnings that I see.

Now remember, from Colossians 1:28, it says: "We proclaim Him, admonishing every man." God has never called me or any man to preach warnings. God has never called me or any man to preach the promises of God. We proclaim Him, promising. We proclaim Him, admonishing. I am not going to just give you a bunch of warnings. I am going to proclaim Christ, warning every man. There is a big difference there because one way puts too much of the responsibility on me and you. As we struggle to stay Christ-centered, seek Him alone and obey His voice, we agree with all that He is doing. The Holy Spirit of God convicts people of their sin not us. So, I call attention to that because I do not want you to get your eyes on warnings. I want to present warnings, but in a Christ-centered way.

The first warning is this. **Beware of half-truths**. You see, they said **true things**, but they did not preach the **truth**. **The truth is a person**. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life". When you go through this section you will find a

lot of true things, but these men were not preaching the truth. This is the age old story. When man fell in the Garden of Eden, he fell under the influence of a half-truth. Satan did not tell the whole story; he left something out. "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." That is what Satan said. Here is what he did not say. Ye shall be as gods and know good, but as men you won't be able to perform it. You shall know evil, but not be able to refrain from it. He did not tell them that part. He just said you will know good and evil. He did not tell them about the horrible struggle this knowledge would bring to them and then ultimately to us.

God's people have suffered through the years with half-truths. Was there any element of truth in their philosophy – suffering is caused by sin? Sure, there's truth in that. In at least two aspects it is true. Number one, all suffering is indirectly caused by sin. You see, if Adam and Eve had never sinned, there would be no suffering on the earth. So it is foundationally caused by sin. They were right, but only caused by sin indirectly. The fact is, much suffering is caused by the law of sowing and reaping. It is the great doctrine of chastening. God disciplines His children. Not punishment, but training. Not because you have done something, but in order to instruct and to teach. The worst lie is the unbalanced truth. Standing on thin ice you are convinced is thick enough to hold you.

The second warning I see from this negative section is a warning against **arguing**. Especially, violent argument. And, boy, they got violent! Do not waste time trying to cause a prejudiced mind to understand something. Chapters 3-31 are a wonderful illustration of the futility of argumentation. NOTHING, NOTHING is gained by arguing the truth with someone. Here is something it takes years to begin to learn. See if you can get this. It is a little complicated to explain. God has not called you to win the world or to convince the world. He has called you to **know** His Son. As we walk in the intimacy and knowledge of the Lord, the **Holy Spirit** will convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He has not called you to convince the world of anything.

We are tempted to think that the more we argue and debate these things, the closer to the truth we will get. No, that's not what the Bible says at all. The fact is, the longer you debate and argue, the deeper the ditch you are digging yourself. The passion of the conflict excites the flesh and fans the flames of self-righteousness. Worst of all, it takes our undivided gaze off of Jesus.

I love to compare before the argument, chapter 1:21, "The Lord giveth and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." With Job 38:2 which is after the argument. God looks in the face of Job and says: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" "Darkens counsel". He says, "Hey, I have been arguing in order to get counsel". God says, "No, you

are a lot darker now than you were when you began. You were better off when you said", "The Lord giveth and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Where did you get after all this arguing? More deeply entrenched in the darkness.

These chapters are a great demonstration of how debating can take you from the truth. Job was more confused after all of this philosophy than before. It is always that way. Do you know the verse, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom?" Here is an amazing thing. If you start your reasoning anywhere but "The fear of the Lord", the more logic you apply, the further from God you get. I remember one time getting ready for a Bible study and I started buttoning my shirt wrong. The more I buttoned the worse it got. If you don't start out right, you're not going to end up right. And so, you have to begin with the Lord. Do not ever think that you are going to win anyone to the truth by an argument. You will not.

Now I realize what I am about to say might be an unpopular position in a world where seminaries and Bible schools teach the exact opposite of this. But as I study my Bible, I do not see any place for what is called "apologetics". The idea of apologetics is to create logical arguments in order to defend the faith. I think seminaries that teach such courses are wasting their time. It is worthless stuff. God is known by **revelation!** It is a miracle of God. God teaches this stuff. No defense of the truth, no explanation of the truth, no refutation of error, no amount of eloquence or of evidence, is going to take you one step closer to the truth. The truth is a mighty miracle of God, and it comes as the Holy Spirit shows you. God reveals Himself to a **willing heart;** someone who wants to know.

So, for what that is worth, I hand out a warning against argumentation. Do not argue the things of God with anybody. It does not work. It has never worked, and it never will. Especially, with the unwilling. Those who don't want to know. "Those convinced against their will are of the same opinion still". They cannot/will not change. "God doesn't believe in atheists!" He has set eternity in every man's heart (Ecc 3:11) therefore it is a conscious act of rebellion, not intellectual superiority, when someone chooses not to bow the knee to the wisdom God put inside of him.

A third warning I find in this section is; **Avoid self-pity**. Job did not start off with self-pity, but little by little he landed there. I think the devil's most popular sermon is entitled, "Pity Thyself." Every good sermon, they say, has three points and a poem. Well, the devil's sermon entitled, "Pity Thyself" has three points and a poem. His first point is poor me. His second point is poor, poor me. Can you guess what his third point is? And his poem is: "Nobody loves me, everybody hates me, sitting in the garden eating worms".

Pity means to feel compassion toward someone, and it is all right if you are talking about someone else. It's great to feel sympathy and try to enter into the sufferings of others. But self-pity is when you are feeling that same compassion toward yourself. In other words, you are living on the level of your emotions. I think one of the difficulties you will have to deal with ministering to suffering Christians is offering true comfort and somehow discouraging self-pity. Once again we come in helpless dependence to Him who fills us with His wisdom and guidance for the task.

# Chapter 6 Reading JOB to Know God

Strong Warnings

The fourth warning can be summarized in these words. Avoid a superstructural presentation of truth. A superstructure refers to that which is built upon something else. A house is the superstructure built on the foundation. You can have a wonderfully strong and solid foundation yet build a lopsided, weak and sloppy house on it. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. According to the grace of God which is given to me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon"

Under the figure of a building, the apostle continues to speak of the work of Christ's ministers, and especially of his own labors at Corinth. As the first to preach the gospel there he had laid the foundation. With Christ as the Cornerstone the teachers that succeeded him could build. The reference is primarily to doctrine, but the principles apply to work and life as well.

THE FOUNDATION: This is Jesus Christ the Mediator (Isaiah 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6). He is the Foundation of truth: the system of Christian theology is built upon Him. All Christian teaching and preaching must have Him for their basis. The entire structure of knowledge rests upon Him who is the Source of all wisdom. He is also the Foundation of life The Church is built upon, believers being "living stones" in the great spiritual temple.

THE SUPERSTRUCTURE: Having found the true Foundation, we must "take heed how we build thereon." The work of ministers/believers in general is here viewed as the superstructure. Two kinds of materials may be employed: "gold, silver, costly stones" - the beautiful and lasting materials, suited for a temple; or "wood, hay, stubble" - the baser and more perishable materials, fit only for a temporary house.

Let me illustrate from Job's three friends – Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. All of them presented superstructural truth, emphasizing their building and not God's foundational wisdom. Job's heart was crying out for foundation. He needed a Rock (actually he needed the Rock); he did not need the wisdom of men. He did not need what they had to offer. The problem is they based their teaching

on something superstructural. Let me illustrate that.

Eliphaz was the oldest and, supposedly, the wisest. You can tell that from the nature of his speeches. Chapter 4, verse 8 "According to what I have seen." And then he begins to give his argument. Look at chapter 5, verse 3 "I have seen." Look at chapter 5, verse 27 "Behold this, we have investigated it, and so it is. Hear it, and know for yourself." He speaks again in chapter 15, and once again he bases his arguments on the same thing. Verse 17 "I will tell you, listen to me; what I have seen I will declare." Watch what Eliphaz bases his argument on. This is a very eerie section. Chapter 4, verse 12

"Now a word was brought to me stealthily, and my ear received a whisper of it. Amid disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, dread came upon me, and trembling, and made all my bones shake. Then a spirit passed by my face; the hair of my flesh bristled up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance; A form was before my eyes; There was silence, then I heard a voice."

Do you see what he is doing? He is basing his arguments on what I have seen, what I have heard, what I have observed, and then he bases it on an experience he had one night when he was laying in bed. He said he had a vision and this angelic being came to the foot of his bed and made his hair stand up on end, and he tells about this vision he had. Eliphaz based all his arguments on his experiential observations. Now, experience is a wonderful thing, but do not base truth on it. Illustrate truth with your experience, but don't let it be your foundation. You base truth on the unchanging word of the unchanging God. There is your truth; that is your foundation.

Let me provide you with an example of this practice. (Let me coin a word) "Eliphasizing" — taking the foundation as Eliphaz did from his experiences. Someone gets up and gives a testimony. "Well, let me tell you about the day I got saved. I cried for four hours". And some uninstructed person sitting in the audience says, "I did not cry when I got saved; maybe I did not mean it, perhaps I'm not really saved". This often leads people astray. Someone says, "I saw so and so get healed after I fasted and prayed all night". So then somebody hears that and figures, "Well, maybe if I pray all night God will answer me. Especially if uninstructed and immature Christians hear this. They will feel compelled to duplicate that particular experience. I think this is one of the great dangers of the testimony meeting.

I used to love those meetings. But the more I hear them, the less I like them. The reason they have begun to bother me so much, is that they are often

too experience-centered, too much "Eliphasizing". Everything is about what people felt or did. Colossians 2:18 "Stop letting anyone, in gratuitous humility and worship of angels, defraud you as an umpire, for such a one is taking his stand on the mere visions he has seen, and is groundlessly conceited over his sensuous mind". If someone would stand up and say, "Here is the truth of God from the Bible, and here is how God did this in my life". That would be wonderful because they would be illustrating an objective principle by their subjective experience. A lot of time is wasted in self-analysis and self-interpretation. Too much talk about your own experience, dissipates spiritual energy. That is how Eliphaz based his arguments. What I have seen, what I have observed. I had an experience; I had a dream; I had a vision. And it did not satisfy Job, and Job told him so.

Bildad comes along, and he chooses something else to base his on. Look at chapter 8:8 "Please inquire of past generations, and consider the things searched out by their fathers." Verse 11 "Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can the rushes grow without water?" These seem to be proverbs which were taken from the ancients. If you read the sermons of Bildad, and you can find them in chapter 8, 18 and 25, you will find that he almost exclusively built his arguments on something someone else said. He was a student. I remember E, Eliphaz, for Experience, and B, Bildad, for Books. He was a student; he studied all the tradition. He quoted everybody. So and so said this. He does not have his own reasoning.

Now, Proverbs 11:14 says, "Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory." So don't get me wrong. I'm not saying, when I talk about Bildad, that we do not need counseling, that we do not need to study commentaries and we do not need to study books. It can sound so spiritual to say something like this: "Through the years I am getting away from books; I am getting away from the comments of men. Now I just want to study the Bible. I have the Bible, I have the Lord, I have the Holy Spirit and I have an open heart." That sounds spiritual on the outside. But more often than not it is pride masquerading as humility. We ought to be real careful about that. Part of helpless dependence is not only helpless dependence upon God, but helpless dependence upon men. The fact is, the more you grow in the Lord the more childlike you are going to become. In Christ we grow backwards toward the cradle. That is what maturity is. You are not going to need men less; you are going to need men more. "Christians don't get better – they get deader"

I went through a period in my life when I brushed aside all the great books of church history. I don't need Calvin or Luther. I don't need to read Wesley and Whitfield and Bunyan and Myers. Forget all the commentaries, the theology books and the biographies. I have the Bible! That's all I need! And the Holy Spirit! You see, that approach is a contradiction of Ephesians chapter 4,

"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men."

According to these verses, what is the safeguard that I will not remain a spiritual child? That I will not be tossed by the waves? That I will not be blown out into some ocean of confusion by every wind of false doctrine? The answer is **gifted men/women.** Ones who can touch our lives in real authentic relationships. God has given spiritual gifts to men, that I might be mature, that I might not be a child.

I need G. Campbell Morgan. I know no other commentator that gives you a more all-inclusive Christ-centered look. He can put a verse into the context of the whole Bible. I need that; I cannot do that on my own. I need Lightfoot, Ellicott and those commentators who give me the original Greek and Hebrew. I need these men of God. I need concordances, atlases, theology books and dictionaries. I need them, but they are not the foundation.

It is true, not because Spurgeon said so. Praise God for Spurgeon. It is true because GOD said so! Not Moody. God! Not Wesley. God! Not Whitfield. God! Not Ed Miller. God! Not anybody. The Word of God! Bildad said, "Believe it, Job, because" and then he gave a human name.

Never once does Bildad refer to his own experience or his own observation. He is the well-read scholar. He goes back to the authority of the fathers. I suppose, in one sense, he advances on Eliphaz. In the sense, that it is probably more modest to be guided by a group of voices instead of just your own. But the fact is, experience is not the foundation. Tradition is not the foundation. When you make that the foundation you are in trouble. Isaiah 28:16 "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."

1Corinthians 3:11 "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Now let's look at Zophar. On what did he base his truth? Zophar is the dogmatist of the group, almost a bigot. He is also the nastiest one. He is the one

who comes across very blunt, cold, and detached. His view of God is very low. Take, for example, chapter 20:1

"Then Zophar the Naamathite answered, 'Therefore my disquieting thoughts make me respond, even because of my inward agitation. I listened to the reproof which insults me, and the spirit of my understanding makes me answer.'

He says, "I know so much, I have to speak". Later on Job says to him, "Yes, and when you die wisdom dies, with you!". Zophar is the one who says I know it is right! And then he gives a creed. A cold, hard doctrinal formula. He says "This is what we believe, and Job, if you are one of us, you are going to believe this too". He doesn't even care that Job is a human being stripped by God and in agony. He has no concern about that. All he wants to know is, "Is your doctrine right?" Let's check your creed. That is Zophar.

Here is the point. The foundation of truth is a revelation of God. What God says, what God reveals. Experience is a wonderful thing if it illustrates and confirms God's manifested wisdom. Tradition, the voice of men, is a wonderful thing, if it illustrates what God has revealed. Doctrine also can be wonderful if it illustrates God's foundational truth. But so often doctrine is like that woman who reached out and touched the hem of His garment. A lot of people think that the **virtue(power)** was in the **garment**. It was not. What made that garment a healing garment was that Jesus was in it. The garment was **touching the Healer**. Doctrine is like the robe without Christ in it, and many people just touch the doctrine and expect healing. If Christ is not in it, then there is no healing in the garment, and doctrine can be just the garment.

### A VISION OF GOD PRODUCES A SPIRIT OF REPENTANCE

There is much discussion in this section, 3-31, on the depravity of man. Was Job convinced of his own sinfulness? He was. But not, by Eliphaz' arguments. Eliphaz eloquently argues the depravity of man, but he doesn't get to Job. Bildad talks about the holiness of God but he did not get to Job either. Do you know how he was convinced of it? He saw God. That is how you are always convinced of it. God gave him the truth by laying a foundation. A vision of God produces a repenting spirit, a repenting heart, a humble attitude. So, experience, tradition and dogmatism must all bow low to the revelation of truth as it is found in the Bible.

The fifth warning I get from Job chapters 3-31 is; Don't be fooled by what appear to be peoples good qualities, strengths or special gifts. Let me illustrate that. In James 5:11 we read these words. "You have heard about the patience of Job." If you read the book of Job you would write your own verse,

and it would read something like this. "I have heard of the impatience of Job". From reading Job, that is what you come up with. He was a very impatient man. We are only as deep as the third chapter and we see the impatience of Job.

One of the clearest doctrines in the Bible is what theologians call the depravity of man. In order to have the Bible doctrine of depravity of man, you have to have three things included. Let me give them to you. The first is **wretchedness**, which simply means that man cannot be worse off than he is. Man suffered a complete and total fall. Sin has turned man into a monster. Sin has turned man into a beast. By nature, man is blind and ignorant. He is plunged into pollution by his nature and practice. He is just wiped out. He is filthy through and through.

Now, wretchedness does not mean man is at his worst. You go out there and you will see that people could be far worse than they are. The doctrine of depravity says man is wretched, and he is **potentially** at his worse. That is, inside of man there is no end to the evil he can do.

The second aspect of depravity is **Helplessness**. Man is ignorant of his own condition. He is senseless of his own state. He does not see his sin. He does not see his danger and, obviously therefore, he cannot see his own remedy. I am not going to quote Scripture passages at this time to illustrate the helplessness of man because it is everywhere. It is all through the Bible. But, if man were to see his condition, his misery, his pollution, his wretchedness, the Bible teaches he would be absolutely helpless to do anything about it. He could not lift one finger to improve his situation. Without a miracle of mercy, he could not be delivered from his wretched condition.

Let me give the third thing that depravity must have. Something worse than total wretchedness and absolute helplessness. You say, now what could be worse than that? The word the Bible uses is **enmity**, which means to be in opposition to. That means this. Wretchedness says, "I am lost". Helplessness says, "I cannot do anything about it". Enmity says, "If I could do something about it, I would not". That is the condition man is in. He is an enemy of God. He not only cannot do anything, but if he could, he would not. He would refuse to do anything about it. Now this is an amazing thing, but this is what the Bible teaches concerning every man. Not only the unsaved, but Christians also are totally depraved. Our "old man" can pop up and take control at any time. We are absolutely sinful through and through. We are helpless, absolutely helpless. And we are at enmity with God.

If you do not believe man is like that, just think of this. In order to keep man from sinning, you have to restrain him. In order to get a man to the Lord, he has to be drawn by God. "No man cometh except the Father"

draw him." Doesn't that tell you something about the heart of man? Regarding sin, he must be restrained. Regarding God, he has got to be drawn or he will never come. What a condition man is in. Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Man cannot think of damnation and the consequences of sin, without terror. And on the other hand, man cannot think about sin, the cause of damnation, without pleasure. This is the conundrum of the human condition and the teaching of the Bible. You say, okay, that is great on depravity, but how does that tie in with Job chapters 3-31? Just this way. Man is taught these days that he has strong points, saving qualities. Not from the Bible, but from people. Humanism says we are born perfect with a propensity toward high morals and creative genius. But the idea of total depravity is that you don't have any strong points. You are totally depraved. Somebody says I read the story of Moses, and his strong point was meekness. I read about Elijah, and his strong point was courage. I read about Peter, and his strong point was loyalty. I read about Job, and his strong point was patience.

Boy, Satan would love to have you believe that. You read the record and you will see in every case each one failed miserably. Elijah failed in his courage. Moses failed in his meekness. David failed in his morality. Peter failed in his loyalty and Job failed in his patience. Satan would love to have you believe that your life is divided up into areas of **strong points and weak points**. Someone says, "Well, I know I have some weak areas. I have these tendencies' you know. God built me with a short fuse. I tend to procrastinate or exaggerate. I often lust or worry". Someone worries. Worry is a sin. They say, "Oh, that's just my nature. I am always anxious, always worrying. That is just a weakness that I have. But I would never be untrue to my life partner. Not a chance. I would never attempt suicide. Somebody else might, but I'm strong there. You could never look at me and say there goes a potential drunkard. There goes a potential homosexual. There goes a Sabbath breaker. I would never rob; I would never murder; those are my strong points."

Be careful. Be warned. Every man, the most spiritual man, is totally depraved. We are wretched; we are helpless; we have enmity; we have no strong point. It is only the grace of God that can keep us from sin, from the worst kind of sin. There is no such thing as strong points and weak points. We are all less than zero before God.

**Editor's Note:** The Lord showed me something once that really goes along with this teaching. We like "Superheroes" in the world and in the Church. But there are no "Superheroes" just "Superzero's". Thinking in a numerical dynamic there is only one 1 in all of creation; God Almighty is the number 1. The rest of us are

all zeroes. Now you might not like to think of yourself as a zero because it denotes nothingness. But you see if a zero follows a one, it remains a zero but magnifies the one. 10, 100, 1000, 10,000 etc. So when we follow the Lord (Psalm 23) we have a place, a position that increases His value while we still remain zeros. It is when we go in front of the Lord that we diminish Him. 01, 001, 0001 and so on.

Christians fall so often in the very areas where they think they are strong. Boy, the devil loves to get you there. You are standing on guard on your weak points and boom. He gets you where you think you are strong. It is what happened to Job. Job fell, in his patience.

If you really believe the doctrine of depravity, then you would take the safest course you could take. The safest course anyone who is helpless can take is to just fall at the feet of the Lord Jesus and cry out for mercy. Living in total dependence on Him. "Unless you repent and become as a little child, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God". Job did not fall in his strong point. He did not fall in his weak point. He just fell. He had no strong points. He had no weak points. He is just helpless. The moment you believe that you are strong in an area then watch out. I Corinthians 10:12 "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall". You get wiser and wiser, but not stronger and stronger. In your mature wisdom you surrender more quickly to His will and quit your own. In the garden of Gethsemane the Lord Jesus experienced the struggle of surrendered will. Matthew 26:39 "And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt".

You give up right away and surrender to the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You see more clearly than ever before just how weak you are. If you have any spiritual excellencies, they are borrowed. They are from God; they do not belong to you. "I am what I am," Paul said, "by the grace of God." I Corinthians 4:6 "For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"

All right, let me give one other practical warning. I will not develop this. I will just mention it without a great deal of comment. Job 6:26

"Do you intend to reprove my words, when the words of one in despair belong to the wind?"

I call this warning "the reproof of words". According to this verse a

person who is desperate speaks with words that are wind. That is, when a person is under pressure, he says a lot of things he doesn't really mean. That is what this verse is teaching. You have probably known that in your own lives. Something has come up in your life and you are under a great deal of pressure, and you say things that you do not really mean to say. When a person is desperate, Job said, "Do you intend to reprove my words, when the words of one in despair belong to the wind?" Even when a person is not under pressure, a lot of what he says is wind. So I would be careful and try not be too harsh on those who mouth off when they are under pressure. Their speech is wind. Let's be gentle. Let's walk softly in dealing with them.

That brings us then to chapters 3-31, man's futile attempts to answer the mysteries of life. Before we look into the debates, which actually begin in chapter 4, let me show you how chapter 3 is the foundation for all of them. It is a unique chapter, and it has been a source of real trouble to many commentators. As I told you last time, in chapters 4-31 the three friends of Job are trying to address the mysteries of life – why is there suffering? They only have the one answer. Suffering is because of sin. The wicked suffer, therefore, Job must be wicked.

Job chapter 3 shows what a surface discussion chapters 4-31 really are. I am so amazed at the speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. The fact is, apart from their false premise about Job, there is not an awful lot you can disagree with. If you read Eliphaz, if you read Bildad, if you read Zophar, they say some marvelous things. Their philosophy, though it is ill-based, was perfectly correct as far as it went. Of course, it did not go far enough. Let me illustrate. Eliphaz, for example. Chapter 4, verse 6

"Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope?"

Isn't that a marvelous verse? Look at verse 17

"Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? He puts no trust even in His servants; And against His angels He charges error. How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed before the moth!"

Isn't that marvelous? Look at chapter 5, verse 8

"But as for me, I would seek God, and I would place my cause before God; Who does great and unsearchable things, wonders without number." And then he describes the great wonders of God in Verse 17

"Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves; So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal."

Look at chapter 22 if you want to see a tremendous verse. Once again, Eliphaz speaks. Verse 21

## "Yield now and be at peace with Him."

Boy, isn't that a tremendous sermon? You could take each word. Yield. Now. Be at peace with Him. You could preach on every one. And 22:21-27

"Therefore good will come to you. Please receive instruction from His mouth and establish His words in your heart. If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored; If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent, and place your gold in the dust, and the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks, then the Almighty will be your gold. And choice silver to you. For then you will delight in the Almighty and lift up your face to God. You will pray to Him, and He will hear you; And you will pay your vows."

Aren't those marvelous verses? That is Eliphaz speaking, the philosopher. The same thing is true of Bildad. Chapter 8:1-7. Boy, you could preach that from any evangelical pulpit. Chapter 25: 1-6

"Then Bildad the Shuhite answered, 'Dominion and awe belong to Him Who establishes peace in His heights. Is there any number to His troops? And upon whom does His light not rise? How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman? If even the moon has no brightness and the stars are not pure in His sight, how much less man, that maggot, and the son of man, that worm!"

Marvelous truth coming from his mouth. Zophar, even that guy. You read chapter 20, his last comment, how he describes the portion of the wicked. It is eloquent. It is a masterpiece of poetry. So what I am saying is these men were correct as far as they went, but now watch. Their philosophies did not reach quite far enough.

Here stood Job, stripped, in agony, suffering, crying out from his innermost spirit. His voice did not represent his soul. He was not able to express

the depths of his heart. Their answers never reached the real him. They did not go down deep enough. His trials went beyond their philosophies, and chapter 3 shows you the depths from which Job was really crying out.

You see, it is in this way that man's answers to the riddles of life are futile. They are shallow; they are surface; they chop off weeds on the surface but leave the roots. These friends of Job never got to the deep wounds of Job. Their answers are good. Their answers are true, and in a few cases they are right on, but they could not satisfy. Because the real issue in Job's heart was bigger than, why do people suffer? That is what they were answering. But Job was crying for something deeper. He wanted the answers to **life.** 

When you see chapter 3 and its spiritual significance, then I think you will see automatically the utter folly of the debates that follow. They were stupid to the nth degree. Let me give you a simple outline that we will follow as we look at chapter 3. First of all, I want to look at this chapter on the level of earth. In this chapter, Job gives two illustrations. Then I want to go behind the scenes and show you the principles that are underneath his illustrations, show you the level of heaven and what he is really saying.

All right, Job chapter 3, on the level of earth. There are two illustrations in this chapter. The first is Job's birthday. At the top of my Bible in bold print (New American Standard) the translator summarized this chapter in these words: "Job bewails his birth". The second illustration is in verse 8 "Let those curse it who curse the day, who are prepared to rouse Leviathan." It was not enough that Job cursed his birthday. He wanted professional cursors to help him. Enchanters or magicians. People whose business it was to curse. "Help me curse my birthday". Those who are daring enough to rouse Leviathan. Like those magicians of Egypt who brought up snakes and frogs. That is what he is talking about. So the two illustrations are his birthday and Leviathan the crocodile.

Let me discuss these for a moment on the level of earth. Then we will take it to heaven. There is no question about it that Job is not happy in this chapter about his birthday. Here is the outline of the chapter. Verses 1 through 10 he said, I wish I was never even conceived. He is very logical the way he does it. First he curses the night he was conceived and the day he was born, together, and then he takes them apart and does it separately. He curses the day, and then he curses the night. He says I am not happy. I wish I was never conceived, and I wish I was never born. That is the first ten verses. But, since he was conceived and he was born, he wishes the next best thing. Verses 11-19. I wish I had died at my birth. He pictures death as a great equalizer. Look at these verses. Everybody is on level ground when they die. It is in verse 13

have slept then, I would have been at rest, with kings and with counselors of the earth, who rebuilt ruins for themselves; or with princes who had gold, who were filling their houses with silver. Or like a miscarriage which is discarded, I would not be, as infants that never saw light. There the wicked cease from raging, and there the weary are at rest. The prisoners are at ease together; They do not hear the voice of the taskmaster. the small and the great are there, and the slave is free from his master."

Verse 23, he says that His way is hidden. Life is a riddle. He does not understand. Why was I conceived? Why was I born? Why didn't I die as soon as I was born? Why wasn't I miscarried? Why doesn't God take me home now that I want to die? He is in despair here. It seems hardly possible that the words recorded before this in Chapter 1:21 "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." could have been spoken by the same man.

Jesus said of Judas, in Matthew chapter 26, "It would have been good for that man if he had never been born". That is because he was going to hell. That's why Jesus said that about him. I will not be too hard on Job yet. Most commentators are very brutal on Job in this chapter. They come down heavy because of his attitude, but I saw the heavenly side and I am just a little easy on him. I think you will agree with me when you see it.

There are a couple of principles you can learn from this chapter. Job was the one who was upright before God and feared God, and yet he was a victim of this passionate discontent. It is possible that we could be as well. Job had no idea that God was going to make him a historical symbol of suffering patience, that God was writing a Bible with his life. He did not know all of that. Only grace can make a man willing to die when everything is prospering, and only grace can make a man willing to live when everything goes against him.

All right, let me make an observation about Leviathan and then we will take it from the level of heaven. Chapter 3:8 The word Leviathan means twisted or snaky, with folds or spines or closely interlocked scales. In chapter 41 of Job, you have a great description of Leviathan. If you read Job 41, in the margin it says crocodile. It is a description of a sea monster. In Psalm 104, evidently it is used as a whale or something like that. Once in Isaiah it is used as a serpent. But it is a monster with scales. Some people think it refers to a dragon. The point is that Job was looking for someone to curse his birth who wasn't afraid to rouse Leviathan.

All right, let's go upstairs to the level of heaven. I suggest that under

each of these there is a spiritual truth, a principle. Job's birthday is just a picture of something. Leviathan is just a picture of something, and when we get what that something is, you will see how chapter 3 is the preparation for all of this. What is pictured by the mourning over Job's birthday? There is a spiritual mystery in this. Those expressions of misery are the expressions of miserable humanity. It is bigger than Job's birthday. He is declaring the wretchedness of the birth of the whole human race. In other words, he is saying my natural birth is under a curse. He is mourning life on earth. He speaks in the chapter as a **prophet**. He is describing the condition of fallen humanity. It is the same thing David said when he sinned. He said in Psalm 51:4, "In sin, my mother conceived me." He was mourning the fact of the old sin nature. He looked back at his natural birth and saw the problem.

I believe the underlying cry of Job's heart, the real depth of the problem, is this. I want a "new birth". That is what he's really asking for. The natural birth and everything that goes with it is cursed. He is not saying I hate October 1<sup>st</sup> or whatever day his or your birthday falls on. He is saying I curse what comes out of man and woman naturally. What I am by nature is ruined. He was crying out for deliverance by a new birth. John 3:4-6 "Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit'".

What is pictured by Leviathan? More than a crocodile. More than a sea monster. Ezekiel 29:3 uses the same word symbolically for Egypt. He calls Egypt Leviathan. As a matter of fact, there is an ancient coin of Julius Caesar with a crocodile on it and the words Egypt underneath. Egypt was pictured by the crocodile. Look at Job chapter 26, please, and verse 13

"By His breath the heavens are cleared; His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent. (The fleeing serpent is Leviathan). Behold, these are the fringes of His ways; and how faint a word we hear of Him! But His mighty thunder, who can understand"

Evidently, verse 13 is a reference to the fall of Satan – when God cleared heaven of the fleeing serpent. I do not have any doubt of this when I turn to Isaiah 27. God talks about that great day of the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. Great prophetic chapter, when Jesus returns. Verse 1

"In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, with His fierce and great and mighty sword, even Leviathan the twisted serpent; And He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea.

#### In that day, a vineyard of wine, sing of it! I, the LORD, am its keeper; I water it every moment. So that no one will damage it."

He is talking about the Millennium, and what he is saying is there is coming a day when Leviathan will be destroyed. That is just a picture of Satan. Under that figure, Leviathan, Dragon, Egypt, is the symbol, evil Satan himself. Just as cursing his natural birth was tantamount to a cry, "I want a new birth", longing for someone daring enough to rouse up and to curse Leviathan was the inward cry for a Savior. "I want a Deliverer". I want someone who is a match for Leviathan. I want someone who is able to beat and conquer Leviathan. Boy when you read chapter 3 this way! He is not cursing his birthday. He is not cursing a crocodile that lives in the Nile. Instead, he is saying my heart cries out for a "new birth". My heart cries out for a Deliverer, a Savior. That is the real cry that he could not put into words.

And that is why these men come along and say, oh, do you want to know why you are suffering? He says, no, but what I really want to know is I want to be satisfied! I need an answer for this birth, for this life, for nature! I need an answer for evil, for wickedness, for sin, for Leviathan. They never answered that. They could not answer that because they never saw it. And he kept answering back, no, you are wrong. So chapter 3 becomes the foundation for the tremendous debates which are to follow.

## Chapter 7 Reading JOB to Know God

The Wrong Answers

I came across a cartoon that showed two fish in a bowl who were trying to understand the mysteries of life. These two goldfish were discussing the purpose for existence and the reality of God. Now one of the goldfish was a doubter and the other a believer. The first panel showed these fish angrily debating back and forth. Then in frustration the believing goldfish said to the doubting goldfish, "Okay, smartie, if there is no God, who changes our water every Tuesday?" Now as ridiculous as it is to think that two fish can understand the great mysteries of life, it's just as absurd to think we humans could do any better. Little tiny fish and all they could see is, **somebody's** out there.

Just so, Job and his three friends were like four fish trying to understand the ways of God. There is no way! And the best they could do is just poke at the truth and try to touch it. Man has not advanced very far beyond the reasoning of those fish. We look around and we think we know something, but I will tell you, we don't know anything. Shame on us if we think we have begun to know God. God is infinite and we as finite beings just don't have the capacity. He is toooooo big. In Job 11:7, Zophar said this: "Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?" Isn't that a marvelous verse? And Job said in chapter 26, verse 14 "Behold, these are the fringes of His ways; And how faint a word we hear of Him! But His mighty thunder, who can understand?" These are the fringes of His ways, just the edges. We only see the hem of His garment. We have not begun to know Him.

Let me show you what all three of Job's friends had in common, beside confusion. They all suffered from the same preconceived notion; God always prospers the upright; God always punishes the perverse. It was, to them, inconsistent that a holy God, a righteous God, an omnipotent God, could allow men, good men, to be miserable in this life. Job's friends never did rise above that juvenile understanding of suffering. They never saw the blessed side of suffering. They never saw its sanctifying and purifying effects. They never saw the beauty and the dignity that shines through broken vessels when Christ is displayed in their woundedness. The wicked suffer. Job suffers. Job must be wicked. That was their reasoning and the premise of all these debates.

This attitude toward suffering was challenged by the Lord Jesus in Luke chapter 13:1–5 where we read about Pilates's murder of some Galileans while they were offering sacrifices. "He answered and said to them, 'Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than the other Galileans because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no." And then in that same chapter, He tells about

a tower that fell down and killed eighteen men. Luke 13:4. Jesus said, "Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no." That is what Jesus said. Just because the tower fell on them and killed them, that does not mean they were worse than those who escaped the bricks from the tower.

In John 9 we find the story of the man born blind. Chapter 9:3 Jesus answered, "It was neither this man that sinned nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him." And so, Job's friends never saw that side of suffering. They said the tower fell on those men because they were wicked, and Pilate killed those men because they were evil. That man was born blind because of sin. God says, no. Indeed no. That is not why. It is deeper than that. Satan is presented in Job as the instrument of Job's afflictions. The manner in which the affliction comes makes it look like the wrath of God. God was the One that was blamed for this. Job wanted to know the riddle of life. He wanted to know what life was all about, and is there a Savior?

Remember, now, these three men are not strangers. They are not philosophers who came in from the local university to debate with Job. According to the Scriptures, these are his best friends. Everybody else forsook him except these three! And his best friends were shocked because they thought they knew Job. The fact is, Job had a reputation throughout the known world for his godliness. And because these three men come with this idea that Job must be wicked – these men come because they are shocked. They say, Job, we cannot believe it. What have you done to deserve this? They have only one conclusion. He must be wearing a mask of hypocrisy. God looks through the mask. And so those men were broken-hearted when they came to Job, because they said you have deceived us. You pretended you were a holy and righteous man. And now look! God has judged you! What have you done? Tell us! Show us! We are your friends. You can let us know. We love you; we want to pray for you; we want to pray with you. Why have you played the hypocrite? Why have you tried to deceive us?

I must tell you that those things entered his heart like arrows. These were his best friends, and it was hard for him because it came from them. To have your best friends in your deepest trial insinuate that you are a wicked man must be very, very painful. And even more painful, because it wasn't true. The truth hurts, but not as much as an insinuation. How do you prove a spiritual thing that nobody can see? And the more Job said, "I am innocent", the more they said you are wicked and hiding it.

And so, we begin these three debates. If you take what Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar said in the abstract, you'll find much truth there. But it did not apply to Job or his situation. That is why he said in chapter 16, "Sorry comforters are

you all. Miserable comforters." As a matter of fact, the margin says, "Comforters of sorrow." Rather than bringing me comfort, you are adding sorrow on top of my sorrow.

Job agreed with almost everything they said. He agreed that all events come from God. Job agreed that God inflicts suffering on the wicked. But he knew in his heart that he was innocent. His conscience was clear. And yet, God treated him as if he were guilty. And so he charged God with injustice, and he blamed God. He said God has become my enemy, and for no reason God set me up as His target. That is Job's mistake.

So these are the three cycles as a whole. I was reading one commentator, and here is the outline he gave for this section. He says 4-14 you can call **confusion**; 15-21 you can call **more confusion**; and 22-31 you can call **the most confusion**.

Now watch how they end. The Bible tells us who won the debates. No question about it, Job won. He triumphed over his friends. Job 32:1 says, "Then these three men ceased answering Job because he was righteous in his own eyes." He shut their mouths. The arguments he gave proved they were wrong. Now just because you win an argument does not mean you have the victory. Job won the argument, but his heart was still crying, "What is the answer to life and is there a Savior?" Refuting error is one thing. Realizing truth is another.

One thing I get out of the fact that Job silenced these men is that God discredited their theories. By the fact that God shut their mouths, He is saying do not believe what they said. It might be a temptation to fall into their philosophy. Job shuts their mouths, then God speaks and shuts Job's mouth. That is how it ends. Job 40, verses 4 and 5

"Then Job answered the LORD and said, 'Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more."

You see, God not only discredited the theories of these men, but also discredited the theory of Job. God was saying, "Not only are these men wrong, but, Job, you are wrong. I am not your enemy, and this was not for nothing. There is a reason". And then of course He shows them the full answer. More of that as we come to it.

That brings us to the first cycle of debates – chapter 4-14. I will ask you to turn to chapter 4. What I would like to do is look at the first part of this debate. That is, Eliphaz speaks, chapters 4 and 5, and then Job answers in chapters 6 and

7. What was it that started this war of words? I believe it was the statements of chapter 3 where we see Job cursing his birthday, and longing for professional cursors who would rise up and curse Leviathan. They took Job's words at face value. His best friends were there for seven days in silence. Then, all of a sudden, Job blurted out and began a bitter cursing of his conception and his birth. They heard Job's passionate cry for death. This was their best friend! And, all of a sudden, they said we cannot take it anymore. We have to speak.

What I would like to do first is present the facts of the debate and then give some principles that I think will be practical for our lives. Chapter 4 and 5, Eliphaz speaks, and underlying everything he says is that preconception that Job must have sinned.

Let me say a word about Eliphaz before we look into what he said. Eliphaz is the oldest of all the speakers, and the wisest. He is more dignified than the others. He is more calm. He is more composed. I believe, as we read it, that he is very considerate of Job. The fact is, I always took Eliphaz as one of the worst villains because he was the first to speak, but I really got to like him this time around. He made some grievous errors; there is no question about that. But he is not arrogant like Zophar. He is not cocky like Bildad. He is methodical, logical and sincere, and he is genuinely concerned for the spiritual condition of Job. He wants Job right with God, and so he speaks.

You see, here is the idea. He fears that his dear friend Job has drifted from the Lord. He is going to try his best to bring him back. The fact is, I believe this first speech of Eliphaz is one of the masterpieces of the whole book of Job. Eliphaz, the oldest, the wisest, the kindest, and probably the most sincere. After seven days of silence, he hears this bitter lamentation of life which he completely misinterprets. He does not have the foggiest idea what Job is talking about in chapter 3, and he cannot hold his tongue any longer. Let me give you a suggested outline of his sermon. As I see it, there are only three thoughts. There are a lot of words, but he really only said three things in these two chapters. In chapter 4:1-11, he said this. If you are righteous, then why are you folding? Why are you buckling under this pressure? Why are you caving in? Why are you despairing?

Then in chapters 4:12-5:7, he said if you are really righteous, why are you murmuring against God? Why are you complaining? The wicked gripe and complain against God, not the righteous. The righteous bow their head in submission and say this is the will of God, I accept it, and thank you. If you are righteous, why don't you do that?

And then in chapter 5:8-27, he says if you are really righteous, Job, why are you despairing? Come now, Job, you know you are not righteous. Repent!

You see, that is basically his argument. He tries to prove from these two things that Job is not really righteous because he is caving in. Job is not righteous because he is complaining. Therefore, he says repent, Job, and get right with God so that you can be blessed.

Let me give some of the emphases of Eliphaz' speech and then show how Job responds to it. Verses 1-11, if you are righteous, why are you folding under this pressure? You see, Eliphaz is confused. He thought he knew Job. He is one of Job's best friends. The tone of Job's words, the state of Job's mind and the attitude that Job is showing seems ungodly to Eliphaz. Something is wrong. Is this the Job I know? Is this the Job that is my best friend? Despairing? Despondent? Cursing his birthday? Wishing he would die? Wishing he was never born?

"Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, 'If one ventures a word with you, will you become impatient? But who can refrain from speaking?'"

The idea is after what you just said in chapter 3, who can shut up? I shut up for seven days, but I have to speak now.

"Behold you have admonished many, and you have strengthened weak hands. Your words have helped the tottering to stand, and you have strengthened feeble knees. But now it has come to you, and you are impatient; It touches you, and you are dismayed. Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope?"

You see his argument? Job, you were such an instrument of comfort in the lives of others. You were so skillful in helping other afflicted people. You helped the tottering to stand and you encouraged those who had weak knees, but now you are despairing.

You know, before we get too hard on Eliphaz, let me just ask this question. Wouldn't you have drawn the same conclusion? Job, apply your own medicine. You tell others to trust in the Lord. You tell others not to despair and not to be despondent and in every trial of life just look to the Lord. You get some trials in your life and you curse your conception. I would have said exactly what Eliphaz said. I would have told him the same thing. If you are righteous, he says, you have nothing to fear. Verse 6

"Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope? Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed?"

If you are righteous, then this is for your own good, for your own teaching. Verses 7-9, he describes the destruction of the wicked under a very graphic picture. You do not see it clearly in the English, but in the Hebrew there are five different Hebrew words for lion. In verse 10, you have the roaring lion and the young lion. In verse 11, you have the strong, old, mature lion and the lioness. He is saying, like the lion, the wicked are strong and violent, and like the lion, the wicked are going to have their homes destroyed and they themselves are going to be destroyed. Verse 8

#### "According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity and those who sow trouble harvest it."

Job, you have a lot of trouble in your life. You must have sown it someplace along the line. You have a harvest of trial. So that is the first question to Job. Understanding the cry of chapter 3 to be despair, he says, why are you despairing? Why are you despondent? Why are you folding under this pressure? Again, he interprets Job's lament in chapter 3 as frustration and asks, "Why are you murmuring against God?" Then he drives home the truth with a testimony in chapter 4:12-21, and a warning in chapter 5:1-7. I love the testimony of Eliphaz in Verse 12

"Now a word was brought to me stealthily, and my ear received a whisper of it. Amid disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, dread came upon me, and trembling, and made all my bones shake. Then a spirit passed by my face; The hair of my flesh bristled up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance; A form was before my eyes; There was silence, then I heard a voice: 'Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before His Maker? He puts no trust even in His servants; And against His angels He charges error. How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed before the moth! Between morning and evening they are broken in pieces; Unobserved, they perish forever. Is not their tent cord plucked up within them? They die, yet without wisdom."

I believe this testimony shows great delicacy and consideration for Job. I did not look at it like that before. But instead of coming right out and saying, Job, you are a dirty sinner, you have sinned against God, he narrates the truth of how man's sinfulness was brought home to his own heart. He said let me tell you an experience I had and how I was convinced of how wicked man is — mankind in general. And then he tells of this vision and contrasts God's holiness with all of God's creatures. He said even the holy angels in the sky are dirty. How can

you say you are not dirty? God is so Holy compared to Him even perfection is unclean. Of course, he suggests to Job that the cause of his suffering is sin, but he does it in an inoffensive way. He says, Job, I believed like you did one time, but then I had this vision and God showed me my heart, and it was dirty. And even the angels are dirty. How much more man? You see, he had truth. And then in chapter 5:1-7, he warns Job against his murmuring. Only the wicked, he says, resent the afflictions of God. Verse 2 and 3

"For anger slays the foolish man, and jealousy kills the simple. I have seen the foolish taking root, and I cursed his abode immediately."

Then he describes what happens to the wicked.

"His sons are far from safety, they are even oppressed in the gate, and there is no deliverer. His harvest the hungry devour and take it to a place of thorns."

Of course, his description is strikingly like the experience Job just had. And of course he is insinuating that this is what has happened to you Job. And then he concludes logically from his premise. Verse 6

"For affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble sprout from the ground."

What he means by that is trouble is not accidental or spontaneous. There is a reason for it. There has to be a cause and effect. Trouble did not just happen, Job. Something must have happened in your life. Then he says, "Man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward."

What he means by that is this. Because of sin, trouble is as natural to man as it is for sparks to come out of the fire. Job, you are denying that? It is logical. Since that is true, Job, and since only the wicked despair and only the wicked murmur, why not admit it? You have sinned. And then in chapter 5, verse 8, through the end, he said give God the benefit of the doubt and repent

I do not see the pride that many commentators see in verse 8 "But as for me, I would seek God." I do not think it is pride. Have you ever said something like this or heard something like this? "If I were you, here is what I would do". I think that is what Eliphaz is saying. He is giving personal advice. Here is what I would do. I would seek God. I would place my cause before God. And then in verse 17

"Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, so do

#### not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal."

What he is saying is, Job, you are being reproved. You are being chastened for sin. If I were you I would just seek God, and I would repent of that sin. And then God would bless. Look how he describes the life of benediction. Glance at the verses, and I will state the principles. If you did this Job, if you would just repent. Verse 19, you would have a life free from trouble. Verse 20, you would be safe from famine and war. Verse 21, you would be fearless of the tongues of men and of violence. Verse 22, you would have joy in the midst of your troubles. Verse 23, you would have peace with everything and everyone. Verse 24, you would have security. Verse 25, you would have prosperity. Verse 26, you would have strength in your old age. Verse 27, try it and see.

But as you might expect, Job was deeply wounded by the insinuations of Eliphaz. Words like impatient, wicked, fool, lion, schemer, cunning, all of those insinuations he knew were applied to him. Beside those physical agonies of Job, he had a deep hunger. He wanted his soul satisfied. Job did not have the foggiest idea what was going on in his life, but he knew Eliphaz was wrong. For seven days three of his best friends sat there in silence. Did not say a word. He thought they were sympathetic. He thought that they were friendly, that they would understand. And after seven days he fully expected them to understand. And so he began to lament and to cry and to wail. He let loose because he was among friends. He poured out his heart because he felt accepted.

He would not cry out to anyone. He would not cry out to his wife. He told her in chapter 2:10, "You speak as one of the foolish women." "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" He would not even tell her. But these men sat for seven days, and he said, "My friends, they will understand". And then an agony erupted from his soul and he poured out his spirit before them. And he thought they would understand as he vented his heart. They had misinterpreted his agony, his crying, his wailing. And so Job answers now in chapter 6 and 7.

Let me give you the facts of Job's reply, and then let me show you how he answered Eliphaz at least in two particulars. Job's reply is also in three parts. Let me give you a simple outline. In chapter 6:1-13, he says you did not understand why I cried; let me explain. He gives an explanation of his crying. Chapter 6:14-30, he tells how disappointed he is over his three friends. He said I expected more than this from you. Then in chapter 7, you are not going to believe this, but he does it again. He lets out a wail and a lament and an agony that makes chapter 3 look like a song of praise. In Chapter 3 he is lamenting his birth, his conception and everything else, but it gets worse in chapter 7. And, those men true to their calling, misinterpret this cry also. And when Bildad hears this, then

he lets out his explanation. And this is hot. And we will get to that. Chapter 6: 1 - 13, Job explains his cry. I will encourage you to read it on your own time. Here's some key verses from Chapter 6.

Verse 5: "Does the wild donkey bray over his grass, Or does the ox low over his fodder?"

Verse 12: "Is my strength the strength of stones,
Or is my flesh bronze?
Is it that my help is not within me,
And that deliverance is driven from me?"

Here is what Job is saying. Will you at least give me the same consideration you give animals? If an animal cries out, if an animal brays, what do you conclude? He is hungry? He is hurt? If an animal screams, you know that something is wrong. I scream, and you do not say, "Job must be hurting". You say, "Job must have sinned". He said, "Give me the same consideration you give animals. Do you know why I cried? I cried because I hurt. Because, it is painful. I am suffering. Do you know why I cried loud? I cried loud because I am in great pain!"

Then in verse 12 he says, "Is my strength the strength of stones? Is my flesh bronze?" When God made me, He did not make me a stone. When God made me, He did not make me out of brass. He made me flesh and blood, and I have nerves and nerve endings, and I hurt.

We need to pay attention to this and how we might apply it in our lives. Someone cries out, and the first thing you say is he is not trusting in the Lord. He is rebelling against God. Maybe he is just suffering. When God made us, He did not make us out of brass. He did not make us out of stone. And men hurt sometime. And that is why Job cried. They did not understand it. Verse 10

"But it is still my consolation, and I rejoice in unsparing pain, that I have not denied the words of the Holy One."

I am not rebelling against God. And even though I am in all of this pain and I am screaming out, I thought you would understand that, best friend. I cry because I hurt. I have not denied God. I have not thrown Him aside. He would have kept his mouth shut if he had known what they were made of, but he thought they would be sympathetic. He thought they would understand. And so in 6:14-30 he shows his disappointment. Verse 14

"For the despairing man there should be kindness from his friend; So that he does not forsake the fear of the Almighty."

That is all I wanted from you. A little kindness. A little understanding. A little sympathy. Verse 15 through 23

#### "My brothers have acted deceitfully like a wadi, like the torrents of wadis which vanish."

A wadi is a winter river, and when the snows come down and melt, the river is full. Then in the summer when people need it, the sun has dried it up. So it is dry and there is nothing for the camels, nothing for the horses and nothing for men. So Job says when friends are in abundance you are all there to be my friends, but when I really need a friend you have all dried up. I was thirsty and I wanted something to drink, and I am disappointed. I thought you would understand. I thought you would sympathize. But instead, you have become to me like a deceitful wadi, a dried up river bed. You have not been able to feed my soul. Verse 22 and 23 he says:

"Have I said, 'Give me something,' or, 'Offer a bribe for me from your wealth,' or, 'Deliver me from the hand of the adversary,' or, 'Redeem me from the hand of the tyrants'?"

If I had asked you for something, I could understand you thinking that I have an ulterior motive. But I didn't ask you for anything. I didn't even ask you to come. All I wanted was understanding. All I wanted was an ear. All I wanted was sympathy. And you have acted like a deceitful wadi. Then in verse 24-26 he says, you say I have sinned. If I have sinned, name it. Tell me what I have done. Look at verse 24

#### "Teach me, and I will be silent; and show me how I have erred. How painful are honest words! But what does your argument prove?"

If I have done something, tell me what it is! Then in verse 27-30 he says, if not, then you had better come up with another argument because I know I am innocent. So after explaining his cry, and after explaining his disappointment in his friends, then he begins another lament. And if they were shocked at chapter 3, they are really shocked now in chapter 7. The first ten verses of chapter 7 are sort of a general lament over the evils and the brevity of life. Life is short, he says, and life is bad. It is a misery and the only thing more miserable than life is thinking about life, and that is misery added to misery.

For preachers, verses 6-10 are wonderful passages. If you ever want to preach a sermon entitled, "The Shortness of Life," boy, here are the passages to do it on. In verse 6 he compares life to a *"Weaver's shuttle"*. In verse 7, the *"Taking of a breath"*. In verse 8, to the *"Glancing of an eye"*. In verse 9, to the

"Vanishing of a cloud". Then he closes with how final it is. You leave home and you never come back.

That is how he describes it. And so he is just lamenting. This chapter ends not in an answer to Eliphaz. He has answered Eliphaz. He has answered him by explaining his own cry and by showing his disappointment in his friends for not understanding him. But if you will notice from verse 11 to the end of the chapter, rather than speaking man to man, Job to Eliphaz, he turns around and he lifts his head up toward God. This is a prayer. He prays to the Lord. We will not take time to look at every verse. Let me give you the essence of it. Chapter 7:11-16. Here is what he said.

He looks up in the face of God and he says, "Am I a danger to Your universe? Am I doing something that is dangerous? Why do You have to tie me down like this? Why do You have to put me in prison?" He is praying to God and don't forget these men are listening. He asks God, "Am I endangering Your universe that You have to bring all this upon me? Just tell me; I will not do it anymore! Why do You have to throw me in prison? Why do You have to tie me up? Why do You have to make my flesh and my bones ache?"

Then in verse 17-20, he says, "God, don't You have better things to do than to pick on a poor insignificant man? You are a great God, and I am just a man. I am nothing! I am nobody! Less than nothing! Why are You spending so much time on me?" Then in verse 21

"Have I sinned? What have I done to You, o watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, so that I am a burden to myself?

He says, If I have sinned, God, why don't You bring it to the surface so I can see it, so I can confess it, so it can be forgiven? And Job cries out, "What is going on in my life? Why are You picking on me,

#### Chapter 8 Reading JOB to Know God

Job Struggles with God

Okay, let's look then at chapter 8. Here is the thing that is crushing Job. He really wants to know the answers to life. He is confused about something deeper. He is not concerned so much about his boils and about his pain and about his sleeplessness. He is concerned about the mysteries of God, the riddles of life and the relationship between God and men. 8:1-3

"Then Bildad the Shuhite answered, 'How long will you say these things, and the words of your mouth be a mighty wind? Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert what is right?'"

You see, Bildad expresses wonder, almost astonishment. Abhorrence that Job can utter what he has just uttered in chapter 7. He interprets the essence of Job's reply. Verse 3 "*Does God pervert justice?*" You see, Bildad has the idea that Job thinks God is perverting justice, that God rules His world in an unmoral way. Bildad answers in language stronger than Eliphaz used.

Let me give you a simple outline of what I think the philosophy of Bildad is. Now I am not trying to be clever and give you alliterations. In the first seven verses he gives his principles. In other words, this is what Bildad believes – chapter 8:1–7. Then in verses 8-19 he illustrates his principles. He gives three illustrations of his principles. Then in chapter 8:20-22, he restates his principles again.

Actually, this speech of Bildad is very logical, very easy to follow. Let me try to examine it a little more closely. What is it that Bildad believed? Let me first state it for you and then try to illustrate it through chapter 8. Bildad believes that God is discriminately righteous. That is, God distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked. And because He distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked, He treats them different. He does not treat everybody the same way. He punishes the wicked. He rewards the righteous.

The harsh way in which Bildad drives this home is a lot stronger than Eliphaz. Eliphaz was kind. But Job really blew his cork in chapter seven and Bildad is responding to that, notice verse 4

"If your sons sinned against Him, then He delivered them into the power of their transgression."

There he gives an illusion about Job's children. I am certain that when

Job heard this he was enraged by the insinuation of this comment. What he is saying is this. Evil carries with it the seeds of its own distrust. Evil bears its own retribution. In other words, he is saying God is righteous; He only punishes the wicked. Your children are dead, Job; they deserved it; they were wicked. That is what he said in verse 4. Your children died because they deserved to die. Then he thinks he is encouraging Job by trying to illustrate the positive side in verses 5-7

"If you would seek God and implore the compassion of the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, surely now He would rouse Himself for you and restore your righteous estate. Though your beginning was insignificant, yet your end will increase greatly."

Evidently, says Bildad, you are not the kind of sinner your sons were, because God is discriminately righteous. They sinned, and they died. You are still alive. That means there is some hope for you if you would only repent. You are still alive, because God sees the potential, the possibility, that you are going to repent. Turn back to God! That is Bildad's mantra. The second part of Bildad's speech is the illustration of that principle by three illustrations in verses 8-10

"Please inquire of past generations, and consider the things searched out by their fathers. For we are only of yesterday and know nothing, because our days on earth are as a shadow. Will they not teach you and tell you, and bring forth words from their minds?"

Bildad is saying, this principle that I am holding, that God is discriminately righteous, did not come off the top of my head. This is not my own bright idea. Why, this is the talk of the ancestors. This principle has stood the test of time. This is what people have believed for generations. It rests on research. It rests on the general experience of all mankind. I did not make this up. Then he gives three illustrations. Verse 11 and 12, the illustration of the papyrus leave, the Nile reed. Commentators tell us that those reeds grow twice the size of an average person, 10 or 12 feet high. Then in verses 13-15, he gives the illustration of a spider's web. And in verses 16-19, he describes a type of spreading plant.

In his first illustration verses 12 and 13, his basic idea is this. If you take water away from the reed it will perish and die. Just so, if you take the Lord away from a person he will perish and die. The godless are like the reed without water. In the second illustration in verses 14 and 15, he talks about a spider's web. As there is no hope that a spider's web will bear the weight of a man (just imagine

swinging over a chasm on a spider's web) you will be destroyed for sure if you hung on a spider's web. It cannot hold you. Just so, there is no hope that a godless man will be saved. A godless man will be destroyed.

His third illustration is the illustration of a spreading plant. It is in verses 16-19. A luxurious plant that is solidly rooted in the soil, spreading out every way and entwining itself around the rocks, solidly gripping the soil. That thriving plant that is basking in the sunshine so secure in the ground seems so safe. But somebody comes along and grabs the plant and rips it out of the ground, tears it from its home. You look at verse 18 and 19

"If he is removed from his place, then it will deny him, saying, 'I never saw you.' Behold, this is the joy of His way; and out of the dust others will spring."

If you rip up a plant like that, its place is occupied by another plant and it leaves no trace. It leaves no memory. It was just as if that plant was never there. And so he says those who forget God are like those who are torn from the soil. Ripped out of the sunshine. After a while it is as if they never were. They just perish.

The fact is, the speech is quite eloquent. Bildad was very learned. Not as learned as Eliphaz, but I think one of the greatest sections in the whole book of Job is right there, chapters 4 through 7, in the great speech of Eliphaz. But Bildad is very wise indeed. He says, Job, the godless are like the Nile papyrus without water. The godless are like a man clinging on a spider's web for safety. The godless are like a plucked up plant, and there is no hope for their survival. That is his principle. That God is discriminately righteous. He will reward the righteous; he will punish the wicked. And he illustrates how the wicked are going to fare when they forget God. Then he restates his principle in verses 20-22

"Lo, God will not reject a man of integrity, nor will He support the evildoers." (There is his principle again)

In verse 21, he has reason to believe that Job has hope.

"He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouting."

Verse 22, I believe is a very tender verse.

"Those who hate you will be clothed with shame."

But why does he mention the haters of Job? Later on Job looked at his

three friends, and he said you all hate me. I think what he is saying is something like this. Job, I am not saying this because I hate you. The haters of Job will be put to shame. That is not me. That is not Eliphaz; that is not Zophar. We do not hate you, Job. We are saying this because we love you. It is the only reason we are telling you this. You have exploded and you have turned and rebelled against God. You have shaken your fist in His face. You have accused God of perverting justice, of being unrighteous, and we are just telling you this because we love you.

I believe that is the context of Bildad's speech. God is righteous. He always rewards the righteous. The wicked suffer. Job, are you suffering? It is because you are wicked. Are you suffering greatly? You are a heinous sinner, and the greater your suffering, the greater your sin. Then we come to chapters 9 and 10. Are you ready for this? Boy, if he was hot here in chapters 6 and 7, he is really upset here. As Eliphaz misinterpreted the cry of chapter 3, as Bildad misinterpreted the real cry of chapter 7, so now he utters a cry that is almost unbelievable, and as you can guess, dear old Zophar is listening in and he is not going to enjoy what he is about to hear. Zophar did not like chapters 9 and 10, and he tells you that in no uncertain terms.

Job is crying out from the depths of his soul and his sickness. I just told you Bildad's speech was easy to outline, and it was. It was very logical. But these are the outbursts of a frustrated man. He is not calm; he is not logical. He is overcome with passion. I find him all over the place. There seems to be a desperate jumping from one thing to another, from one riddle to another. Job says, what about this? How about that? Well, God, what do you do about this? I suppose the only thing that ties it all together is confusion. It is all the cry of his sick heart.

It is hard to describe the speech. Try to enter into this. Job, as he speaks in these two chapters, is full of awe and confusion. He views God as omnipotent, all powerful and sovereign more than any theologian I have ever read. He makes Calvin look Armenian in these chapters. He has a tremendous respect for the power of God and His final authority.

At the same time, he is full of terror. He is scared to death and indignant. He disagrees with Bildad that God is discriminately righteous. Job feels that God is indiscriminately severe, that God crushes all men whether they are good or bad. It doesn't matter. God has a vendetta against everybody. As a matter of fact, it gets so hot he says, if God has a bias, it is toward the wicked and against the righteous. I cannot believe the mental anguish that Job was going through.

Now if you can imagine that he was filled with awe and confusion, scared silly and trembling. Job is crushed feeling that God is so strong I can't resist Him? "Let's say", Job says, "I am right and He is wrong. How can I ever prove

that? How can I go up against God and prove Him wrong?" He feels as helpless as a housefly in a tornado. There is just no possibility for Job because he cannot prevail against God. And so, this reckless speech comes from a man in total mental confusion. It is bold, it is irreligious and it sounds like blasphemy.

I suppose, as a general outline, chapter 9 forms one thought and chapter 10 forms another. At least this much of a division is clear. Chapter 9 is addressed to Bildad and chapter 10 is addressed to God. In chapter 9, Job expresses the reason for his despair. Then in chapter 10 he gives five questions to God. He says, God, You answer these five questions. Boy, they are hot. In an impassioned plea, he gives his twisted concepts of God. He is not playing games; he is not playing the hypocrite. He really harbors these feelings, and he's not afraid to say it. Not many would do that. We would play spiritual and we would say, "Oh, I do not really feel that way about God", because you would be scared to death.

Let's look at chapter 9. Bildad gives his philosophy. God is discriminately righteous. He rewards the righteous and He condemns the unjust. Job gives a sneering remark to that philosophy. Chapter 9:1–3

"Then Job answered, 'In truth I know that this is so; But how can a man be in the right before God? If one wished to dispute with Him, He could not answer Him once in a thousand times."

What he is saying is, "How can a man substantiate his righteousness?" Let's say that I am right, Job said. How could I prove that with God? If God says I am wrong, how could I go up before God and say that I am right? Have you ever heard this human proverb? "Might, makes right". That is what Job believed about God. Sure He is right, because He is God, and who can stop Him? Whatever He says is right. Did you ever hear this human proverb? "You can't fight City Hall". That is what Job believes about God. So, Job is frustrated. Job viewed his sufferings as a verdict from God that he is guilty. For example, look at chapter 10, verse 17

### "You renew Your witnesses against me and increase Your anger toward me; Hardship after hardship is with me."

Job's idea was that all his sufferings are proof that God says I am guilty. I have not done anything, but I am guilty. And the proof is that God has given me all these trials, all these sicknesses and all these hardships.

In chapter 9, verses 4-10, Job illustrates his point from the material world. His point is that God is irresistible. His wisdom. His might. Who would ever dare to resist God and hope to succeed? Verse 5, Job does not have a little

picture of God. He is the One who "Moves mountains". Verse 6, "Shakes the earth". Verse 7, "Dictates to the sun". Verse 8, "Controls the surging seas". Verses 7-9, "Controls the mighty constellations in the sky". Verse 10, "His workings are beyond any human mind to understand, to grasp".

Then he says, "How can a man prove himself right and come against an opponent like that? Anybody here want to disagree with God? Raise your hand". That is Job's position. He does not know why all these things have happened to him. He disagrees with his friends. He looks around and he says the wicked prosper. You tell me the wicked suffer; but I see them doing well! And the righteous suffer. I have not done anything, and this is happening. And Job is confused. He honestly believes that he is right and God is wrong. He looks around, and he says God is the one that makes the oceans, and He makes the mountains, and He controls the universe and the stars and the galaxies, and I disagree with Him. Do you want to go up against Him? Let's take Him to court. Are you going to be a witness against Him? All right, that is Job's problem.

In Chapter 9 verse 2, he says God will overpower me in every attempt I make to substantiate my innocence. Then he pictures a face to face confrontation with God. Verse 11 and 12

"Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him; were He to move past me, I would not perceive Him. Were He to snatch away, who could restrain Him? Who could say to Him, 'What are You doing?'"

Verse 11, He is invisible. He is imperceptible. He is beyond human understanding. In verse 12, He is irresistible. Look at verse 14

"How then can I answer Him, and choose my words before Him? For though I were right, I could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge. If I called and He answered me, I could not believe that He was listening to my voice."

He would not listen to me! I would not have anything to say to Him! He pictures divine omnipotence, and he sees human paralysis. He was just as weak as water, and there was no way he could go up against God. Bildad had said, God is discriminately righteous. Job says, no, he is not. Look at verse 17

"For He bruises me with a tempest. And multiplies my wounds without cause. He will not allow me to get my breath, but saturates me with bitterness. If it is a matter of power, behold, He is the strong one!"

Is He trying to prove who is the strongest? He wins. I admit that.

"And if it is a matter of justice, who can summon Him? Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me; though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty. I am guiltless; I do not take notice of myself; I despise my life."

Now watch. Here is where he refutes Bildad.

"It is all one; therefore I say, He destroys the guiltless and the wicked. If the scourge kills suddenly, He mocks the despair of the innocent. The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, then who is it?"

It gets a lot hotter than this, but Job never strikes out more vehemently against Got than he does right here. He looks at God and declares, Bildad, you say He is righteous? You say He is discriminately righteous and just? Not as I see it. Job says, in verse 24

#### "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked."

As I see it, the earth is just one scene of injustice. The wicked, rule the earth. Rather than rewarding the innocent, I think He punishes the innocent and rewards the wicked. Then Job says, if there is a bias at all, I see it to be against the righteous and for the wicked. Strong language indeed.

When we read the book of Job it is almost impossible to see how God looks at things. The New Testament says, "You have heard of the patience of Job." Isn't that amazing? The New Testament uses Job as an illustration of patience. If it were not for the New Testament, you would never know he was patient. You sure do not find it in the book of Job. After this pathetic and desperate outburst, Job sort of sinks in exhaustion. There is a literary pause. He cools down, and he begins to speak in 9:25

"Now my days are swifter than a runner; They flee away, they see no good. They slip by like reed boats, like an eagle that swoops on its prey."

And he just starts to talk about the shortness of life. It is like one who runs a race. It is like one of these reed boats that used to go down the Nile. It is like an eagle that comes down, sees its prey, swoops it and it is gone. That is life. And then he says, I do not like this – being discouraged, being pessimistic, being broken spirited. He says, I am just laying here and I am complaining all the time.

I would love to lift myself up and be encouraged and to take some hope and to lay hold of some light instead of all this darkness. As a matter of fact, look at verse 27

### "Though I say, 'I will forget my complaint', I will leave off my sad countenance and be cheerful."

As soon as he says I will try to cheer myself up, he remembers again God's resolve to hold him guilty. I get crushed over and over again even though I have not done anything. I try to encourage myself, and then I remember that God is my enemy. I remember that He is not doing what Bildad said He was going to do.

You see, Job has this idea. Bildad, you have a great philosophy. God is discriminately righteous. He judges the wicked and He rewards the righteous. That is how any "just" God would rule His universe! But that is not what is happening. So I conclude He is not a just God. Then he ends chapter 9, verses 30-35, and we see another glimpse of the depths of Job's heart.

"If I should wash myself with snow and cleanse my hands with lye, yet You would plunge me into the pit, and my own clothes would abhor me. For He is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, that we may go to court together. There is no umpire between us, who may lay his hand upon us both."

This idea of the "Umpire", Job 9:33 has been recognized throughout the ages by every commentator to be one of the great Messianic passages in the Old Testament. That is, a picture of Jesus Christ. And here is the idea. Job said I am a man and He is God. There is nobody who can put one hand on man and the other hand on God and bring us together. Of course, you see how the Lord Jesus is pictured by that. He was the God/Man. He was able to put one hand on God and one hand on man because He was God and He was Man. I Timothy 2:5 "For there is but one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus".

Although I believe this is Messianic in the sense that the whole Old Testament is Messianic, I do not think Job had Jesus in mind. I think what Job is saying is this. If, God were man, then we could meet man to man. But as it is, I am having trouble finding an objective judge. When I take God to court, who is going to give a fair ruling? Who is going to be the umpire to stand between us and give a righteous judgment? He said I am guilty before I go to court. I do not care how innocent I am. If I go against God, I am wrong.

That is what he said in chapter 9. Not the cry of an atheist. The opposite is true. He sees Him every place. He is the Ruler of the universe. He had this double consciousness. The greatness of God and the corresponding littleness of

his own self. Job 10 is a prayer. That is what makes it so hot. If he said these things about God to Bildad, that is one thing. But he says these things about God to God, and it is daring.

I used to think the most daring prayer in the Bible was in Habakkuk. In chapter 3 Habakkuk dares to tell God that he disagreed with Him. Oh, I tell you what Job says to God is more daring. Job does something here that is almost shocking. All through the Bible you see God searching man. God coming in with a light, and looking through my heart. Here, Job searches God. In this chapter he is looking for some clue as to why he is going through what he is going through, and so Job dares to search the mind of God. His conclusions are pathetic.

He asks five questions. What I will do is just get the questions before you and not discuss them too much. They are not much to discuss. Then, when we finish we will draw some applications. Chapter 10:1-3, here is the question. Are You enjoying this, God? Do You enjoy seeing the wicked prosper and the righteous squirm. If you look at the margin, you will see how the word is used. The word good. In verse 3

### "Is it right for You indeed to oppress, to reject the labor of Your hands, and to look favorably on the schemes of the wicked?"

That idea "to look favorably" means, "Do You enjoy it?" That is his first question. The second question is in chapter 10: 4–7. Have You made a mistake? Verse 4

#### "Have You eyes of flesh? Or do You see as a man sees?"

"Maybe, God, You made a mistake; You have the wrong guy. Maybe You are righteous and only reward the righteous, but You missed on me. Maybe You saw as man sees, and You did not really see me the right way". Or, he says, "Maybe You are afraid that I will get away. That I am going to live longer than You. Have You made a mistake?" Well, in verse 7, He rules out both of those ideas.

# "According to Your knowledge (he says in Your heart You know I am right, God) I am indeed not guilty. Yet there is no deliverance from Your hand."

I could not escape if I wanted to. Nobody could. Then verses 8-13. What a question this is. Why did You have former compassion on me? That is what he asks. Verses 8-11 he talks about his birth, and he talks about the intricate skill with which God formed him in the womb. Then in chapter 10, verse 12, he talks

about early life. Look at verse 12. It almost looks out of place.

### "You have granted me life and lovingkindness; And Your care has preserved my spirit."

But if you read this in context, here is what he is saying. He is saying You have treated me like a potter treats his vessel. You have given such tenderness, such skill and such wisdom. Why? So that now, You can crush the ornament and destroy it completely. Turn it back to dust? He says I see a strange contradiction. You watched over me in my birth, and in my early life You blessed me pouring out Your goodness. Why did You do that, God? Verse 13

#### "Yet these things You have concealed in Your heart; I know that this is within You."

Here is what he is saying. You gave me a life of blessing first so I could feel this pain more keenly now. You know, if a man is born blind he doesn't miss sight, because he never had it. But if you can see and then you go blind, then that is more painful. Our son was born deaf. He does not miss it; he has never had it; he does not know what it is to hear. If he could hear and then lost his hearing, he would miss it. He says, oh, I see now why You have blessed me. You blessed me all those years so that now, You torment me and I feel it more. Whew, what a question. Why did You have former compassion?

Then verses 14-19. His question is: "Doesn't my moral condition mean anything to You?" You read the three examples he gives there. Verse 14. "If I sin" – The English doesn't explain it but the Hebrew denotes a very small sin. I hate to use the word "little" sin, but that is what he has in mind. If I do some little thing wrong, you still would not acquit me of my guilt? If I am wicked, if the main direction of my life is wrong, woe is me. If I am righteous, what's the difference? I am going to get it anyway. That is Job's idea. It doesn't matter if I sin a little bit or I sin a lot. He says, doesn't my moral condition mean anything to You, God? Verse 19, I like this

#### "I should have been as though I had not been, carried from womb to tomb."

That is what he wanted. He wanted to go from the womb to the tomb. And then he ends up the chapter with his fifth question. Why don't You leave me alone? Do you know what that amounts to? Get out of my life. That's what he is saying.

"Would He not let my few days alone? Withdraw from me that I may have a little cheer before I go."

Look at how hopeless this is – where he is going to go.

"And I shall not return to the land of darkness and deep shadow, the land of utter gloom as darkness itself, of deep shadow without order, and which shines as the darkness."

That is what he looks for. Was he discouraged? Man, he was at the bottom. Are You enjoying this, God? Have You made some mistake that I am the one that is suffering down here? Why did You have former compassion on me? Doesn't a moral condition mean anything to You? It makes no difference if I am righteous or wicked. God, why don't You let me alone and get out of my life? Zophar is listening to this, and he is about to answer. Boy, watch out when he answers.

Those are the facts. You wonder why Job's friends became so intense and so urgent and gave such sharp reviews? This is Job. The cry of a confused man whose experience goes in the opposite direction of his theology. He believed one thing and believed it for years. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." "I know that my Redeemer liveth." And now, listen to him. A Godly man. God looked down and said there is not a man like him on the earth. Upright, pure, fearing God. A holy man of God.

#### Chapter 9 Reading JOB to Know God

Greater Vision and Revelation

In chapters 8 through 10 I find three great principles, the chief of which is this. You have to have a high vision of the Lord. Everything depends on how you see God. The greater your vision of God is, the more accurate your vision of everything around you will be also. Let me ask you a question. Did Job have a high vision of God? Read chapter 9:3-12. Job saw God as the sovereign one in control of everything. The one who made the mountains and controlled the stars! Job had a marvelous theology, but I believe he had a low vision of God. Let me illustrate.

Job's view of God was solid concerning His power, His wisdom, His strength and His sovereignty. But Job did have a problem with the justice of God. He was not too sound on that. He had a problem with the righteousness of God. He had no problem with the power of God, that's what he was afraid of. That is why he was trembling. God is so awesome I cannot fight Him. We are thinking that Job had no trouble understanding the power of God, but trouble with the righteousness of God. If we look at the end of the book we see something different. We would expect the Lord to fix Job's view in regard to justice and righteousness. But do you know what He does? He reveals Himself as the strong one. He shows Himself as the God of creation. He shows how He is sovereign, how He rules the animals. Then, all of a sudden, Job is on his face saying, I repent with dust and ashes. What happened there? Let's take a look.

Let me illustrate it. We are talking about a high vision of the Lord? All right, now watch. Some people, in their brain, have no thought of God, so they have no vision of God. Some people think a little bit about God so they have some thoughts of God. Some people, like Job, have their brain FULL of God. That is all he could talk about! He did not say very nice things, but it was all he could talk about.

Now watch. Did he have a high **vision** of God? No! For this reason. God **fit** in his brain. I do not care what superlatives he used and how big he said God was. Or even that he knew God is in charge of everything from the atom to the Archangel. Big vocabulary and favorable expressions, but God was still confined within his understanding. God was no bigger than Job's brain. God was a small god to him because He was confined to Job's ability to comprehend. That's why you have so many priests, and pastors and scholars with their heads filled with "god info" but wouldn't know Jesus if they ran into Him on the street.

You see, this is the whole need for revelation. The Lord reveals to Job His power because Job only knew of God's awesomeness in a theological way. He never had a revelation of it. You see, what you get by scholarship, study, reading, information, discovery and experience, you do not really have. You do not have anything that God does not give you.

He had some good teaching, and that is the trouble with the world today. They have the right theology. They will give you a creed and a code of ethics. They will say I believe this, I believe that, I believe in the Bible, I believe la, la, la, la, la. They do not have it. Because, it comes from God. And Job had to get it by revelation. Boy, that is one thing I learned. Just like Job I thought I knew God and His attributes but it was in my head. When we lose confidence in our understanding then God opens the eyes of our hearts. Job had to reach a place where God could finally reveal it.

Faith begins where your understanding ends. God is transcendent. He is on the other side of this. I Corinthians 2:9 "That which eye cannot see and ear cannot hear, neither which has entered into the heart of men, the things which God has prepared for those that love Him, He has revealed them to us by His Spirit." That's the revelation. Galatians 1:11-12 bears this out:

"For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ."

That is what Job did not have, and that is why he was so frustrated. He was arguing. He wanted God to fit in his box. "I want to know everything God is doing. I want to know why He is doing it. I want to know when He is doing it. And if He violates any of my principles, if He goes against my ideas, then God is wrong". Whew. A high view of God? He had a low view of God. Just because he said God is in charge of Pleiades and Orion and all the stars, it doesn't mean he had a large view. All right, that is the first thing I see.

The second principle is this; The awful despair that comes from regarding God as your enemy. This is one thing I fear about those who do not believe in eternal security. Now I am not talking about those who deny eternal security as a doctrine, because they are just parrots anyway. Their church teaches that it is not true, and they have heard a bunch of verses and so they parrot them back. I am talking about someone who really in his heart feels like God is against them. I will tell you, man was not made to bear that burden. That will crush a person. That will drive him insane. That is why Job was in such despair. Because he believed with all of his heart that God was his enemy.

I am so glad the opposite of that is true. That we can read in our Bible, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And, "Even when we were enemies,

when we were sinners, Christ died for us." So he is not against us. Oh, my heart goes out to those trapped in this thinking. If you who are reading this think that God is against you, and that one day He will cast your off forever. I am telling you that you don't need Bible verses and you don't need someone to explain how to get around the bad teachings of others. You need a revelation of God as your friend, and that only comes through the Holy Spirit. You need a revelation of the nature of God in the bloody cross of Christ. But God must prepare your heart and frustrate your brain for that to happen. Everything in your life happens with that purpose in mind.

The third thing that I see is; God is bigger than all our principles. Bildad was right. God is discriminately righteous. Rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked. Bildad was dead right. But appearance is deceptive. God is not under the law of time. There are a million and one reasons why God would afflict the righteous and never violate that principle. So God is bigger than all our principles. We think we know something. We spout off some little principle. Oh, you don't know about God? I will tell you about God. We have not begun to know about God. That is one of the things I get when I study Job – how little we know. When I stand up here and try to teach you something, or you stand up and try to teach, we are fools. We have not begun to scratch the surface. The foolishness of God is higher than our highest wisdom. Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding." One verse you could live your whole life by.

So I learned these things about God. I need a revelation. God is my friend – the friend of sinners. God is my "Kinsman Redeemer", and He is bigger than my little theology book and my little ideas and my little concepts. God's love for me is bigger than my principles. He is transcendent. Job is going to see that down the road, and we will see when he sees. Oh, when he gets it by revelation, he really gets it. God is not mad at Job. God is not angry because he uttered these things or because he poured out his heart. God was happy. Job was just being honest. He was just really bearing his naked spirit before God. As a matter of fact, before the end of the book God rebukes his three friends. Job is becoming the man God said he was at the beginning of the book!

I will ask you to turn to Job chapter 11. Now, remember, every time Job speaks, it is with increased vehemence. He is trying to communicate something that he does not know how to put into words – hence the frustration. They are answering what he is saying, not what he is feeling. And so their answer is not the answer because his question is not the question. Job is trying, by this vehemence, to break the crust and to get down to the depths, but the more animated he gets the more defensive they get. Listen to the way he talks about God! Listen to how he accuses God! Listen to his prayer! He must be a wicked man.

And so Zophar speaks. He could not stand the questions that Job threw at Bildad in chapter 10. In Zophar's mind, two things are clear. At this point he was convinced that Job really believed he was innocent. To Zophar, that was an amazing thing. And then the second thing he believed was that God regarded Job as guilty. Now, to Zophar's mind, that was the cause of all this trouble. Here is what Job knows about Job. Here is what God knows about Job. Zophar is convinced that Job is a wicked sinner, but he allows the possibility that Job is naive, that Job does not know that he is a sinner. His argument is; Job, you may not be aware of your sin, but God knows about it. And so the whole argument in chapter 11 is about the knowledge of God, the wisdom of God, the omniscience of God.

In The New American Standard you see a little break there after verse 6 and a little break after verse 12, and it is accurate. Zophar's answer is in three parts. The first six verses, then 7-12, then 13-20. Job said I wish God would come down in person and we could talk this thing out. That is what Job wanted. Let's just get this thing out once and for all. And so, in chapter 11 Zophar says "You don't know what you are asking for". 11:5-6

"But would that God might speak, and open His lips against you, and show you the secrets of wisdom! For sound wisdom has two sides. Know then that God forgets a part of your iniquity."

What does that mean, "That God forgets a part of your iniquity?" Look in the margin, please. In the Hebrew it says, "causes to be forgotten for you". In other words, what Zophar is saying is that God is wiser than you, Job. God allows you to forget what you did wrong. There is sin in your heart but you just do not see it, because you are not as wise as God. God sees your sin. And then in verses 11 and 12

"For He knows false men, and He sees iniquity without investigating. An idiot will become intelligent when the foal of a wild donkey is born a man."

In other words, there is an unbridgeable gulf between a man and a donkey, and there is an unbridgeable gulf between a man and God. And Job, you are acting like a donkey now. If you could only see how much God knows, you would not say you are innocent. You would not say that there is no sin in your heart. And then in verses 7-12 he expounds the wisdom of God. Now, remember, what these guys are saying is not wrong. It is true, but it is not **the truth**. It is true, but it does not answer his problem. You read verses 7-12 in this chapter. Tremendous verses!

"Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea. If He passes by or shuts up, or calls an assembly, who can restrain Him?"

Marvelous verses on the wisdom of God. And then in verses 13-20, Zophar just says, Job, Job, Job, repent and be blessed. Give God the benefit of the doubt. Oh, they are precious verses:

"If you would direct your heart right and spread out your hand to Him, if iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, and do not let wickedness dwell in your tents; Then, indeed, you could lift up your face without moral defect, and you would be steadfast and not fear. For you would forget your trouble."

And on and on. Tremendous section! Filled with wonderful truth! But it does not touch Job's problem. So the first section, Zophar says, "I wish God would come to you". And then he says, "I wish you could see the wisdom of God and how He sees in your heart". And then he says, "Job, repent, turn from your sin".

Zophar took a very harsh approach. Do not forget, now, Job is a Godly man and he is a suffering man, and what they say not only doesn't meet his needs, it actually adds to his suffering. It cuts him deeply; it wounds him. Zophar really shows his youth here. He is proud, he is arrogant, and he is dogmatically disrespectful. Look at verses 1 and 2

#### "Then Zophar the Naamathite answered, shall a multitude of words go unanswered, and a talkative man be acquitted?"

Now, this talkative man, literally, is "a man of lips". In other words, he says what you say, Job, is just with your lips not with your heart. And then in verse 3

#### "Shall your boasts silence men?"

The Hebrew for boasts is lies. Job, you are nothing but a liar.

#### "And shall you scoff and none rebuke?"

That is his opinion, Job is just scoffing at God. Mocking God. And here

comes this little upstart, Zophar. And he comes to Job and says, "Job, your heart is not in it. You are a liar. You are just a mocker." Poor Job. My heart really goes out to him. He is touching problems so deep he cannot even express them. He is a Godly man, longing to trust in the Lord, and his attitude through all of this is, "Though He slay me, yet shall I trust Him." And now he is accused of lip service and lying and scoffing and mocking and harboring secret sins. And most of all, in Zophar's attack he is accused of ignorance of the omniscience of God. Ignorance of the wisdom of God.

Verses 7-12 are wonderful verses on omniscience. Job did not debate those truths. As a matter of fact, Job is insulted that Zophar thought he was ignorant in this area. Job knew those things. Here is an amazing thing. This tickles me a little bit. Job walked with God through the years. He was testified by God before angels that he was righteous, upright, God-fearing, a perfect man on the earth. Then Zophar comes along. This young kid is a little snot. He is just a brat. He comes up to Job and he says, Job, I have got it! You have all these problems, and I know the answer. God is wise! Job says, hey, that is really good. Duhhhh! That is why I think he wrote in chapter 12:2

#### "Truly then you are the people, and with you wisdom will die!"

That is what Job's response was. Oh, that is so wise, Zophar! You come up and tell me that God knows more than I do. What do you think I am? Some kind of a Kindergarten kid? I know God knows more than I do! But he thinks he has some big answer, and comes up with the omniscience of God. And he says, "I've got it, Job!" This is what we have been missing! God knows!" And Job says, "Yeah, and wisdom will die with you. When you die, it is all over for us. Good ideas die with you". 12:3

#### "But I have intelligence as well as you; I am not inferior to you. And who does not know such things as these?"

Zophar, what are you offering? A,B,C's. I know all this! This debate of Zophar stung Job very deeply because it implied that he knew nothing about God, even the most basics. I don't think Job could have been cut more deeply than to be this misunderstood as an ungodly man. Verse 4

### "I am a joke to my friends, the one who called on God and He answered him; The just and blameless man is a joke."

I love the Lord! I cling to the Lord! I trust in the Lord! I have committed my family to the Lord. I am not an ungodly man, and now I have become a joke to you, and you think I am despising the Lord. As if Job did not know that God was wise. He knew it more than these three miserable comforters. You look at

"With Him are wisdom and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding. Behold, He tears down, and it cannot be rebuilt; He imprisons a man, and there can be no release. Behold, He restrains the waters, and they dry up; And He sends them out, and they inundate the earth. With Him are strength and sound wisdom, the misled and the misleader belong to Him."

And he goes on describing how tremendous God is. He forgot more about God's wisdom then Zophar ever knew. Job says, "You want some wisdom? I will give you some". Chapter 13, verse 5 "O that you would be completely silent, and that it would become your wisdom." Shut up!!!! You want to be wise, then shut your mouth. You do not know anything, Zophar. Coming up with all these bright ideas.

Job gets pretty hot in his response to Zophar, because Zophar is just skimming the surface. He is quoting what he was taught in Sunday School, and Job calls it in 13:12 "Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes, your defenses are defenses of clay." You are just quoting some pious platitudes you heard. This is very instructive. The mysteries of life. Somebody has a problem. It is so easy to give them the answer, right? Trust in the Lord! Look to Jesus! It is so easy to throw out the answers, and never really have the answer from God to meet the answer of the heart. And that is what Zophar was doing. He was just spouting off what he learned in theological school. He had all the right answers and all the platitudes. And Job said, "You have proverbs of ashes," because you do not know what you are talking about. Do you want to be wise, Zophar? Then I would shut up for about twenty-five years until you learn something. Until you get dry behind the ears, until you learn to change your diaper.

Zophar had dragged Job before God and said you are guilty of secret sins. Now Job does the same thing to Zophar. In chapter 13 he drags Zophar before God, and says, "How are you going to feel when you have to stand before God and God accuses you of trying to defend Him?" He says, "You do not have to defend God. If God has an issue with me, God will show me. Let God defend God, Zophar. You do not have to do that". I think verse 15 would be beautiful anywhere in the Bible, but it is marvelous as an answer to Zophar.

"Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.

Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him."

He says I do not care what you guys accuse me of, I do not care what you think about secret sins and that I am harboring some wickedness in my heart.

Whatever God does is right. It is not going to change my faith. "Though He slay me, I will trust Him." Boy, it is a marvelous thing for him to say that at this point in the book. He said, yet I am going to argue with Him. I want to know some answers. Why has God allowed this in my life? You see, that is not a bad question to ask. Over and over again, people say do not ask why. I will tell you to ask why! God gives you the answer why in Job.

It is always the same answer, but you better ask why. It is because He wants you to know Him as El Shaddai, the God who is **more** than enough. That's why God brings you low. That's why God wipes out your finances and destroys your job and removes all your false foundations. He pulls out the rug and brings you to your wit's end, confuses you to pieces, allows the children to go haywire. God allows all those things. Touches your body. Strikes you down. Breaks your leg. In order that you might see Him, and know Him as the God who is more than enough, El Shaddai. And so Job answers Zophar. Verses 20-22 of Chapter 13:

"Only two things do not do to me, then I will not hide from Your face: Remove Your hand from me, and let not the dread of You terrify me. Then call, and I will answer; Or let me speak, then reply to me."

He said I only want two things, God. Give me a little relief from this suffering, and then come down and let's talk. Now, you know that great Messianic verse in chapter 9 where he says "There is not an umpire between us that would lay his hand upon us both?" I am sure that can apply to Christ, but in the context he is not talking about Jesus. What Job is saying is that he is frustrated. He said if God were a man or if I were God we could talk. I love Him; I trust Him; I am going to cling to Him. I have given my family to Him. I will never change. I will trust Him though He slay me, but I want to talk to Him. I want to know why. If there is sin in my heart I will confess it. He is just being honest; he is trying to bare his heart. Way down deep he is crying out for a new birth and a Savior, which, at the end of the book, he finally gets. So the cry of his heart – you read verses 23-28 – these are the questions that still bother him.

"How many are my iniquities and sins? Make known to me my rebellion and my sin. Why do You hide Your face and consider me Your enemy? Will You cause a driven leaf to tremble? or will You pursue the dry chaff?"

He said, "I am wiped out, Lord. I am low; I have surrendered. What more do You want? Are You going to drive me? I am already driven. Are You going to knock me down? I am laying on my face. I cannot get any lower. Please meet with me, talk to me, tell me what is wrong. Why am I going through this?"

But God's time is not yet. The cry of Job's heart is unanswered. Eliphaz gave him no answer, Bildad gave him no answer, Zophar gave him no answer and God gave him no answer. In chapter 15 Job is left still crying out, and it starts again. Eliphaz comes up with another bright idea, and it is worse than all the rest, and Job responds and makes a terrible mistake in chapter 17. Bildad pounces on it in chapter 18. Job makes another terrible mistake in chapter 19, and Zophar jumps on that.

And then one day the dawn breaks, and God who never did this before, shocks His favorite son. Job is crying out in his bedroom, "If God will only come down and talk to me" and all of a sudden, guess what? There He was!!! He said, "Okay Job, let's talk!"

### Chapter 10 Reading JOB to Know God

Getting to Job's Heart

Now, I realize that the bulk of commentators point out the self-righteousness of Job. On the surface it certainly looks like he is. But if you get into the spirit of the book, I do not believe self-righteousness was his real problem. Now, of course, Job was a sinner, as all men are sinners. He was proud, as all men are proud. He was unbelieving, as all men are unbelieving. He was self-righteous, as all of us are self-righteous. I do not believe, as I once did, that God allowed all this in Job's life to take out that deep, deep, rooted sin of self-righteousness. Job was really honest. Let me give you an illustration.

If I say I am faithful to my wife, and I have no eyes for any other woman. That I love her exclusively, and I never desire another relationship. Is that self-righteousness? I don't think so. That is my real heart. That is how I feel inside; that is the truth. By saying I am true to my wife, I am not denying the propensities of my wicked heart. I know the potential that is there. I have seen some Godly men fall. I am not saying that my heart is untouchable. But I am saying that I am true to my wife. I believe that is what Job was saying. He is not saying that he is perfect. He is saying, I have been true to the Lord. My heart is right. I have not rebelled against God. My life is for Him. I do not think he is being self-righteous. I think he is being honest.

Okay, let's turn then to chapter 15. Eliphaz is the first to speak. Eliphaz means "God is gold." Unfortunately he does not value the Lord like his name implies. Eliphaz is a descendant from Esau, and that shows in his character. Even though Eliphaz is the oldest, most dignified and most considerate of all of Job's friends, this cycle of debates is going to illustrate that he is greatly annoyed.

Now remember the chief problem was that Job did not accurately express the depth of his anguish. Now since the three comforters heard only what came out of Job's mouth, these debates have been going around in circles. They were answering his lips, but not his heart. The more he tried to explain, the deeper he dug a hole. Did you ever get into a spot where the more you explained something, the worse it sounded? Well, that is how it went with Job. The more he tries to explain, the more his lips sound rebellious. Eliphaz is hot, because of what he thinks is in Job's heart. Let me illustrate it. Eliphaz is annoyed at two main things as he begins this first speech. He is annoyed at the fact that Job is irreverent. 15: 4,12 and13

"Indeed, you do away with reverence and hinder meditation

# before God. Why does your heart carry you away? And why do your eyes flash, that you should turn your spirit against God and allow such words to go out of your mouth?"

And so Eliphaz says, you are an irreligious, irreverent person. Don't you regard God? Aren't you afraid of Him? Why are you so rebellious? He is also angry at the fact that Job will not admit that he is a sinner. You are hiding your sin. You are a hypocrite, Job. Look at verse 5

# "For your guilt teaches your mouth, and you choose the language of the crafty."

Now, in the last cycle of debates, Job suggested that these men were talking through their hats. They had nothing to offer. I believe if you read chapter 15 you will see that Eliphaz' feelings got a little hurt. His pride was wounded. After all, he was the eldest, and experience is supposed to be the best teacher. And Job dared to call his wisdom hot air? 15:9-10

"What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that we do not? Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, older than your father."

Eliphaz had the idea that he and his two buddies were the mouthpieces of God. Look at verse 11

# "Are the consolations of God too small for you, even the word spoken gently with you?"

Job, we did not come here for this. We came here to give you the consolations of God. We have been telling you God's will. We have been trying to be nice to you and explain to you that you are a sinner, and you are getting mad at us. Our words are the consolations of God. It was shocking to Eliphaz to think that Job had contempt for their wisdom. The very idea, Job! This young upstart! Telling us gray-haired old veterans. And so he gets really sarcastic here. Look at verses 7 and 8

# "Were you the first man to be born, (Are you Adam?) Or were you brought forth before the hills? Do you hear the secret counsel of God, and limit wisdom to yourself?"

Oh, tell us, Job. Are you the first one born? Are you Adam? When God was in the counsel of declaring what He was going to do, were you behind the scenes listening to Him? But after his fluffed up feathers get cooled down a little then he gets down to his narrow argument. Eliphaz makes it plain that what he is about to say is not his own bright idea. This is the talk of the ancestors. This is

"I will tell you, listen to me; and what I have seen I will also declare; What wise men have told, and have not concealed from their fathers, to whom alone the land was given, and no alien passed among them."

In other words, Job, I am going to tell you something, and I did not make it up. This is wisdom, and it is from the ancestors. They had this forever, and no stranger came in and diluted the truth. You have heard it before. The wicked suffer, Job, and you are suffering. Therefore, ergo, you are wicked. His argument is basically that, but he divides it up into three facts. First he says, the conscience of the wicked is troubled every day. Verse 20 and 21

"The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, and numbered are the years stored up for the ruthless. Sounds of terror are in his ears; While at peace the destroyer comes upon him."

Job, the wicked have a guilty conscience. Verse 24

"Distress and anguish terrify him, they overpower him like a king ready for the attack. Because he has stretched out his hand against God and conducts himself arrogantly against the Almighty."

And then he says the wicked always come to poverty. Verse 28

"He has lived in desolate cities, in houses no one would inhabit, which are destined to become ruins. He will not become rich, nor will his wealth endure; And his grain will not bend down to the ground. He will not escape from darkness; The flame will wither his shoots."

Take a look at your life, Job. That is what happens to the wicked. And then in verse 32 through 34, he says the wicked always die a premature death, and Job, you are a dying man. Verse 32

"It will be accomplished before his time, and his palm branch will not be green. He will drop off his unripe grape like the vine, and cast off his flower like the olive tree. For the company of the godless is barren, and fire consumes the tents of the corrupt. They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity, and their mind prepares deception."

Well, Job responds to Bildad's accusation - you are wicked, Job, you are

very wicked – in chapters 16 and 17. Since he has already answered that old argument proposed by Eliphaz, he sort of ignores it this time. He thinks it is useless listening to these guys. He is getting weary of empty speeches. He reminds them of that in verse 2 and 3

"I have heard many such things; Sorry comforters are you all. Is there no limit to windy words? Or what plagues you that you answer?"

You see, Job is sort of on the spot now. Eliphaz says the wicked have a guilty conscience. Job says my conscience is not guilty. Eliphaz said the wicked lose all their wealth, and Job says I have lost my wealth. Eliphaz says the wicked die. They are coming to a premature death, and Job is dying. And so Job says it is senseless to try to reconcile before these fellows. And besides, even if he could successfully answer Eliphaz' argument, his heart would still have empty spaces. He is not satisfied because his problem is deeper than that. They are giving him theology, doctrine, creed. Job did not need a dissertation on those things. His perplexity was that his best friend, God, turned against him for no apparent reason. And this God, whom he trusted, whom he served, and the fact is, whom he loved, had for some reason placed Job between the hammer and the anvil, and Job did not know why. Chapter 16: 7–16

"But now He has exhausted me; You have laid waste all my company."

You notice, this is a prayer now. He is not saying to Bildad, "He has", he is saying to God, "You have". He is praying.

"You have shriveled me up, it has become a witness; And my leanness rises up against me, it testifies to my face."

Then he turns to Bildad and says:

"His anger has torn me and hunted me down, He has gnashed at me with His teeth; My adversary glares at me. They have gaped at me with their mouth, they have slapped me on the cheek with contempt; They have massed themselves against me. God hands me over to ruffians and tosses me into the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, but He shattered me, and He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to pieces; He has also set me up as His target. His arrows surround me. Without mercy He splits my kidneys open; He pours out my gall on the ground. He breaks through me with breach after breach; He runs at me like a

warrior. I have sewed sackcloth over my skin and thrust my horn in the dust. My face is flushed from weeping, and deep darkness is on my eyelids; Although there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure."

God has come against me. If He would only tell me why. Job's frustration was that he was alone on the earth. God had abandoned him, and God had withheld wisdom from these guys so that they also alienated him. Job knows in his heart he is right. He refuses to let go of the one thing he has left, innocence. He was finding it increasingly hopeless to call upon God. Do you see his frustration? By the end of chapter 16 and the beginning of chapter 17, Job has thrown in the towel. He is ready to die. Chapter 17:1 and 2

"My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished, the grave is ready for me. Surely mockers are with me, and my eye gazes on their provocation."

Remember what Proverbs 17:22 says about a broken spirit. It says, "A broken spirit drieth up the bones." And, boy, does it ever! You get somebody whose spirit is broken and you have a person that is ready to die. Job holds tenaciously to the belief that his integrity is righteousness. He has this assurance that his righteousness will not be hidden forever. His innocent blood will never stop crying to God. His blood is going to appeal to God until the day a righteous God finally vindicates him and his blood finds a response. Look at 16: verse 18 and 19

"O earth, do not cover my blood, and let there be no resting place for my cry. Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my advocate is on high."

It is sort of a pathetic scene. Job feels abandoned, and he does not know why. God has rejected him, and man has rejected him, and he has finally come to the place where he says I know I am going to die, but I am innocent. And one day my blood will cry out and God will vindicate me. It is a pathetic scene. Chapter 16, verse 20. Job lifts his tear filled eyes to God.

#### "My friends are my scoffers; My eye weeps to God."

He looks up to the God that he thinks is unjustly bringing him to death, but he has a hope that even after he is dead and after worms destroy his body, he will be vindicated. One day everyone will know that he was right. He does not have any hope for this life. Look at chapter 17:10-16

"But come again all of you now, for I do not find a wise man

among you. My days are past, my plans are torn apart, even the wishes of my heart. They make night into day, saying, the light is near, in the presence of darkness. If I look for Sheol as my home, I make my bed in the darkness; If I call to the pit, 'You are my father'; To the worm, 'my mother and my sister'; Where now is my hope? And who regards my hope? Will it go down with me to Sheol? Shall we together go down into the dust?"

# "Nevertheless the righteous will hold to his way, and he who has clean hands will grow stronger and stronger."

And Job says, I knew you would understand this, gentlemen. I know your theology. The wicked suffer. I am suffering. Therefore, I am wicked. I reject your theology. I cannot explain it. I cannot convince you of it. I know I have done nothing. I know I am not wicked. I know I am right. My prayer is pure. I know what has come upon me has come from God. I have cried out for Him to say why. I have called upon Him to come and face me like a man, and He refuses to listen. And so I have one choice. Since God is too strong for me, I must die. And die I will. But I am going to go into the grave saying I am right. And one day I have the assurance that God, who is Holy, will vindicate me somehow.

That is how Job feels. He feels like that is going to end his discussion. The argument is ended. He sinks back into his bed, and he says it is all over. Job feels like a man who has lost his wife. They are arguing, why did she leave? He says, "I don't care why she left! She is gone; that is what bothers me. You are not going to help me by telling me why". And so he feels like that's the end of it. He has already closed the argument. But, these good physicians will not let it lie. Bildad now has to add his two cents. Job keeps trying to quit, and they keep draggggging him back in. In Chapter 18 Job speaks in ruthless severity. Job has given up. His spirit is broken. He doesn't want to argue anymore. He doesn't want to fight God. He doesn't want to fight man. He hopes to die and somehow be vindicated. But Bildad will not let it end. His pride is hurt. Chapter 18, verse 3

#### "Why are we regarded as beasts, as stupid in your eyes?"

That is the only thing that is bothering him. You will not accept my counsel. He thinks Job is expecting too much from God. Verse 4

# "O you who tear yourself in your anger; For your sake is the earth to be abandoned, or the rock to be moved from its place?"

In other words, Bildad is saying God has established certain

unchangeable laws and He is not going to change them for you. And what according to Bildad is God's unchangeable law? Here we go again. The wicked suffer. You suffer. Therefore, you are wicked. I will not bore you with Bildad's speech. I will take the terminal points to illustrate it. Chapter 18, verse 5

#### "Indeed, the light of the wicked goes out."

And then he describes the wicked. And then the last verse, 21

# "Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him who does not know God."

In other words, Bildad has done exactly what everyone before him has done, except he says, Job, God is not going to change His plan for you. And so, whether he likes it or not, Job is back in the debate. He answers Bildad in chapter 19. I do not think Bildad appreciated the answer. His answer goes something like this. Okay, says Job to Bildad, let's take your unchanging principle of God – the wicked suffer, I am suffering, therefore I am wicked. Here is how it comes across to me. The wicked suffer. I suffer. I am innocent. Therefore, verse 6

### "Know then that God has wronged me and has closed His net around me."

God goofed. The principle is not true. The wicked suffer. I suffer. I am innocent. Therefore, there is only one conclusion, and that is God is to be blamed. Job is angry and frustrated with Bildad. He is deeply pained that they think he is a hypocrite harboring some sin in his life, and he knows it is futile to keep explaining his position, and besides, his real problem is too deep to express. All Job wants is an answer from God. He knows God is real, and he knows God is up there, and he knows God is listening. But God will not answer! Look at verse 7

"Behold, I cry, 'Violence!' but I get no answer; I shout for help, but there is no justice. He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass, and He has put darkness on my paths. He has stripped my honor from me and removed the crown from my head. He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone; and He has uprooted my hope like a tree. He has also kindled His anger against me and considered me as His enemy. His troops come together, and build up their way against me and camp around my tent."

He does not understand why God gives him the deaf ear. Job says, only God can solve my problem, not you. I only want one thing from you men and it

"Pity me, pity me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has struck me."

He says, all I want from you is a little pity. How about some understanding. Maybe a little sympathy. I am not asking you to help me out of my problem. There is only one who can do that. And then he sinks back again in despair, and in verse 23 through 29 he says, "What's the use?"

"Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! That with an iron stylus and lead they were engraved in the rock forever! As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives."

You see he believes in God with all his heart. He says, "Though He slay me, I will trust Him!" But he expects to die. He says:

"As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God: Whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!

He says, I know that I will be vindicated someday even if it is after this life. Job is stubborn. He will not yield. And so Zophar says I am going to add some light to all of this. Like the others, Zophar is also irritated. Job ended his discussion with Bildad with this suggestion. Verse 29

"Then be afraid of the sword for yourselves, for wrath brings the punishment of the sword, so that you may know there is judgment."

Job ended his answer to Bildad with a suggestion that God might strike them down the way He struck him. And old Zophar did not like that insinuation because that would make him a sufferer and a sinner. Zophar's great contribution to this confusion can be summarized in these words. Chapter 20, verse 5,8 and 23

"That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the godless momentary?

"He flies away like a dream, and they cannot find him."

"When he fills his belly, God will send His fierce anger on him and will rain it on him while he is eating."

In other words, nothing new. The wicked suffer. Look at verse 29

"This is the wicked man's portion from God, even the heritage decreed to him by God."

These guys won't quit. Since you dragged me back into the argument, okay, I will try to explain. Chapter 21:3

"Bear with me that I may speak; Then after I have spoken, you may mock."

All right, he says, I will try again. And then Job gives an unanswerable observation. It is the beginning of shutting their mouths when he says this. Chapter 21:7. He said, all right, you guys, you have told me how the wicked suffer. I have heard that until it is coming out my ears.

"Why do the wicked still live, continue on, also become very powerful? Their descendants are established with them in their sight, and their offspring before their eyes, their houses are safe from fear, and the rod of God is not on them. His ox mates without fail; His cow calves and does not abort. They send forth their little ones like the flock, and their children skip about. They sing to the timbrel and harp and rejoice at the sound of the flute. They spend their days in prosperity, and suddenly they go down to Sheol.

They say to God, 'Depart from us! We do not even desire the knowledge of Your ways. Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him, and what would we gain if we entreat Him?' Behold, their prosperity is not in their hand; The counsel of the wicked is far from me. How often is the lamp of the wicked put out, or does their calamity fall on them? Does God apportion destruction in His anger? Are they as straw before the wind, and like chaff which the storm carries away? You say, 'God stores away a man's iniquity for his sons.' Let God repay him so that he may know it. Let his own eyes see his decay." Etc. Etc.

Job says, "Really? Do the wicked suffer? Tell me about it. I have some wicked neighbors, and they are not suffering. I know a lot of wicked people that do not suffer. God cuts them off? The wicked are always poor and the wicked are always diseased?" He says, "Where did you get that idea?" This is his answer to them.

Job does not deny that the wicked are going to be punished. Verse 30,

"The wicked are reserved for the day of calamity." He knows, the wicked are going to be punished one day. And so the second cycle of debates ends. They cannot answer Job's logic. Their whole argument has gone up in smoke.

Let's look at the facts of the third debate. This is the heaviest siege of all. It goes from chapters 22-31. This time there are no innuendos, no insinuations, and no vague metaphors. Eliphaz begins, chapter 22:5

"To the weary you have given no water to drink, and from the hungry you have withheld bread. But the earth belongs to the mighty man, and the honorable man dwells in it.

You have sent widows away empty, and the strength of the orphans has been crushed. Therefore snares surround you, and sudden dread terrifies you, or darkness, so that you cannot see and an abundance of water covers you."

Oh, how this must have broken the heart of Job. To hear these things from Eliphaz, his former friend. He comes right out and says you have crushed the orphan and you have turned away the widow and he begins to name sins. You talk about judging a man's heart. Eliphaz says I do not care what you observed about the prosperity of the wicked, it is not true. The principle remains. It looks like in verses 12 through 20 he says I am even going to hold God to that principle. And his conclusion is, verse 21 "*Yield now and be at peace with Him.*" You had better repent. Then he goes back to the same old argument. The wicked suffer. You are suffering. Isn't it amazing how blind people can be?

Job is a lot more rational than Eliphaz was, and that is illustrated in his response in chapters 23 and 24. Again, he first expresses the depths of his heart. He does not want answers; he wants God. Chapter 23:3

"Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His seat! I would present my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would learn the words which He would answer, and perceive what He would say to me. Would He contend with me by the greatness of His power? No, surely He would pay attention to me. There the upright would reason with Him; And I would be delivered forever from my Judge".

"Behold, I go forward but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; When He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him."

Do you see what Job is saying? Oh, why won't He listen? Why won't

### "But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

What a marvelous verse. Job knows there is a reason! He is not rebelling against that. It is the perplexity in his heart. He is not crying because he lost his children or his gold or his cattle or his houses or even his health. He is not complaining about the physical suffering. He is complaining because God is gone and he does not know where to find Him. He knows he cannot resist the Lord. Verse 13

"But He is unique and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, that He does. For He performs what is appointed for me, and many such decrees are with Him."

This is the mystery of providence. Let me just digress from Job for a moment here. As a matter of fact, in my study of Luke I found an interesting verse. Turn to Luke 13 just for a moment where Jesus gave this wonderful illustration. Luke 13, beginning at verse 1: "Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate?" Verse 4: "Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?

Why did that tower fall and kill those eighteen people? Because they were more wicked? Jesus says, "I tell you no." Why does that airplane crash? That God would have judgment on those that were in it? Jesus said, "I tell you no." Matthew 5:45 says, "He causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and He sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

God has established certain laws of nature. He can change them, but He seldom does. If anyone, whether they are Christian or non-Christian, violates those laws they are going to be hurt. Fire, gravity, sea currents, exposure. These are laws of God. God does not exempt His children from suffering. Recently,

you remember down South there was a Bible school. There was a dam, and the dam broke. God did not stop that water just because a Bible school was in front of that dam, and many people lost their lives.

Here is what God does without violating the free will. Someone might choose to build under that dam or stand under that tower or get on that airplane. Someone drives their car and gets hit by a drunk driver. Someone else gets cancer or some other disease. Here is what God does. What part does God have in it? God rules and overrules. "All things work together for good". He changes the curse into a blessing. He turns it around for good. He uses those things to perform His own will. He works out His purposes. But we are not puppets. We are not marionettes. He is not pulling strings. People are not run by remote control. He is not guiding us that way. Romans 8:28 is true. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Christians love to quote that scripture and hold on to it as if it could reverse some bad experience they're going through. But as often is the case they fail to read one more verse which brings light and puts into context the meaning in God's Kingdom and purpose. Romans 8:29

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

All things work together bringing us into the likeness of the "Image of His Son" Not to make you healthy, wealthy and wise in this earth. But to fulfill God's desire for you. His purpose is to have many sons and daughters and a Bride for His son. Material blessings fall on the just and on the unjust, and the wicked sometime are blessed because God has reserved the day of judgment for them. And curses fall on the righteous to conform them to the image of His Son.

Anyway, back to Job. Bildad must speak once more. It is a short chapter, but he has to get in the last word, and here is what it boils down to. I am talking about chapter 25. You can see how short it is. Job, I cannot answer your argument, but I still think you are a dirty sinner. That is his argument. Then Job gives one of the longest of his discourses – chapter 26 through 31. Now that everyone has shut up – the debates are over – he gets a little softer, and he says I have been asking you about big things and I know you cannot answer. Only God can answer those. But I have presented some problems and you could not even answer them. So he says let me answer the surface things first of all. First of all, he says, verses 5-14 of chapter 26, I have a large view of God. Boy, you begin to read that description of God, and he really does. It is probably larger than Bildad's, Zophar's and Eliphaz's put together. Chapter 27:1 - 6

"As God lives, who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, who has embittered my soul, for as long as life is in me, and the breath of God is in my nostrils, my lips certainly will not

speak unjustly, nor will my tongue mutter deceit. Far be it from me that I should declare you right; Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go. My heart does not reproach any of my days."

He says, I have a high view of God, and I do not understand it all but I know this. I have not sinned. Verse 11

"I will instruct you in the power of God; What is with the Almighty I will not conceal."

You say the wicked do not get rich. Here is what I say. Verse 14

"Though his sons are many, they are destined for the sword; and his descendants will not be satisfied with bread."

Oh, they will get rich, but they will not be satisfied with their riches.

"His survivors will be buried because of the plague, and their widows will not be able to weep. Though he piles up silver like dust (he will get rich) and prepares garments as plentiful as the clay, (he will get rich) He may prepare it, but the just will wear it and the innocent will divide the silver.

They talked about physical things. Chapter 28:1-11. Do you want to see how smart Job is? We will not take time to read this, but boy, does he have a knowledge of geology. He said you have been talking about gold, silver, riches and wealth. I will tell you about it. I know more about it than you do. He goes on to illustrate it in the first eleven verses. But then he says I am not talking about gold and silver and being rich and not being rich. I do not care about losing my money. I am not complaining about my "crosses and my losses". Verse 12 "Where can wisdom be found?" That is what I am after. Verse 14

"The deep says, 'It is not in me'; And the sea says, 'It is not with me.' Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, nor can silver be weighed as its price. It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx, or sapphire. Gold or glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for articles of fine gold. Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned; And the acquisition of wisdom is above that of pearls. The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold."

He says all of you have been talking about gold, and the rich are poor,

and the righteous are rich. I am not talking about gold. Gold cannot buy wisdom! I know I lost my money, and I know I lost my house, and I know I lost my kids and I lost my health, but there is something deeper than that. That is what my heart cries out for! I want wisdom, and you do not buy that with silver and gold.

He says in verse 23-28, I know He knows. And then he sinks into his final despair, chapter 29 he reminisces. Oh, I remember when I was walking with God. In chapter 30 he says, but look at me now. In chapter 31 he says, there has been no reason for this, no reason that I know of. Look at verse 35 of chapter 31. This is his final sigh now. The arguments are over.

"Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; Let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written, Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, I would bind it to myself like a crown. I would declare to Him the number of my steps; Like a prince I would approach Him."

If only God would come out of hiding! I would come right up before Him, and I would say, "Lord, here I am. You know my heart; You know me inside out. Why have You allowed this in my life? I know it is not because I have sinned." Chapter 32, verse 1

"Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes."

The debates are ended, and Job sinks back on his pillow waiting for only one thing – death.

# Chapter 11 Reading JOB to Know God

Elihu Speaks

Job chapter 32 brings us the mysterious fourth man known as Elihu. Who was Elihu? His name in Hebrew means "The God of him", and he is quite impressive. He is a man of deep spiritual character. He is the fourth friend of Job. He appears suddenly with no previous mention and has a Christ like feel to him. In order to illustrate what kind of a man he was, let me do it in principles and illustrate it with specific verses. I find three characteristics in Elihu as we look in Job 32. First of all, he was a man who was filled with righteous indignation and holy anger. Chapter 32: 1 - 3

"Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. But the anger of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram burned; against Job his anger burned because he justified himself before God. And his anger burned against his three friends because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job."

All anger is not sin. According to Ephesians 4:26, "Be angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath" God tells you to be angry without sinning. Of course, the simplest way to do that is to be angry at sin. Elihu was burning in his heart against error. He had to speak. Look at verses 17 through 20

"I too will answer my share, I also will tell my opinion. For I am full of words; The spirit within me constrains me. Behold, my belly is like unvented wine, like new wineskins it is about to burst. Let me speak that I may get relief; Let me open my lips and answer."

He had an inward necessity. He said I have got to speak or I am going to bust. I have seen all of these errors. These friends are condemning Job. Job is condemning God. I can't take any more. I have to speak. That is Elihu. Burning with righteous indignation. And then he was a humble man. Look at chapter 32 beginning at verse 4

"Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were years older than he. And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of the three men his anger burned. So Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite spoke out and said,

'I am young in years and you are old; Therefore I was shy and afraid to tell you what I think. I thought age should speak, and increased years should teach wisdom. But it is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding. The abundant in years may not be wise, nor may elders understand justice. So I say, 'Listen to me, I too will tell what I think.'"

Here is a man that respected age. He listened. A humble man that is conscious of his own youth and immaturity. Look at verse 11

"Behold, I waited for your words, I listened to your reasonings, while you pondered what to say. I even paid close attention to you; Indeed, there was no one who refuted Job, not one of you who answered his words.

Do not say, 'We have found wisdom; God will rout him, not man.' For he has not arranged his words against me, nor will I reply to him with your arguments."

And so the lesson is this. Speak only when you must. When it is a heavenly burden inside of you. When you have to talk because something is wrong. And like Elihu when you have a word from God. The old are not always wise. It is what God speaks that matters. I think He has spoken to me and I have something to say, and I will not reply with their arguments. I have something new to say. I can add to this situation.

And so Elihu was not a respecter of persons. He was impartial. He does not justify Job, although he would like to. Neither does he suspect and condemn him. He speaks his mind and he has no fear and no favor for any man. Now look at chapter 32, verse 21

"Let me now be partial to no one, nor flatter any man.

For I do not know how to flatter, else my Maker would soon take me away."

And so we have these characteristics. He is zealous, filled with righteous indignation. He is a humble man. Waiting for everyone to get done, and that was a long time, because they went through three cycles and he never said a word. When they were all done and all silent, then he stood up and he said I have something to add, and I think it's from God. I waited until you were all finished. I listened carefully. I weighed your arguments, and what I am going to say you do not have to fear because I am not going to try to get on Job's side and I am not going to try to get on your side. I am going to say what I have from God. I will be partial to no man. I am not afraid of anybody, and I am not trying to win

anybody's approval. That is the kind of man he was.

Before I suggest the outline to summarize the content of his speeches, let me show you how Elihu took a forward step. Now do not forget, this is the message of the whole book. He took a forward step towards the full answer. The **full** answer is **God** Himself. Elihu does not come up with God Himself, but he points in that direction.

I believe the chief emphasis of each speaker so far has been this. I think it is clear to say that Job, through this whole thing, was **problem** centered. Now some people are problem centered in a surface way. I do not believe Job was problem centered in a **surface** way. His river flowed a little deeper than that. I think I would be problem centered in a surface way, but Job was not. You don't hear Job complaining about losing his house or his children. Not one time does he mention the fact that he lost his gold or he lost his job or his farm or even the companionship of his life partner. He does not mention failing health, because his problem is deeper than that.

If I'm sick for a day I have enough table conversation to carry me through about a month, because I'm problem centered. My natural heart is always about my kids, my job, my bills, the high prices I have to pay, my health, and my taxes, etc., etc., etc.

Job saw a deeper problem than that, but he is still looking at the problem. It is not more spiritual, but it sounds more spiritual. Why has God afflicted me? What have I done? Why me? I am innocent. I do not deserve this. It is not right that God should do it. Why doesn't he come out as a man and debate with me? If I have sinned, why doesn't He bring it to the surface so I can confess it? And so Job is centered on the problem.

Now on the other hand the three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar are **solution** centered. They have their sites on the explanation. They are going to clarify things for Job. Let us solve your problem for you. We know what's going on. We know all about God. We know everything He is going to do. We know why He has afflicted you. You have sinned. You are wicked. And now you are playing the hypocrite and you are trying to hide it. (Ever have people like this in your life?)

I believe it is right to say that Elihu takes a forward step in this regard. He is not problem centered, and he is not solution centered. He is **God** centered. He is more concerned with how they approach the thing than with the solution itself. He suggests another possibility. Here is his new information. Job, you

are not necessarily suffering for sin. He did not rule it out. You are suffering for your own good. You see, Job's friends said all suffering is punitive – punishment. Elihu said, no, it is not. Some of it is designed to **purify**, to make you holy, like pruning in the New Testament (John 15). This is not the full answer, as we will see, but it is a tremendous forward step. Let me illustrate in chapters 32-37 – how he gives this answer that suffering is to teach and to instruct you. Look at 33:17 and 18

"That He may turn aside from his conduct, and keep man from pride; He keeps back his soul from the pit, and his life from passing over into Sheol."

Suffering is to deliver you from pride and to bring your soul back, he said. In other words, if I never had trials in my life I would be headed for the pit, but God brings trials to bring me back from the pit. David had that same idea when he wrote Psalm 119:67, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept Thy word." Affliction is designed to keep you on the path. Chapter 33:29 and 30

"Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men, to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of life."

Again not punitive – remedial. God has a greater purpose in all of this. Look at chapter 34, verse 26

"He strikes them like the wicked in a public place, because they turned aside from following Him, and had no regard for any of His ways so that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him, that He might hear the cry of the afflicted."

In other words, he lets the wicked oppress the righteous because it makes the righteous cry to Him, and He likes that. We read this in Exodus when Israel is captive in Egypt –. The Bible says the Egyptians made their lives bitter. Exodus 2:23 says:

"And the sons of Israel sighed because of their bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning."

God allows us to be crushed because that drives us to Him. Anything that drives us to Him is redemptive. I read a sermon one time by Spurgeon, and he has a very graphic way of describing things. He said, "Every Christian will learn to kiss the wave that dashes him on the Rock of Ages." What a picture! And then he went on to say, "There is a sweetness with Christ in bitterness, not

found in honey. There is a calm with Christ in a storm, that is not found in peace." Did you ever experience anything like that? You see, these are the ways of God. That is what he is saying in chapter 34:26-28. God brings and allows these things in your life because it makes you cry to Him. And anything that makes you seek Him is wonderful. Chapter 35:10-11

"But no one says, 'Where is God my Maker, Who gives songs in the night, Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds of the heavens?"

Elihu cannot imagine listening to all this conversation and no one asks, "Where is God who teaches us?" No one is looking for a lesson. No one is saying, "Why did God bring this? What am I to learn? What am I to be taught?" I like that expression, "Songs in the night." Notice Job wanted songs from the night. He did not want songs in the night. He wanted to be delivered from the night. Elihu says in chapter 35:15

#### "He delivers the afflicted in their affliction."

Not from their affliction. "He delivers the afflicted (in) their affliction." Recently, I was studying Psalm 119, and I was greatly blessed by verse 62. It says, "At midnight I will rise and give thanks to Thee." At first I did not understand what he was saying. I thought midnight was the hour after 11 p.m. and before 1 a.m. That seemed logical to me; that is what midnight was. But I do not think David was saying I set my alarm clock for 12, and at 12 o'clock I rose up and had a little prayer meeting and said thank you. In the context, night was used as a figure of speech. The mystics always spoke of "The dark night of the soul". You know, sometime we have used it that way. Boy, this has been quite a night. God has allowed me all this darkness and I am confused. Night was an experience of affliction and trouble. David says, "I will rise at midnight and give thanks to Thee." Right in the middle of my trouble I will rise up and give thanks to Thee. That is what Elihu is emphasizing. Who is the one who seeks God, who gives songs in the night? That is what you need to learn, Job.

The great Protestant Reformer Martin Luther struggled mightily with a sense of his own sinfulness and inability to please God. The darkness he often experience he called in German "Anfechtungen". Say that out loud and it has the feel of dark hopeless suffering. What is remarkable but completely coincides with what we are finding in Job's life is that Luther's struggles culminated in the revelation that triggered "The Reformation". The Lord revealed to him that righteousness is not within our ability to achieve; God Himself freely gives it. Ephesians 2:8 "By grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourself. It is the gift of God lest any man should boast." This kingdom changing principle came in the midst of Luther's "Anfechtungen". Yours will too!

Job was too busy looking at the problem, and the others were too busy trying to find the solution, and no one sought for God and said teach us these things. Chapter 36:10

"He opens their ear to instruction, and commands that they return from evil."

Verse 22:

"Behold, God is exalted in His power; Who is a teacher like Him? Who has appointed Him His way, and who has said, 'You have done wrong'?"

Verse 13 of chapter 37:

"Whether for correction, (here is a wonderful verse) or for His world, or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen."

Isn't that tremendous? The point is, **He has a reason!** He has a purpose. And it is to instruct you in some way or to conform you to Him. I believe that is enough to show you that Elihu takes a forward step because for the first time he introduces the concept that maybe God wants to teach you something. Nobody suggested that before. The whole argument has been you are wicked. And now Elihu says, "God is disciplining you".

Let me suggest a simple outline of these four chapters in order to be able to develop it better. I think he has four speeches. He really only spoke once and it was never interrupted, but four, because it should have been interrupted. Let me explain what I mean.

He speaks in chapter 33 and then he waits. He was expecting to be treated like the others who spoke and then Job answered. But Job does not answer. So look at chapter 34, verse 1, it says: "Then Elihu continued," because Job said nothing. You see in chapter 33:32

"Then if you have anything to say, answer me; Speak, for I desire to justify you."

But Job did not speak, so Elihu continues. Then the same thing happens again. He waits at the end of the next speech and Job does not answer, so chapter 35, verse 1, "*Then Elihu continued*." Here is a simple outline for you. In chapter 32 he simply introduces himself. He tells you why he got into the debate. Then in chapter 33 he answers Job's argument and Job asks, "Why won't God

answer?" Well, Elihu tells him why. Then in chapter 34 Job says, "God is unjust," and Elihu answers that. In chapter 35 Job said, "Nothing is gained by being righteous." I might as well be wicked. God punishes the righteous and He punishes the wicked. And then with tongue in cheek Job says, "I have an idea, it's because He has more fun punishing the righteous". Real sarcasm! So Elihu answers that. Then he gives his own view of God in chapters 36 and 37 which is the end of Elihu's speech. He then draws two important conclusions. Job, since God is who God is, you ought to: 1: (chapter 36) Pray, and 2: (chapter 37) Worship.

He no sooner finishes his statement and Job gets the shock of his life because God comes on the scene, and God speaks from heaven. That shook him to his boots. We will pick that up in the next chapter, where God gives seventynine questions in a row. Questions that neither Job, nor the present day scientists have ever been able to answer.

Let's look at each of these briefly. I have already done chapter 32. In chapter 33, Elihu is responding to Job's argument that God will not speak to him. God will not answer. Job 33, verse 8

"Surely you have spoken in my hearing, and I have heard the sound of your words; (now he is quoting) 'I am pure, without transgression; I am innocent and there is no guilt in me. Behold, He invents pretexts against me; He counts me as His enemy. He puts my feet in the stocks; He watches all my paths.'

Then Elihu says:

"Behold, let me tell you, you are not right in this, for God is greater than man." Why do you complain against Him that He does not give an account of all His doings?"

Job, you have been complaining that God will not answer you, that God will not give an account of all of His doings. Let me tell you something, Job. Verse 14

"Indeed God speaks once, or twice, yet no one notices it."

What is Elihu saying? He is saying, Really, Job? God will not speak? Or you will not listen? Which is it? God has spoken once or twice, and then he begins to name some of the ways God speaks. Verse 15

"In a dream, a vision of the night, when sound sleep falls on men, while they slumber in their beds, then He opens the

#### ears of men, and seals their instruction."

He speaks in dreams and visions. Verse 23. He says

"If there is an angel as mediator for him, one out of a thousand, to remind a man what is right for him, then let him be gracious to him, and say,"

God speaks through angels. Now, watch. Here is the thrill of this chapter. Why won't God speak? Really, Job? He speaks through dreams and visions. He speaks through angels. Now what does Elihu put in between dreams and angels? Verse 19

"Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, and with unceasing complaint in his bones; so that his life loathes bread, and his soul favorite food. His flesh wastes away from sight, and his bones which were not seen stick out. Then his soul draws near to the pit, and his life to those who bring death."

He also speaks through affliction, Job. You want the voice of God? Why won't God speak? He speaks once or twice, many times. Sometimes in visions and dreams and sometimes through angels. Sometimes through affliction. You have had the voice of God all along, and you have not listened to it. Verse 29

# "Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men, to bring back his soul from the pit."

Trial, affliction, trouble, sickness, hard times. These are all the voice of God. Proverbs 13:24, "He that spareth the rod hateth his son." God deals with us as children, and we are often going to get the rod. Affliction is a correction. It is not an execution. It is a blessing from God. Luther calls affliction, "The workings of virtue," and they are. One of my commentators called affliction, "The treasury of all of God's blessings." There is nothing like sanctified discipline.

I sat at the feet of the wonderful Bible Professor Dr. Alexander. I will never forget this one day as he was describing how much better heaven is than earth. He said one of the ways in which God reveals Himself on earth is through trouble. You see, if you were to die and go to heaven, God could never show you how He supports you in times of trouble. If you were in heaven a million years, you could not see God as the One who gives grace and sustains you in your anguish. You have to learn that down here! I have to learn that down here! And so affliction is wonderful because it reveals God as the One who sustains us and rescues us in times of need. And so, he stops the mouth of Job. Why doesn't

God answer? Job, it is not the voice of God; it is your ear. He has already taught, and He speaks through affliction. Chapter 34. Job has been saying God is unjust. Look at verses 5

"For Job has said, 'I am righteous, but God has taken away my right; Should I lie concerning my right? My wound is incurable, though I am without transgression."

Elihu's argument is based on a very high view of God. Verse 10

"Therefore, listen to me, you men of understanding.

Far be it from God to do wickedness, and from the almighty
to do wrong. For He pays a man according to his work, and
makes him find it according to his way. Surely, God will not act
wickedly, and the Almighty will not pervert justice."

He illustrates how great God is and that you cannot say "God" and "unjust" in the same sentence. It is a contradiction of terms. And then he illustrates it with this marvelous point. He says, Job, why would God be unjust? He can do anything He wants to do. He can get his way honestly without compromising His Holiness and Justice. Verse 13

"Who gave Him authority over the earth? And who has laid on Him the whole world? If He should determine to do so, if he should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust."

He said, if God ever decided to inhale, all flesh would perish. Do you know how you came to be alive? Genesis 2:7

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

God breathed in the breath of life. What if God ever inhaled? The ancient Rabbis said that the Lord kissed Moses to death on the mountain. It says in Deuteronomy 34:5 That Moses died by the word of the Lord. But if you look up the Hebrew meaning of "word" used there, it literally means "mouth as the means of blowing" The Lord lovingly kissed Moses and withdrew His Breath. So He received Moses life back to Himself.

He said God can do anything He wants to do. Injustice is violating the rights of others in order to enrich yourself. He said, "Why would God be unjust?" And so he shoots down Job's argument. He shows how injustice is incompatible with God's supremacy. Verse 13 and 17

"Who gave Him authority over the earth? And who has

#### laid on Him the whole world?

"Shall one who hates justice rule? And will you condemn the righteous mighty One, who says to a king, 'Worthless one,' To nobles, 'Wicked ones'; Who shows no partiality to princes nor regards the rich above the poor."

And then he begins to describes how God creates and sustains the rich and the poor together. When God decides to hide Himself, who can restrain Him? He says that in verse 29. So Job is silent again. The next chapter 35, Elihu answers Job's contention that nothing is gained by being righteous. Verses 1 through 3

"Do you think this is according to justice? Do you say, 'My righteousness is more than God's'? For you say, 'What advantage will it be to You? What profit will I have, more than if I had sinned?' I will answer you, and your friends with you."

His argument is in verses 4-8. God is **transcendent**. He says you believe that God is punishing the wicked for sin and that God rewards the righteous. But he is saying God is above all of that. God does not afflict people because they are wicked, and He does not bless people because they are righteous. That is an interesting truth of God. He afflicts people because He is God, and He has a purpose for it. And He blesses people, not because they are doing something right, but for His higher purpose and design. God does not **provide** for you because you **trust** Him. You trust Him because that **honors** Him. He provides because He is a great provider. He is a great God; that is why He provides. **Not because we do anything right**. Most Christians don't get this at all and so their lives are a never ending attempt to manipulate God into blessing them.

Here is what he is saying. Job says, "What good is to be gained?" Elihu says, on the level of earth there is a lot of good to be gained, but not with God because God is above all of this. Look at Chapter 35, verse 8

# "Your wickedness is for a man like yourself, and your righteousness is for a son of man."

In other words, if I was mean to my neighbor, do you think he would be mean to me? Sure he would. If I was good to my neighbor, do you think he would be good to me? Is there anything gained by being good? **On the level of earth there is**. There is a lot to be gained. You do unto your neighbor as you would have them to do unto you. Otherwise, they are going to be vindictive, and they are going to hold a grudge, and there is going to be animosity. He says there is blessing to be gained down here – men with men in society. **But God is above** 

**all that**. God does not bless you because you are good. He does not curse you because you are bad. Not in this life. And so, again, he turns his eyes to God.

God does speak. It is incompatible with God's nature to be unjust. God transcends all of this. On the level of earth it does pay to be righteous because it is going to save you a lot of headaches and a lot of heartaches with your neighbors. And this is his conclusion. He gives a tremendous picture of God. In chapter 36, he presents Him as the God of providence, the God of nature, the God who controls everything and is doing everything. And then he ends chapter 36 with this picture of a storm. I love this!

"For He draws up the drops of water, they distill rain from the mist, (That is evaporation) Which the clouds pour down, they drip upon man abundantly. (That is rain) Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thundering of His pavilion? Behold, He spreads His lightning about Him, And He covers the depths of the sea." (Now you're in a thunderstorm)

"He covers His hands with the lightning, and commands it to strike the mark. Its noise declares His presence."

Here is what he does. He takes the storm of nature and he says, "God is in charge". The evaporation goes up and it forms a cloud and a cloud begins to rain, and thunder begins to come, and lightning strikes. But where does it strike? Arbitrarily? Hit this tree? Hit this barn? Hit that man? No! He commands it, and it strikes its mark. He says lightning never strikes anything unless it is directed by God. God always hits His target. Then he says, what is true in the physical storm, Job, is true in the storms of life. You have been struck by God, but God has hit His target. God has done it deliberately. Job, you ought to be praising God. This did not just happen to you. God directed it!

Then in chapter 37 he does the same thing. He continues to exalt the power and wisdom of God. In verse 1-5 he says God sends storms. In verse 9 he says sometimes they are good, the south wind, and sometimes they are bad, the north wind. Verse 11-13 he says all God's storms have a purpose. Verse 14

#### "Listen to this, O Job, stand and consider the wonders of God."

Verse 15-20, do not try to understand it, Job. Verse 22-24, just fear Him. And so he concludes, Job, you ought to be praising God. God has hit His mark. You ought to be worshiping God. And so the scene has been set and the stage prepared. And now God speaks!

# Chapter 12 Reading JOB to Know God

God Speaks from the Whirlwind

Chapter 38 through 42:6 of Job we have entitled the **full answer** to the problem of suffering. Elihu gave a partial answer, but now we are going to get the full answer. Before I begin discussing this section, let me introduce it by these first words. Chapter 38:1

"Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?'"

Now you would expect God to say that to Elihu. "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" Because Elihu was the last one who spoke. But the Lord interrupts Elihu and speaks to "Job out of the whirlwind". "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" – "The LORD answered Job," not Elihu. He stops Elihu. God started to speak, and just swallowed up Elihu's message.

Instead of getting clearer, the arguments that were put forth and all the answers that were given and all the solutions that were proposed actually added darkness. There is a principle involved here about argument. You never get anywhere when you argue, and you are going to end up worse off than when you started. Job started off badly, but he ended up a lot worse after these debates, and no closer to the truth. If you look at 42:1-2

"Then Job answered the LORD and said, 'I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand."

You see, Job applies it to himself. God is not talking to Elihu, He is talking to Job. Chapter 38:1, "The LORD answered Job." And then it says, "Out of the whirlwind." The question is, was that a literal storm. Could it have been a tornado or cyclone? Possibly, but isn't it interesting that tornados are caused by the collision of the opposites. They occur when high pressure meets low pressure and hot meets cold. True opposites were meeting, man and God. I will not rule that out. It says whirlwind. Chances are, God came in some kind of a storm. But if there was a literal storm, I believe it was an object lesson picture. Job was in a whirlwind. He was blown away. He was in a mental tornado, and God speaks from the chaos. They had been debating back and forth and it was chaotic, and out of the midst of that, God spoke.

First of all, I would like to set the stage and examine the question, "What happened here?" Let's try and put ourselves in Job's place. God overwhelms Job with seventy-nine questions. He asks question after question. He doesn't wait for Job's answer. The fact is, Job probably could not answer most of them. God just hurls those questions on twenty-four different subjects. And the result of this great discourse and collision of opposites is: "The full answer to the problem of suffering and the mysteries of life".

All right, let me set the stage and try to bring you into the spirit of what is happening. Remember now, through the three cycles of debates Job was getting nowhere with Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. And of course he was getting nowhere with God. Let me show you some of those verses. Turn to chapter 9, please. This was the first expression of his challenge to God. Of course, it shocked the daylights out of his friends when they heard him say this. Chapter 9, verse 32

"For He is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, that we may go to court together. There is no umpire between us, who may lay his hand upon us both. Let Him remove His rod from me, and let not dread of Him terrify me. Then I would speak and not fear Him; But I am not like that in myself."

Here is what Job was saying. "It's not fair! He is God and I am a man! He can do anything He wants to me, and I cannot do anything against Him!" If He were a man, as I am a man, then we could square off and we could settle this thing. Or if there were an umpire between us – someone who was God/man, who could lay his hand upon us both. Of course, this is a picture of Christ who is going to come later on, who can put one hand on God and one hand on man and bring them together. But in Job's day, he said, if there was only somebody. If He would let the pressure off, then I would stand face to face with God and I would debate Him. Look at chapter 13 verse 21

"Remove Your hand from me, (now he is praying to God) and let not the dread of You terrify me. Then call, and I will answer; Or let me speak, then reply to me."

Let's have this out, God. But in every case the heavens are brass, and God's ears are deaf, and Job is not answered. Chapter 23 Job speaks again. He has been through these debates, and he has heard these arguments, and he is getting more and more frustrated. He is perplexed about the problems of life, and he thinks that God has set him up as a target – a special target. Chapter 23, verse 3

"Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His seat! I would present my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would learn the words which He would answer, and perceive what He would say to me. Would He contend with me by the greatness of His power? No, surely he would pay attention to me. There the upright would reason with Him; And I would be delivered forever from my Judge."

If I could only present my case, I would stand there and fill my mouth with arguments. I would show Him that I knew what I was talking about. Chapter 31, verse 35

"Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; Let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written, surely I would carry it on my shoulder, I would bind it to myself like a crown. I would declare to Him the number of my steps; Like a prince I would approach Him."

He will not come but if He did, I would stand up like a prince. I would have all my arguments written out and my mouth would be full. I would say, okay, God, here it is. That is what Job said all through these debates. In his presumption he had challenged God. If only God would lay aside His deity and His glory and come down and fight like a man, then I would respond and I would debate with Him.

It is so easy to read chapter 38 in a ho hum, take it for granted, way. But try to imagine. Job had distorted the wisdom of God in his affliction. He had impugned God's justice. He had challenged God with partiality toward the wicked, of being unfair, of delighting in the sufferings of His children. 38:1-3

"Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct Me!' "

"Job, you had a controversy with me", God says. "You complained about what I have allowed in your life?" Okay, Job, I have heard your challenge, and now I am going to condescend this one time, that it might be written in the Bible forever, so no one else will ever challenge Me on this again. I will meet you where you are, and I challenge you. Come on out to the battlefield, Job, with all your might and gird up your loins like a man.

I cannot imagine what the emotion must have been in Job's heart. He

never expected that God would answer his outcry of frustration and desperation. Oh, if only God would come! These guys won't listen to me. They don't know what they're talking about; they are all talking through their hats. If only there was someone I could talk to. God knows why it is going on. I could talk to Him! I don't know the emotion he felt at that moment. I can't imagine it. But what took place in Job's life at this point both broke and healed him at the same time. God rebuked him and then used it as a balm. He is about to give the full answer to the problem of suffering. So this becomes the last act in the great drama of Job's life.

Job's problems were being compounded through the debates. The problem started off with his suffering. You might think that the simplest way to deal with that, would be to reveal the purpose for the suffering. No, Job, it is not because of your sin. It is because Satan came to me and la, la, la. That would have solved Job's problem. He would say, oh, thank you for telling me. I didn't know. They said You were punishing my sin, but really, You were trying my righteousness. If You had just explained that, it would be all over. But God didn't do that because Job's problems had been compounded. It was not only his suffering now. It was Job himself that was the problem. And so now God begins. God speaks, and Job listens. I believe that his heart was quivering like a leaf in the whirlwind as he stood before God.

Let me suggest a simple outline of this message that God speaks. There are a number of ways to look at it. It is a series of questions that God slings at Job. Nothing, like the debates that have gone before. Man tried to use logical arguments. God throws out judicial interrogations. He suggests the Supremacy and Wisdom of all things He has created.

Here is one way to look at this section. God speaks two times and with each of His messages answers a different question. In 38:1 through 40:5, He answers the question: Shall a mortal man contend with God? When you finish that section, you will see that the answer is **no**. A mortal man should never do what Job did and contend with God. And then chapter 40:6 through 42:6: Shall a mortal man charge God with wrong doing in the way He rules His world? Once again, the answer to that question is, **no**, we should not challenge the way God does things. Chapter 40:3

"Then Job answered the LORD and said, (You see this is right in the middle of the speech and Job speaks) 'Behold, I am insignificant; What can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more.'

Is this the same Job that says let Him come and I will fill my mouth with

arguments? Now he has both hands over his mouth and says, "Okay, Lord, that's enough. I get Your point; I am insignificant; I see it." God says, "You do not get my point, because it is not My point to show you that you are insignificant". So Job speaks again in verse 6 and the Lord answered. God speaks. Job speaks. God speaks again.

Or, you can look at it in terms of what God said. In God's argument, He illustrates His greatness through the world He created. Chapter 38:1-35, He uses the inanimate creation — the earth, the sea, the day, the night, the light, the darkness, storms, stars and heavenly bodies. And then in chapters 38:36 - 42:6, He speaks of living things, animate things — man, animals, insects and birds.

Here is how we're going to look at it. First, I am going to go through it, not verse by verse, but truth by truth. I tried to play a little game and put myself in Job's place. What must it have been like for Job to hear these questions? Then, after we see the facts I am going to get straight to the answer. The full answer to the problem of suffering, illustrated by this tremendous speech.

Now, as I give this I am determined to stick with the book of Job. I was tempted to give you a science lesson because of God's abundant mention of nature; the heavenly bodies, the animals, their migratory habits, their feeding habits, etc. I have studied much of the natural history with the many books I have in my library. I invite you to do the same at your own leisure. But for this particular course we are going to try to stick with Job and the illustrations God gives.

All right, let me give some of these overwhelming facts and lay them before you. Try to put yourself in Job's place if you can. He is exhausted from affliction. He is weary from all the debates. He is frustrated to the nth degree because of the confusion and the perplexity in his mind. He doesn't know what's going on. He has challenged God and all of a sudden, God shows up! And now the Lord Almighty says, "Come on out and fight like a man and gird up your loins". So he stands trembling in the presence of God and God begins. Chapter 38:4–6

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have understanding who set its measurements?
Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone?"

Job, you were not around when I laid the foundation of the earth and hung it in the sky. I did not need you then, Job. And then verse 7

"When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of

#### God shouted for joy?"

You see, Job, there were beings that were glorious and bright existing before you were created. In order to drive this home, I am going to ask you to turn for a moment to Ezra chapter 3 verse 10

"Now when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets. and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD according to the directions of King David of Israel. They sang, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, saying, 'For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever.' And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. Yet many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' households, the old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, while many shouted aloud for joy, (listen to the noise here) so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the shout of joy from the sound of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard far away."

You see, when the earthly temple was completed, when the foundation of the temple was laid, God's people began to sing and to shout. They praised the Lord so loudly that their voices were heard far away. And God is saying, Job, when I laid the foundation of the earth something like that happened. But it was not men singing and priests singing because they were not around. It was the angels of God. The Cherubim and Seraphim. And, Job, you should have heard **that choir!** I finished creating the universe, and the angels began to sing and praise and rejoice. Were you there Job? Did you see that? Did you hear that choir? You see, He is overwhelming Job. And then chapter 38, verse 8-11, he begins talking about the sea.

"Or who enclosed the sea with doors when, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; When I made a cloud its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band."

Do you see what he is doing? He is illustrating His greatness. The mighty ocean is just like a newborn babe in God's arms.

"And I placed boundaries on it and set a bolt and doors, and I said, 'Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop'?

Then God takes that little baby and puts it in its crib, and says to the ocean, "No more". You see, He is referring to the great laws that govern the tides, and God has controlled the sea so it can come so far and no further.

"Job, where were you when I did that?" Chapter 38:12–15. "Job, when was the last time you commanded the sun to rise in the morning and the night to go away?" Verse 16, "Say, Job, can you tell me where the springs of the ocean are? Have you explored the depths of the sea?" Try to capture the wonder of this. Job has challenged this One to a debate. This One who hung the stars in space, the One over Whom the angels sang. Who holds the ocean like a little baby in His arms and Who governs the tides. Job has declared that he would stand and argue like a prince. He is not doing very well. Come on, Job, God has asked you some questions.

Verse 17. "Surely, Job, you have been beyond the gate of death, haven't you? What is it like over there?" Verse 18. "Surely, you know the measurements of this little earth. You could tell me its diameter and its mass and its weight, the depths of the ocean, the number of grains of sand". Verse 19–21. "Tell me, Job, where does light begin and darkness end? Can you trace light to its source, Job?" Verse 22–24. "Surely, you can explain the weather to Me." Verse 25–27. "Job, I not only do not need your help, but I do not even need your presence. I water the land where no man is." Verse 28 – 30, "Has the rain a father?" "Are you in charge of that, Job? Can you make an iceberg."

I saw an iceberg yesterday on the television, and boy what an awesome thing it is! I could not believe it. Those men look like little ants as they tried to climb it. Job, can you make that? Verse 31–33

"Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth a constellation in its season, and guide the Bear with her satellites? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens, or fix their rule over the earth?"

"Come on, Job, let's see if you can lasso one of the galaxies, tie it up and bring it together. Or let's see if you can untie a constellation. Do you control the course of the stars, the meteors, the comets and the planets? I do those things, Job. You have challenged Me, Job. I am asking you some questions." Verse 34 and 35, "Can you direct a bolt of lightning?" You see, these are just samples in the inanimate world. Job, you said you would come with your mouth full of arguments. You would stand up as a prince. You would present your case before Him. Well, here is your opportunity. Speak up.

And then he begins to ask questions about living things. Let me show you what they are. Chapter 38: 36 He starts with the brain of man.

# "Who has put wisdom in the innermost being, who has given understanding to the mind?"

Have you ever studied the brain? Amazing miracle of God. Verse 39-41. "I provide food for the animals and the birds". I believe the lions and the ravens represent that. God provides food for all. How about chapter 39:1–4, "When the mountain goats and the deer calve? Job, you're not there when that happens. I have to be there". Some of those animals not only don't depend on you, Job, but look at verse 4

#### "Their offspring become strong, they grow up in the open field; They leave and do not return to them."

"Those little animals can't even depend on their parents. Some of them wander off. Who takes care of them, Job?" Verse 5-12. "The wild donkey and the wild ox. How about that, Job? They range free and untamed in the wilderness. You not only can't help them, but they wouldn't let you if you tried. They're untamable. They will scorn all your attempts to domesticate them. They are not going to serve you." Verse 19 through 25, "What about the war horse, Job?" This description of the war horse is one of the most stirring pieces of poetry in the Scriptures.

Verse 26-30, "How about the hawk, Job? How about the eagle?" God has been showing that He providentially takes care of His creatures. Chapter 39:14–15

"The ostriches' wings flap joyously with the pinion and plumage of love, for she abandons her eggs to the earth and warms them in the dust, and she forgets that a foot may crush them, or that a wild beast may trample them."

An ostrich buries her eggs in the sand, and she is so dumb that if she gets off her eggs, she will forget where she buried them. The eggs are left in the sand and the warmth of the sun hatches the eggs. God is saying, "Job, when an ostrich goes and buries her eggs and loses them because she is so dumb, who watches over those eggs that no animal comes and steps on them? Job, I take care of these things. I am in charge of everything, and I providentially take care of all my creatures". He was showing His sovereignty in the instinctual qualities of His creatures. To man He gave wisdom and a brain. To some birds He has given beauty. To some animals He has given strength. To some He has given fearlessness. To some He has given a quiet spirit, and others are wild and untamed. One, like the eagle mentioned here, has telescopic vision and can see from afar. Another migrates south. In these things, Job, I am in charge. And then, in chapter 40:1-5, Job is ready to quit.

"Then the LORD said to Job, 'will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it.'

Then Job answered the LORD and said, 'Behold, I am insignificant; What can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more."

His three friends could not get Job to put his hand on his mouth. But God has done it and He is not quite ready to quit. The Lord Almighty has illustrated His greatness from the inanimate creation. He has illustrated His greatness from the animate creation. Now He is going to bring His speech to a climactic close. An ending, which has puzzled commentators for centuries. They have no idea what is being talked about, and yet, it is the climax of the whole thing. Let me read verse 6, chapter 40. He is ready to argue again.

"Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm and said, 'Now gird up your loins like a man; I will ask you, and you instruct Me. Will you really annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified? Or do you have an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like His? Adorn yourself with eminence and dignity, and clothe yourself with honor and majesty. Pour out the overflowings of your anger, and look on everyone who is proud, and humble him, and tread down the wicked where they stand. Hide them in the dust together; Bind them in the hidden place. Then says God to Job, I will also confess to you, that your own right hand can save you."

"When you can handle the pride of man, then I will confess." And then, God does something very strange. Like I said, commentators have been puzzling over this for years. He gives two more descriptions. Chapter 40, verse 15. Behemoth. You are familiar with that animal, right? They roam around all the time. Behemoths. They are all over the place. Chapter 41:1 "Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook?" He says, I want to show you two more things, Job, and then we are done. I want you to see Behemoth and I want you to see Leviathan. So, what is Behemoth?

Well, it is a Hebrew word that means beasts. Plural. Not beast, but beasts. There are as many suggestions as there are commentators on the meaning of this word. Some say it is a water ox or an elephant, perhaps a hippopotamus. Some a river horse or some extinct animal like a mastodon. Or maybe a mammoth, which is a hairy elephant that used to exist. What is a Behemoth?

Nobody knows. The descriptions, the details, do not fit any of those animals.

And then chapter 41:1-34, Leviathan. What is it? Commentators do not know. They say, well, if you read the description it looks like a crocodile. Most of your commentators call it a crocodile. Others will say crocodiles do not breathe fire as this thing does. It is not a crocodile; it is a dragon. A dragon? Dragons don't exist. So some say, no, it's a sea serpent. Others say it's a dinosaur. What is it? Nobody knows. And here is an amazing thing. God is going to give us the answer to the problem of suffering, and He brings it all to a climax. He uses two animals that do not exist, or at least that we don't know anything about. What good is it if we do not even know what these creatures are?

I think I have one little clue. Not as to what they are. I do not think God wants us to know what they are, but what they **stand for**. The principle, behind each of these creatures. I think that is clear, and that is what we will look at, but not right now. We will save that for just a little while. Now we come to the most important part of the study of Job. What is God's purpose? What is God really saying through all of this?

In order to answer this, let me show you two things that God is not saying. They happen to be two things, I used to think He was saying. I know that it is not God's purpose to show Job how ignorant he is. I know that for sure. I believe that Job happened to know a great deal, if not most of what God was saying. Now let me give you some illustrations of that. I am going to ask you to actually look up these verses as we go through them. Keep your finger in chapter 38. Verse 4-6 God tells Job that the earth is hanging on nothing. Turn back to chapter 26. Job is answering Bildad. Look at verse 7

# "He stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing."

Job already knew that. Why did God tell him that? Look at chapter 38, verse 8 to 11. God was telling Job that He made the seas and put a boundary on the seas, "this far and no further". Chapter 26, verses 8-10

"He wraps up the waters in His clouds, and the cloud does not burst under them. He obscures the face of the full moon and spreads His cloud over it. He has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters at the boundary of light and darkness."

You see, Job already knew that. Chapter 38:12-15, God is telling him that only He knows the boundaries between the light and darkness. Chapter 26:10, Job already knew that. Chapter 38:17

"Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?"

Chapter 26:5 and 6

"The departed spirits tremble under the waters and their inhabitants. Naked is Sheol before Him, and Abaddon has no covering."

He says only God knows that. What about wisdom, Job? Where does wisdom come from? Chapter 28, please, verse 12. Job asks:

"But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?"

Verse 23:

"God understands its way, and He knows its place."

Job already knew that reason was not with men, that it was with God.

Look at chapter 38:31

"Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth a constellation in its season, and guide the Bear with her satellites? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens, or fix their rule over the earth?"

Look at chapter nine, please. Job is speaking. Verse 7

"Who commands the sun not to shine, and sets a seal upon the stars; Who alone stretches out the heavens and tramples down the waves of the sea; Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south; Who does great things, unfathomable, and wondrous works without number."

Do you see what I am saying? Job already knew all these things. In chapter 38:35 God said, "Who controls the lightning?" In chapter 28:26, Job says, "He has set a limit for the rain and a course for the thunderbolts." Job already knew most of what God was saying. Chapter 38:39-41. God said, Job, did you know I provided for the animals? Chapter 12:7-10 in his answer to Zophar, Job points that out. Do you see my point?

I know God was not telling Job: Do you see how ignorant you are, Job? You do not know anything. Because almost all of what God said, Job had already said in the debates. I used to think that was the purpose. That God was showing

Job that if you do not understand things natural, how are you going to understand things supernatural?

The second thing God is not doing, is He is not trying to show Job that he is insignificant. When you read chapter 40: 3–5 "Behold, I am insignificant," If that was God's purpose, He would have ended His speech right there. But God said, no, Job, that is not what I want you to see. I want you to see Behemoth and Leviathan. You have to see that if you are going to understand the answer to the sufferings and mysteries of life.

It looks like God is telling him he is nothing, doesn't it? "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" "Where were you when the angels were singing?" "The animals are fed without you; they calve without you; they do not need you for anything. Even the eggs in the sand. I take care of everything, Job. You are nothing. Zero." But that is not what God was saying. For years that is exactly what I thought. I really did. I thought, look at the littleness of man and the greatness of God.

All right, what was He trying to say? I believe the answer is this. God was trying to **show Himself**. Now when you study this message don't ask, "**What** is the answer to the problems of life?" Ask, "**Who** is the answer to the problems of life". Because in this message, God presents **Himself**, as the answer to the problems of life. You see, He was not showing man his darkness; He was showing man a world that was alive to God. One that was brilliant and luminous to Him. God could see all these things. There is a difference in emphasis. Not man's ignorance, but God's wisdom and God's knowledge.

Editor's Note: I must admit that as I was editing and trying to finish this book I felt something missing. The Lord began to show me that I was hearing His responses to Job through my own, still incomplete, knowledge of Him. I heard a stern condescending voice saying "Job you little twit, WHERE WERE YOU WHEN I \_\_\_\_\_\_!" Where was Job? Or you? Or me? We were safe in the mind and heart of Abba who designed and created all things for His pleasure, including us. We were in Him! And although He surely didn't need us, He assures us that He desires us. We are the workmanship of His desire. Not needed, loved. We always run astray when we see the Lord through any other lens than the most mature statement on love in the Scriptures. I John 4:10 "In this way is seen the true love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us first sending His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins."

The Lord was not angry with Job. He was lovingly saying to him "Although I seemingly have no need for you, as carefully as I have designed the complexities of the universe, that is how purposely I have created you for fellowship with me." Grace always takes our legs (man's means of strength and support) out. We drop to our knees in the overwhelming revelation that He

know us and has called us "His beloved". "Job I don't need you, I love you and desire you!"

In this connection I love First Peter 4:19, and I love it because I never understood it. It says, "Let him that suffers in the will of God (like Job) commit his soul unto God as unto a faithful\_\_\_\_\_\_ (now you fill in the blanks). If you don't happen to know this verse you might fill in "comforter" or "healer. But what it says is "Let him that suffers in the will of God, commit his soul unto God as unto a faithful CREATOR." And that is what God does here in Job. He presents Himself as a creator. So how is that going to help when I am suffering? I don't know the full answer, but here is the part I know. When I am going through suffering, I do not have what it takes, but I have Him who can create what it takes in my life. If you are going through suffering you do not have what it takes, but you have Him who can create what it takes. Now Job knew those things that God told him. But look at chapter 42, verse 3 Job is speaking.

"I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."

You say, well, I thought he knew them. Now he says he did not know them.

"Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me. I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You."

I knew it! But I did not know it! I have heard of it! I had all the right answers. I could quote it. It was in my doctrine; it was in my creed. I was fundamental, Bible believing, blood bought, independent, Christ-centered, four square. I had it right! "But I never saw Him". I had all the answers, but I never saw God. And then he says, "Now my heart sees you". The whole message is, He is God! And all you need when you are in trouble, going through the problems of life, is to see God! And He is the answer!

As far as the record goes, God never told Job about the devil coming up and having that little discussion. We know that because we have the first two chapters. Job never knew that. But notice what he does in verse 42:6

### "Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes."

Now here is an amazing thing. The purpose of God was not to show

Job's insignificance. But he saw his insignificance. The purpose of God was not to show his ignorance, but he saw his ignorance. The purpose of God was to show Job **Himself.** When I really see God, then I will repent in dust and ashes. All of the doctrine of the depravity of man, never made him repent. What he needed, he got. And that is a **full vision of God.** 

The full answer to the problems of life is seeing God. Who is Behemoth? Who is Leviathan? Why does He bring this up? Let me refresh your mind about the book of Job. When it began, Job had gone through these terrible things, and these three men who were his best friends came from afar, and they saw him and wept. The Bible says they sat down and for seven days they never said a word. They did not ask him any questions; they did not accuse him of anything; they just sympathized. And at the end of seven days, Job thought, at least I have somebody that I can tell my problems to.

In chapter 3 there is a record of it. He just blurted out, "Oh, cursed be the day that I was born, and my conception. Whoever has mentioned my birthday ought to be shot. And when the doctor told my mother it was a boy he should have been killed. And my mother should have died, and I should have died, I hate my birthday!" And then he said, "And who can fight Leviathan?" In chapter 3 he mentions Leviathan. And those three friends heard what came out of his mouth. What came out of his mouth was intended to express what was in his heart, but it never did. What was in his heart was so deep he could not bring it up

They thought he was cursing his birthday. He was cursing the futility of this life. Being "born of woman", the first and natural birth. This existence has no answers. That is what was way, down, deep. What his words could not express.

And when he was talking about Leviathan he was not saying he was strong enough to wrestle a crocodile. Six times in the Bible Satan is called Leviathan. That was the real problem in his heart. Who was strong enough to fight the forces of evil? It cannot be done on the level of earth; it is not in man's power or nature.

And now God comes to the end, and He says to Job: "Remember way back before all the debates? Remember your friends who never answered your questions? You had two of them. "What is the answer to human nature and what is the answer to Satan?" He says, Job, are you able to rise up and handle the pride of man? Can you handle my enemy Satan?

"Behemoth", I think that's a picture of the natural man, our sinful human nature. What the New Testament calls "*The old man*". Corrupt and unfixable

human nature. It's just a picture of the flesh. And "Old Leviathan" is really a picture of Satan. I think what God is doing here at the end is returning to deal with the very primal and desperate cravings of Job's heart. Who can handle me? Who can handle Satan? And God says, "Job, I can handle the creation; I can handle the animate; I can handle the inanimate; I can handle Behemoth, and Leviathan too." And then Job saw the Lord, and he says, finally I have found the answers. The answer to the problem of life is seeing God Himself and seeing Him alone.

# Chapter 13 Reading JOB to Know God

Outcome of the Lord's Dealings

Now I used to call this the blessed results of suffering, but I found a new title for this section, and it is from the Book of James chapter 5:10-11

"As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful."

Isn't that a marvelous expression? "The outcome of the Lord's dealings." That is what I have entitled chapter 42, taken from James 5:11 If you have the King James version it says: "You have seen the end of the Lord." Of course, as you read through the book of Job you would expect it to read "you have seen the end of Job". But it says you have seen the end of the Lord. That is, the purpose and desire the Lord had for Job, in His perfect will. "The outcome of the Lord's dealings". And then James adds, "He is full of compassion and merciful." So, Job 42 is a great revelation of the compassion and the mercy God has for the afflicted.

Our main message will be found in 42:7-17 which is the outcome of the Lord's dealings. But let's first look at Job's heart attitude now that he was in the place where God could bless him, having **seen** God. The truth that Job was now embracing was not merely theological. Job 42:5

## "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear."

That's just something he heard. His knowledge of the Lord had been by thought process before, but now he says:

#### "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees Thee."

Before this revelation, what Job knew of God was confined to the understanding of his natural mind. As it is with so many of us, we only know what we have been told, or what we have read. Worse of all, we only know what we have interpreted with our feeble minds and proudly call our opinions. His knowledge was confused and defective. But now what he knows is not because

of what he has heard or read, but because of revelation. He has received the inner eye of faith or as the Apostle Paul writes in the fully developed version in Ephesians 1:17-18

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may grant you the Spirit to give wisdom and revelation which comes through a growing knowledge of Him, by having the eyes of your hearts enlightened "

Job 42:5 says: "Now my eye sees Thee." That is the eye of his heart. Before when his knowledge was **theological**, it stimulated **knowledge** rather than **devotion**. His affliction obscured God's gracious purpose. He was accusing God of rash misappropriations of justice. He asserted his innocence and righteousness. God asked this question in chapter 38, verse 2, and now Job repeats it.

"Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?
Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."

In this verse Job is acting as his own Nathan. He points the bony finger of truth at himself. He looks in the mirror and says, "I am the man". He learned the primary reason for his affliction; that he might see God. But more than that, to see God as El Shaddai. To behold a loving God who is more than enough. Not law or theology but a Father. He is seeing God with the eye of faith, the inner eye of the spirit. Because of this, he is not bewailing his suffering. He is now bewailing his sin. Look at verse 6

"Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes."

Look at verse 2. Here is his new attitude.

"I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted."

Boy, that is a great verse to make the sovereignty of God real in your life. I find myself half afraid to believe that with all my might. I find I am trying to hold back, rather than pull out all the stops and believe it.

Let me suggest a simple outline of this last section, 42:7–17, the **outcome** of the Lord's dealings, taken from James 5:11 "You have seen the **outcome of the Lord's dealings.**" I believe there are two results of this outcome illustrated in the life of Job. In other words, Job again is the sample, the fossil, for all of us to dig up and behold the patterns of God. He is God's object lesson. The two results that are in 42:7-17 will follow, without exception, in every life

that suffers in the will of God.

The first blessed result of the outcome of the Lord's dealings can be summarized in these words "enlarged blessing" for the sufferer. Look at verse 10, "The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold." Now I believe that this physical return, this restoring of the fortunes, this doubling of everything Job had, is just God's visible object lesson to illustrate the spiritual blessing.

It is wrong to think, I will be patient, I will bear calamity, I will fast, pray and obey in order to **reap material benefits**. That is wrong; the Bible does not teach that. The Church is full of shallow believers who are practicing all kinds of religious pieties in order to get material blessing. I am amazed they stumble so easily over what the Apostle Paul wrote 2,000 years ago dealing with the same philosophy in Colossians 2:20-23

"If once through fellowship with Christ you died and were separated from the world's crude notions, why do you live as though you belonged to this world? Why submit to rules such as, 'You must not handle,' 'You must not taste,' 'You must not touch,' which refer to things that perish with the using, in accordance with human rules and teachings? Such practices have the outward expression of wisdom, with their self-imposed devotions, their self-humiliations, their torturings of the body, but they are of no value; they really satisfy the lower nature."

People tell themselves, "I am going to really trust the Lord through this trial because then I will get double of everything I had before". That is **not patience**; that is **covetousness**. The Bible never teaches that. Blessed results follow suffering, but they are not weighed in cattle, sheep, camels or donkeys. These are **spiritual blessings** and, like God does all through the Bible, He uses the physical to illustrate the spiritual. Job's physical prosperity is just a picture of the spiritual blessing. God visits us with the **blessing of intimacy** after the trial. Pictures can be used by the Lord to demonstrate or carry a truth to a certain degree but they always fall short of the reality they represent. Again Paul sees this principle and the harm it is producing in the Lord's Body. Not just during the days of Paul but how much it is hurting us today. Once again from Colossians 2:16-17

"Stop letting anyone pass judgment on you in matters of eating and drinking, or in the matter of annual or monthly feasts or sabbaths. These were but the shadow (PICTURES) of what was coming; the reality is found in Christ."

Job's true reward was a new hunger and capacity for intimate

relationship with his God. That changed everything on the inside for Job. In order to show the world, the flesh and the Devil, Job's new inside, the Lord blessed his outside. His true reward was having God's blessing and God's approval, not because of Job's right standing, but because our God is a Lover and Blesser. Four times God proudly says: "My servant Job". The principle may be stated like this. Why does God allow problems in my life? In order to give me twice as much blessing in the knowing of Him as I had before the problems began. That is what God always does.

I like to illustrate this first result of the "end of the Lord" with the closing words of Job 42:17, "And Job died, an old man full of days." Now take that expression, "full of days." Now I realize it means he lived a long time. The fact is, if you look at verse 16 it says that Job lived a full one hundred and forty years after this trial.

Now we don't know how old he was when the trial started. He could have been around two hundred when he died. "He was old and full of days." But there is another way to look at that expression. The Bible teaches that Job was very blessed of the Lord. He was full when he started. He was a righteous man and he was walking with God. And then God brought him through emptiness. When it was all over he was full again, but he was full in a way that he was not full before. It was deeper. It was richer in the reality of God and so more complete at the end. This truth we find in seed form in the oldest Book in the Bible is seen in fully developed truth and is revealed by the Apostle Paul who wrote in Philippians 3:7-10

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings"

I like to put it this way and say: God deepens our fullness by bringing us to emptiness. Well, that is the paradox. Didn't our Lord Jesus Christ tell us in Matthew 19:30, Mark 10:31 and Luke 13:30 "But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." Or in Luke 9:24 "For whoever chooses to save his lower life will lose his higher life, but whoever gives up his lower life for my sake will save his higher life."

That is the truth of God. God will often increase your capacity for spiritual blessing through suffering and affliction. Over and over again the Bible demonstrates how God brings us to emptiness in order to increase our fullness. That is what Naomi said. She said, "I went away full, but God has brought me back empty." And then through that emptiness she became the relative of the one who would marry Boaz and bring Christ and redemption to the world. That is the message of Job. You are only one verse into the Book and it says:

"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil."

That was God's estimate of him. Chapter 1, verse 8. God addresses Satan and says,

"Have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."

That is how he started! King James says, "Job was perfect." And at the end, you see this same man, the perfect man, verse 7 "I retract, I repent in dust and ashes." Perfect men need repentance! Do not think that we cannot find a deeper capacity and a greater fullness.

Sometime we are tempted to kick at the providence of God in the days of famine and drought. When God brings barrenness into our life allowing affliction and suffering. We forget that God is bringing us through emptiness to fullness, **enlarged blessing for the sufferer**. Some have pointed out, by comparing Job 1:3 with 42:10 and 12

"And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job after he prayed for his friends, and the Lord increased all that Job had two fold."

Now look at verse 12

"The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys. He had seven sons and three daughters."

Anyway, God promised to double all of Job's blessings. He started out with 7,000 sheep. He ended up with 14,000. He started out with 3,000 camel; he ended up with 6,000. He started out with 500 yoke of oxen; he ended up with 1,000. He started out with 500 female donkeys and ended up with 1,000. But he

started out with 10 children – 7 boys and 3 girls – chapter 1, verse 2, and he ends up with 10 children – 7 boys and 3 girls. That is verse 13. And yet, the Bible says in verse 10 that "*The Lord increased all twofold.*" How is that explained?

I believe it is easily explained. You see, when he lost his 7,000 sheep and his 3,000 camel and his 500 yoke of oxen and his 500 female donkeys, he lost them forever. They were animals, not created in the image of God. They died and went into the ground, and that was the end of them. But when his sons and daughters died he did not lose them. They are not like animals, who die and then are annihilated. They live on in the Lord. And so, in fact, God really did double his children. He started out with ten and he ended up with twenty. Ten were alive on the earth; ten were alive in heaven. He did not really lose the sons and daughters, he now shared them with his God. So this is the first great result of the outcome of God's dealings; Large spiritual blessings for the sufferer.

Let me state what I believe to be the second result of the outcome of God's dealings. I believe it can be summarized in these words. Enlarged blessing **through** the sufferer. Not only **for** the sufferer, but now **through** the sufferer.

Let me try to get the setting of these verses before you. Job had seen the Lord by faith. He wisely retracted his foolish speech. He had challenged God. Before, Job said, if my adversary brings a charge against me, I will take that charge and put it upon my shoulders. I will embrace it. I will put it as a crown upon my head. I am fully able to refute it. That is what Job said before. He said, if God would come and stand up like a man and we could argue this thing out, he said, I would fill my mouth with arguments. I would stand like a prince before Him. I would argue my case. But now, his hand is tightly over his lips. He refuses to speak. His head is bowed low, and he is covered with ashes and dust.

Now God speaks in verse 7. I do not know how to interpret that little word, "after". "It came about after the LORD had spoken these words to Job." I do not know if it was immediately after or sometime later. But after Job had his eyes opened to the Lord through affliction, the Lord spoke verses 7-10 to Eliphaz, and the other miserable comforters.

"My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept his prayer so that I may not do with you according to your folly. You have not spoken of Me what is right; as My servant Job has. So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD

Told them; and the LORD accepted the prayers of Job. The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold.

Now God required a blood sacrifice from these three friends. Notice these two things. First, that this book takes place long before Moses and the Levitical system. The whole idea of blood sacrifice does not start with Moses; they are patriarchal and ancient. Then notice that God leaves Elihu out. Do you remember that Elihu had taken a step in the right direction? He was not required to bring a blood sacrifice.

I know as I read the book of Job, that he did not speak what was right. Job was as wrong as they were wrong. God is not putting His seal of approval on Job's reasoning's. God already told us His opinion of Job. "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" That is what He thought of Job's arguments. They were words without knowledge. And yet, He says, "My servant Job has spoken what is right." Now what is it that Job said that was right? I believe God is referring to the repentance of Job. He knew how to admit his foolishness and need for change,

"Now Thou canst do all things and nothing can be restrained from Thee." "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You"

Job's **arguments** were wrong, but his **repentance** was right. I believe that those three never did repent. I think there is something very wonderful here. As far as the record goes, God never told Job to pray for his friends. He did not say, "Job, I want you to go pray for them right now". But Job had a burden for his three friends. God opened his eyes. It was more than theology now. He had heard of God for a long time, but now the eyes of his faith were opened. Through suffering, he saw God with his own eyes, by revelation, with his spirit. It is marvelous that after all Job had been through with those three characters, we find him at the end of the book on his knees praying for them. Verse 10 "When he prayed for his friends."

Before, when he wanted them to know something, he argued with them. But now he wants them to see something and he prays for them. He now knows the difference between hearsay and revelation, between what is heard with the ear and what is seen with the eye of faith. And, all of a sudden, Job becomes priest and mediator. Verse 8

"Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my servant Job."

Isn't that marvelous? Job was not only blessed himself, but now he becomes the channel of blessing for others. He becomes a mediator; he becomes a priest. He becomes the one who intercedes for his friends. And how did that all come about? **Through his suffering**. You see, suffering not only means enlarged blessing for Job, but it also means enlarged blessing through the sufferer for others. Job 19:13 - 21

"He has removed my brothers far from me, and my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. my relatives have failed, and my intimate friends have forgotten me. Those who live in my house and my maids consider me a stranger. I am a foreigner in their sight. I call to my servant, but he does not answer; I have to implore him with my mouth. My breath is offensive to my wife, And I am loathsome to my own brothers."

"Even young children despise me; I rise up and they speak against me. All my associates abhor me, and those I love have turned against me, my bone clings to my skin and my flesh, and I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth. Pity me, pity me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has struck me."

Now listen to 42:11

"Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him, and they ate bread with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the LORD had brought on him. And each one gave him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold."

Where were they when he needed them? In Job 19: "Everyone has turned against me, my whole family". You would expect Job to be bitter, wouldn't you? You would expect Job to carry a little chip on his shoulder, a vendetta. You would think he would have animosity in his heart and vindictiveness in his spirit. But he saw God. And seeing God, he is not angry with his friends. He bows down and he prays for them. He says, "They were wrong, but I was wrong too. If they could see the Lord as He has shown Himself to me". Not by hearsay, but by revelation. So he begins to pray for his friends. And then he is in his house and he does not close the door to his family. They come around again after it is all over. They kicked him when he was down, but now he is up, and rather than having a chip on his shoulder, he says, come on in, sit down and let's have some food together. Oh, I think it is marvelous. God not only blesses the sufferer, but blessing goes through the sufferer. He becomes a mediator and a priest to others. He has an opportunity to show love, compassion

and forgiveness to his own family.

I suppose that we could assume that his wife got right with the Lord because she became the mother of his ten additional children. In chapter 2:9, she gave this tremendous advice. She said, "Curse God and die." That demonstrated her spiritual condition. But now God blesses her through Job, and the blessing spreads again. Do not forget this. It is about four thousand years since Job lived his two hundred years. He lived as far on the other side of Bethlehem as we live on this side of Bethlehem. And here we are, Newport, Rhode Island, sitting in this room four thousand years later and we are still being blessed because of what Job went through.

Do you see what I mean when I say God blesses through suffering? Even the generations that are yet unborn can profit by your life. What you go through will bless your kids, and your kids will tell their kids, and their kids will tell their kids. When God throws a stone into your life it is like a stone into a pond. The ripples keep going and going and going, for generations. Sometime I get a thrill when I go up in my library and I crack open some of those old books - 1600's, 1700's, 1800's. Those men have been in the grave a long time. Do you know why they didn't get their rewards yet? Because, they are still earning them. That is why God is going to reward us all at once. We will earn rewards until the last ripple of our life dies out. Until the last human being, is influenced by our testimony. I read some blessing from some old book and I pass that on, and someone else is blessed and passes that on. That fellow who died a long time ago is still reaping the benefits. God blesses the sufferer and blesses through the sufferer. Why does God let me suffer? So I might be brought from here to there. So that I might see El Shaddai. Why does God let me suffer? So that others may see El Shaddai through me.

Let me play a little game with you and ask you a question. Again, I speak foolishly. This would never happen. But let's say that God came up to you and said: "Let Me give you a choice. No suffering. Or suffering so that others can know Me better?" Which would you choose? Penetrating, isn't it? I am sure, by grace, you would bow your head and say, "Thy will be done". You would probably pray, "If it be possible let this cup pass. Nevertheless, Thy will be done. Father, glorify Thy name".

Listen to II Corinthians 1:4: "God who comforts us in all of our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in ANY affliction." Now I want you to note that. I used to think I had to go through a certain trial and then I could help those who went through the same thing. If I lost a child, then I could comfort those who lost a child. If I was delivered from drunkenness, I could help those who were delivered from drunkenness. But God says in II Corinthians 1:4, you go through trials so you can help those who are in "ANY

**affliction**". Because all pain is the same at its root. Comfort others by the comfort which we ourselves are comforted by God. And who is the Comforter, really? Enlarged blessing **for** the sufferer. Enlarged blessing **through** the sufferer. And I did not even tell you the main point yet in chapter 42:7–17

God used Job. He used his sufferings. He blessed his friends. He became priest and mediator. He blessed his family; he forgave them and restored fellowship. Blessed his wife. Blesses us four thousand years later. But that is not the main way God used Job. You see, **Job blessed God Himself**. **Job ministered to the heart of God**. Remember the setting of the book. Remember what it is all about. God was accomplishing something before the eyes of Satan. God had said to Satan, "My servant will be true to Me. My servant Job, even if you remove the hedge, even if you put him between the hammer and the anvil, my servant will not forsake Me".

Let me ask this question. Suppose no human being ever heard about your problems. Nobody ever saw your sufferings. There were no stories told about you. No one ever wrote a book. You would probably say, "Boy, what a waste! Why did I have to go through all that? All for nothing. How could God bless through me if no one ever hears about my problems?" And the answer is, **God would know about it**. He would receive it as a sweet sacrifice of praise unto Himself. It would minister directly to His heart.

You see, that is the great principle in Matthew 26, verse 8. Remember Mary came with that alabaster box of precious ointment? The disciples cried out indignantly, "What is the point of this excess? Why this waste?" Here is the principle. Anything that ministers to the heart of God is not wasted. There is no excess if it ministers to Him. And God blessed Job. Sure, he blessed his friends and he blessed his wife and He is blessing us as we study. But most of all, Job was a blessing to the heart of God. In verses 7 and 8, God says four times, "My servant Job," "My servant Job." And verse 9 "The Lord accepted Job".

#### **Editor's Comment:**

Many years ago I went through what my friends and family aptly described as a "Job experience". Y2K and the doomsday predictions fell short of expectations throughout the world, but not in my life. A quick overview: 2000 Colon cancer, 2002 we lost our 19 year old daughter, Beth, in a fatal car accident. 2005 my wife dies of leukemia and a broken heart 2006 Prostate cancer 2007 I lose my mom, best friend and Trixie, the best dog ever.

It then is no surprise to find me in the Psych ward at Overlook Hospital in NJ on suicide watch. Even though I had been a pastor, worship leader, Bible teacher and counselor, I was in one of the deepest depressions I have ever seen. The worst part of it was feeling abandoned by God. Feeling like "the most cursed man on earth", who was being punished for some sin or sins I had done, or thought. Living every moment, in a whirlwind of confusion, guilt and hopelessness. Trying to understand the nature of God by looking at our circumstances is the plight of many of us, or most of us, at some time in our spiritual journey.

It can be a terribly hard thing when God allows you to see that your head and your heart live in two different worlds. When what you thought was faith was just some mental assent to theological principles. But because He loves Zion, "He will allure His remnant into the desert and speak tenderly to her" (Hosea 2:14). Do you know what Zion means? We super achievers like to think of ourselves on the Holy Hill of the Lord proclaiming our overcomer status. But it means "parched". It is the fundamental condition our Lord Jesus said would cause us to be blessed. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". How happy are the dry. How joyful the empty. Which kingdom reigns in my life. Oh brothers and sisters I was "Zion", I was parched. Out of divine breath.

From total despair His voice gently pierced my calloused spirit with these words: "John, you've been trying to love me your whole life. Have you noticed something, you're not really good at it? From now on let's try something different. I never want you to try and love me, or serve me or do something you think will make Me love you. From now on you are going to let Me love you. When your eyes open in the morning you must throw off the covers like they are snakes and jump out of bed before you fall victim to your "stinking thinking". You have only a few seconds before the "old man" steals the day from you. Put on some clothes and sit in my presence in silence. Just let Me love you!"

I don't have the space to testify the radical change that took place as I listened to the Lord and let Him love me every day. One day I will write a book just about that. But most importantly I learned what Job learned. I had heard of Him with the hearing of these weak fleshly ears. But now I see Him with the eyes of faith He gave me. I am thirsty only for Him and satisfied only with His water. Our faith is a gift, that when received like the seed of life that it is, grows into the life of His only Son. He now lives in, with and through us.

As I struggled over the past few weeks with gastrointestinal issues culminating in surgery this Thursday, I can truly report that the heavenly warfare of Job is still happening in my life and I know it's happening in yours. Being hospitalized for eleven days over the past two weeks has given me ample opportunity to finish this book, but I just couldn't get it done. Having had cancer three times in the past and now finding three tumors in my stomach and duodenum, you can imagine the onslaught of fear and accusations coming from the enemy. But having been engrossed for a month in editing and meditating on the true meaning of the Book of Job I found myself living the principles we are trying to share. I had much time in the midnight hours listening to His "songs in the night" and practicing seeking Him for Him, and not for results. With the enemy of fearful thoughts camped all around me I found no inner sense of fear as I continued to turn to the Lord refusing to play with the soul tempting scenarios offered all around me. James 4:7 "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

I had so many opportunities to deeply share Christ it would take another entire book to document. I never had to initiate a conversation as one by one the Lord sent hungry hearts (parched) my way. It was obvious that these were divine appointments, as tears flowed and phone numbers and emails got exchanged. While sharing these testimonies of the Lord's faithfulness I used the word "surrender". Bells and lights went off in my spirit knowing that was the word I was searching for to describe the change in Job. I think the word "faith" is more clearly illustrated by the word "surrender" than "believe". I meet so many Christians who exhibit pride as they testify how their belief got them through. It is hard to be prideful when you use the word "surrender". The Greek word for faith "pistis", literally means to allow yourself to be persuaded. Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." But I hear many boast!

Romans 12:3 "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, think of himself more highly than he ought to think;

but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith." That's why I like to say "God doesn't believe in atheists"! The Lord has set eternity in every man's heart (Ecclesiastes 3:11) so no one will have an excuse. It is not a belief problem but rather one of surrender. Adam and Eve didn't have a belief problem (they walked with God in the Garden), they wanted to rule themselves. Satan doesn't have a belief problem (he communicates with the Lord in the heavenlies), he wants to rule his own kingdom. The demons recognized Jesus but won't bow the knee.

Job had no problem surrendering at the beginning of the book. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." But as the trials increase and the arguments get hotter, his surrender begins to taste a little bitter and his patience cannot be seen at all. What changed in Job that caused him to repent in dust and ashes? What caused him to have compassion on friends and family and placed him in the position to bear new and abundant fruit?

It was the revelation of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. You see Job was surrendering like a prisoner of war. Beaten, weak and defeated. Yes, he fully realized the awesome power and creative abilities of the Almighty. But he felt crushed under that power and utterly helpless. He feared that God might be capricious. He seemed to be playing with Job's body and soul in a frivolous and almost sardonic fashion. But with the light of revelation Job suddenly knew that although God didn't need him for the creation and sustenance of His Kingdom, God wanted him! He designed Him to bless His heart and to shine in His creation. Where was Job when God did all that He did? He was, as you and I were, chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundations of the world. Ephesians 1:3-4 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

Job knew how to surrender as a prisoner of war. But with this new understanding of how much he was loved, purposed and desired, he could surrender the way God intended from eternity past. The surrender of a bride, deeply and honestly loved, into the arms of her beloved. That is the game changer! We are called to be His Bride. Our problem never was to love, for we were always in awe of His Beauty and Power. Our problem is to trust the King of the Universe. It is a surrendering trust that allows the bride to have abandoned intimacy with her Groom. The safety of this divine marriage covenant brings the "peace that passes all understanding" and celebrates the "rest" that the Lord has always desired His people to enter. Jesus created the

true Sabbath rest as He cried "Shalom" (It is finished) from the cross. It is accomplished. The debt is paid. God is satisfied. Nothing for eternity can be added to this rest.

In order to draw us to Himself, He became flesh. But more than just become a man, He became the weakest and most surrendered man of time and eternity. Phillipians 2:5 "Keep on fostering the same disposition that Christ Jesus had. Though He was existing in the nature of God, He did not think His being on an equality with God a thing to be selfishly grasped, but He laid it aside as He took on the nature of a slave and became like other men. Because He was recognized as a man, in realith as well as in outward form, He finally humiliated Himself in obedience (SURRENDER) so as to die, even to die on a cross."

How can we fear Him who made Himself so low and approachable to us. With the revelation of how much we are desired and loved, we can let down our barriers and defense mechanisms. We can surrender to the Lover of our Souls, resting in His powerful arms. Now in union with Him and being "known" by Him (Galatians 4:9) we can bear fruit for God. Romans 7:4 "So my brothers, you too in the body of Christ (human flesh) have ended your relation to the law (cross), so that you might be married to another husband, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God."

And so Job is now surrendered to His Lover God and the union produces immediate fruit. In order to demonstrate the abundant spiritual understanding and rest Job is experiencing on the inside, the Lord doubles his material Faith is agreeing with the life of God put inside of us which is the image of Jesus Christ. It is not trying to make your flesh believe information it's not really interested in. It's not seeking scientific explanations that make your intellect feel better. It is surrendering to the One who is calling your name and whispering His words of love in your heart. When the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached or observed, it stirs what God has already placed in the heart and now the war is on. Paul was well familiar with this struggle. II Corinthians 4:2-4 "On the other hand, I have renounced all underhanded, disgraceful methods; I neither practice cunning nor do I tamper with God's message, but by clear and candid statements of truth I try to commend myself to every human conscience in God's sight. If the meaning of the good news I preach is covered up at all, it is so only in the case of those who are on the way to destruction. In their case, the god of this world has blinded the eyes of the unbelievers, to keep the glorious light of the good news of Christ, who is the likeness of God, from dawning upon them."

Turn to the loving Kinsman Redeemer of your soul. He has set eternity in your heart and is longing to see the union He desires with you become the blissful marriage He has called you to and designed you for. It has been said, "The soul is not blissful because she is in God. The soul is blissful (full of energy and joy) because God is in her". Surrender to the gift of God in Jesus Christ and they will come and make their permanent home in your heart.

~ John Scalzo