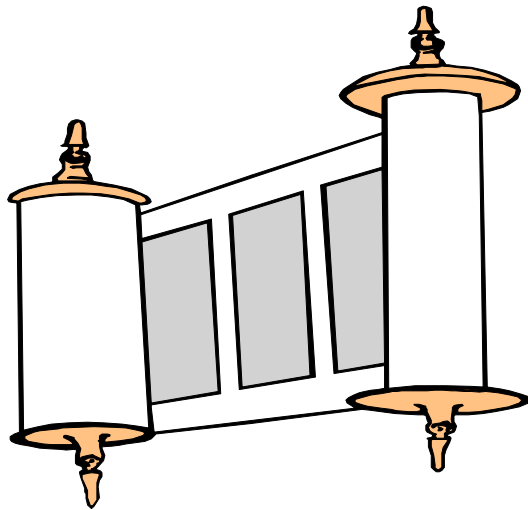


J O B

“Patience In Sufferings”



*“But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me,
I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10)*

“I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you” (Job 42:5)

Lessons by: Rob Harbison

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

AUTHOR: Anonymous. The authorship of this book has been attributed to many different men including Moses, Elihu, Elijah, Solomon, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Ezra, Isaiah, and others. It seems reasonable to suppose that some writer living in the Golden Age of Hebrew wisdom (1000-700BC) wrote the book.

HISTORICAL SETTING: There can be no doubt that Job was actually a historical character (cf. Ezekiel 14:14; James 5:11).

LOCATION: The story took place in the land of Uz (1:1) somewhere northeast of Palestine, near a desert (1:19), within raiding distance of the Chaldeans and Sabeans (1:15,17), probably between the city of Damascus and the Euphrates River. In later years it would fall under God's judgment (Jeremiah 25:20) and was home to some of the Edomites (Lamentations 4:21).

TIME PERIOD: Job likely lived in the second millennium BC (2000-1000BC) during the days of the ancient patriarchs, contemporary with the events of the book of Genesis.

- He was a prosperous man whose life resembles that of Abraham. His wealth is measured in cattle and possessions rather than silver and gold (1:3).
- His longevity corresponds to that of the patriarchs after the flood, when the length of life began declining drastically (cf. Genesis 5:1-32; 11:10-26,32; 25:7). He lived 140 more years after the events of the book (42:16-17).
- The picture of roving Sabean and Chaldean tribesmen fit the second millennium BC better than the first. So do the seats of judgment at the gate of the city where the wise men gathered to judge matters for the people (29:7).
- No mention is made of Moses, the Law, or any other event or institution of the Israelite covenant and nation (although that may have been because Job was Gentile).

THE BOOK OF JOB: The book of Job is a true story set in poetry, which delves into the feelings and emotions of the human mind when faced with trauma and suffering "Since poetry is the language of the heart, Job reveals the innermost thoughts of men more so than outward deeds" (Irving Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament*, p.262).

"It is most amazing that a book with nothing distinctively Israelite about it should find a place as part of the Hebrew canon and never be seriously challenged. This proves that the Hebrews recognized the superior message of this book from the earliest times" (*Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol.3, p.602). It is quoted twice in the New Testament (note 5:13 [1 Corinthians 3:19]; 41:11 [Romans 11:35]).

"The book of Job is glorious because it shows people acting the way people act, rather than the way we ought to act. Job is querulous, antagonistic, bitter and despondent by turn. Surely in this Job does not set a good example. It is only as faith triumphs over despair that the example is set" (Andrew W. Blackwood, Jr., *Out of the Whirlwind*, p.22).

“And so then in this marvelous book we are privileged to gather the facts for a more complete cosmology. We are given a unique behind-the-scenes look at the battle that goes on for our loyalty and souls. The book of Job dramatically sets forth a colossal war between God and Satan, and we are the territory. Satan accuses. God defends. And in the outworking of this cosmic drama is the testing of man. We write our own ending. What shall it be? Shall we relinquish our faith as we suffer or shall our faith grow stronger with each test?” (Johnny Felker, *Today*, Vol.2, No.9, p.8).

MESSAGE OF THE BOOK: All men suffer and struggle with the answer to the question “why?” God never answers that question. The answer would not help us anyway--knowing certain things can never increase our faith, because faith is believing in God when we don't know or understand (2 Corinthians 5:7). When God finally speaks, He does not explain Himself, justify Himself, or excuse Himself. He merely challenges man to trust in Him. For Job, that is finally enough. There was more going on behind the scenes than Job knew.

The question must be answered for God, for Satan, and for us—“Will a man serve God for nothing?” Job finally answers for all of us with an unequivocal “yes!” “There is a service of God which is not work for reward: it is a heart-loyalty, a hunger after God's presence, which survives loss and chastisement; which in spite of contradictory loss and chastisement; which in spite of contradictory seeming cleaves to what is God-like as the needle seeks the pole; and which reaches up out of the darkness and hardness of this life to the light and love beyond” (John F. Genung, *The Epic of the Inner Life*, p.20).

KEY VERSES: Job 23:10; 42:5

THE PROBLEMS RAISED IN THE BOOK OF JOB

- 1) Why do the righteous suffer, while on every hand the wicked are seen to prosper? This raises the question of God's justice. It brings God into judgment for His providence in allowing such.
- 2) Can God trust man to serve Him simply for righteousness sake? This is the problem propounded by Satan, “*Doth Job fear God for nought?*”
- 3) Can man trust God when his suffering is unexpressable in its intensity, and unexplainable as to its cause? This was the problem with Job.
- 4) Is Job's theory correct: Jehovah gives, Jehovah takes; man receives evil at the hand of God (1:21; 2:10)?
- 5) Is the friends' view correct, that all suffering is punitive?

(Homer Hailey, *Bible Study Notes: The Book of Job*, p.5)

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

Various solutions to the problem of suffering are expressed in the book. The prologue suggests that suffering is a test of character. The three friends opine that suffering is always punishment for sins. Job concludes that suffering is because something is out of balance in the moral universe. Elihu suggests that suffering is a call to repentance, which purifies and corrects us. The solution which God suggests is that suffering is one of the many incomprehensible, unfathomable things of life, therefore man needs to leave it all in God's hands and trust Him!

OUTLINE OF JOB

Prologue: The Testing Of Job (1-2)

I. Job Debates With His Friends (3-31)

- A. First Cycle Of Speeches (3-14)
 - 1. Job curses the day of his birth (3)
 - 2. Eliphaz and Job (4-7)
 - 3. Bildad and Job (8-10)
 - 4. Zophar and Job (11-14)
- B. Second Cycle Of Speeches (15-21)
 - 1. Eliphaz and Job (15-17)
 - 2. Bildad and Job (18-19)
 - 3. Zophar and Job (20-21)
- C. Third Cycle Of Speeches (22-31)
 - 1. Eliphaz and Job (22-24)
 - 2. Bildad and Job (25-27)
 - 3. Job's discourse on wisdom (28)
 - 4. Job's defense of himself (29-31)

II. Speeches Of Elihu (32-37)

- A. First speech (32-33)
- B. Second speech (34)
- C. Third speech (35)
- D. Fourth speech (36-37)

III. Speeches Of God (38-42:6)

- A. First Speech--Job's Silence (38-40:5)
- B. Second Speech--Job's Enlightenment (40:6-42:6)

EPILOGUE: Job Restored Twofold (42:7-17)

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize the book of Job in one or two sentences.*
- 2) *What is more important in this story--Job's physical condition or his spiritual condition? On which does Job concentrate? On which does the book itself center its discussion?*
- 3) *Who are the main characters in this book?*
- 4) *Why does God never answer the question of "why" Job is suffering?*
- 5) *How will the lessons of this book help us relate to our own lives?*

KEY STATEMENT: “Does Job fear God for nothing?” (1:9). How does this question of Satan’s set the stage for the events of these two chapters?

OUTLINE:

I. The Testing Of Job’s Faith (Job 1-2)

- A. Job Was Blameless (1:1-5)
- B. Satan’s First Challenge (1:6-22)
 - 1. Satan’s Attack (1:13-19)
 - 2. Job’s Response (1:20-22)
- C. Satan’s Second Challenge (2:1-10)
 - 1. Satan’s Attack (2:7-9)
 - 2. Job’s Response (2:10)
- D. Job’s Three Friends (2:11-13)

SUMMARY:

Job was a righteous, blameless man who had apparently been blessed greatly by God (1:5). The time came for the “*sons of God*” (cf. 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) to present themselves before God and Satan came accusing Job (1:6-12; cf. 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9). He claimed that Job’s service to God was really self-serving (1:9-11). Satan’s power is limited, he can do nothing without God’s permission (1:12).

Job lost everything he had in one day, including all of his children (1:13-19). He mourned greatly for his loss, but did not accuse God with wrongdoing (1:20-22)...yet he did think that God was responsible for all these calamities. That belief which he drew strength from would later lead him to great weakness.

Job’s faith is challenged again by his “Adversary” (2:1-3). Satan charged that when it came to an attack against him personally, Job would turn against God (2:4-6). Job is struck with boils and becomes an outcast outside the city (2:7-8). He then loses his wife’s support of his convictions (2:9). Job does not sin with his lips, but he still attributes this suffering to God (2:10). Three friends come from afar to comfort him and share in his grief (2:11-13).

OBSERVATIONS:

- 1. **Job Has Won These First Two Contests...** but the rest of the book answers the question whether or not Job has the perseverance to continue to be faithful (cf. James 5:10-11; Hebrews 10:35-39). It also asks us to consider our own faith... would we continue to trust God and love Him, when suffering for reasons we do not understand?
- 2. **Satan Is Introduced As Man’s “Adversary”.** The word used here (1:6) literally means “Adversary”. He is mentioned sparingly in the Old Testament although he is active (1 Chronicles 21:1; Psalm 109:6; cf. also Judges 9:23; 1 Samuel 16:14; 18:10; 19:9; 1 Kings 22:19-23).
He is able to work through people--the Sabeans, the Chaldeans, Job’s wife and friends (1:15,17; 2:9; etc.) and has certain power over natural forces (1:16,19; 2:7).

Behind The Scenes

*2 Kings 6:8-18
Daniel 10:1-11:4
Matthew 18:10
Ephesians 2:1-3
Ephesians 6:12
Hebrews 1:14
1 Peter 5:8
1 John 5:19
Revelation 12:9*

There is a spiritual war going on for our souls (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Describe how righteous Job was (cf. 1:1,5; 23:12; 27:4; 29:12-16; 31:1-11,24-25,29-30).*
- 2) *Does Job suffer because he is the worst of men or the best of men?*
- 3) *Is the amount of our suffering a proper indication of our faithfulness?*
- 4) *Does God ever tempt us (James 1:13)? Why does He allow Satan to tempt us?*
- 5) *Why does Satan think that Job only serves God for selfish reasons? What is Satan's motivation for everything he does?*
- 6) *Can God know of man's faithfulness to Him, before man acts (cf. Genesis 22:12)? In other words, did God create a being who can act independent of God's foreknowledge of what he will do?*
- 7) *Is God the only one who has power over nature (1:16,19)? What about sickness and disease (2:7; cf. Luke 13:16)?*
- 8) *Where does suffering come from (2 Corinthians 12:7-12)? What use can God make of it?*
- 9) *Was Job right in his conclusions (1:21; 2:10)? Is this the beginning of his confusion about all these events?*

CLOSING THOUGHT: Job was allowed to be tempted—perhaps to prove a greater lesson to Satan and his angels, and maybe even to condemn them, showing that a lowly man was capable of obeying God when the great angels of heaven who fell could not (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4)! That's quite a slap in Satan's face if you think about it!!

God allowed this because it served the purpose of proving to the devil, his angels, and all of mankind that there is such a thing as unselfish goodness and indestructible faith in the men who are made a little lower than the angels (cf. Psalm 8:4-5). Remember through this entire ordeal, that even though we have been given a glimpse, Job never knows what is going on behind the scenes!

KEY STATEMENT: “*Why is life given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter of soul...?*” (3:20). What insight does this question give into the thinking of Job?

OUTLINE:

I. Job’s Despair (Job 3)

- A. Job Curses The Day Of His Birth (3:1-10)
- B. Job Questions “Why?” (3:11-12)
- C. Job’s Peaceful View Of Death (3:13-19)
- D. Job’s Unrest (3:20-26)

SUMMARY:

Job’s silent brooding turns to a primal scream. He does not begin by cursing God, but rather by cursing the day of his birth (3:1-9). His curse stems from one complaint he has against that day—that it did not keep him from this present day (3:10).

Job next turns to the common question of man—a question which is never answered—“why?” (3:11-12). Why is Job in this condition, rather than being in another? Why did he not die *at* birth where he could have rest with the great men of this world (3:11-15)? Why did he not die *before* birth and be like all the oppressed who have ceased from being oppressed (3:16-19)? Why can the man who wants death to come not experience death (3:20-22)? Why does trouble come to a man who is hedged in so that he cannot avoid it (3:23-26)?

OBSERVATIONS:

- 1) **Job Is A Man In Desperation.** Sometimes he speaks irrationally, sometimes he contradicts himself, and sometimes he sounds completely delirious. Job’s statements about death should be remembered in that context.
- 2) **Job’s View Of Death Is Incomplete.** Remember that God’s word is a progressive revelation. Every word is inspired and correct, but remember these are the feelings of a man who does not have complete understanding of life after death since it was not fully disclosed until Jesus explained it more completely.
- 3) **Job Asks The Question “Why” Seven Times.** Interestingly, seven is a number which occurs throughout the Bible as a number indicating completeness or fullness.
 - “*Why did I not die at birth?*” (3:11)
 - “*Why did I not perish when I came from the womb?*” (3:11)
 - “*Why did the knees receive me?*” (3:12)
 - “*Why the breasts that I should nurse?*” (3:12)
 - “*Why was I not hidden like a stillborn child...?*” (3:16)
 - “*Why is light given to him who is in misery...?*” (3:20)
 - “*Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden...?*” (3:23)

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize this chapter in one or two sentences.*

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- 2) *Is this chapter recorded for us so we can sit in judgment of Job, or for some other reason?*
 - 3) *The storm which descended on Job a week earlier was great, but how was the storm which raged within him even greater (cf. Proverbs 18:14)?*
 - 4) *The major conflicts in which Satan engages us are battles fought within us. If we cannot control what happens to us, what must we control?*
 - 5) *Job is not yet ready to accuse God, but what is he already thinking about God (3:4,23)?*
 - 6) *Describe Job's view of death (3:13-19).*
 - 7) *Why was Job's concept of death different from the Christian's? Was Job wrong? Was the Bible wrong? How can we reconcile these differences?*
 - 8) *Are we in any position to judge Job and his feelings of despondency? Why or why not?*

CLOSING THOUGHT: A broad distinction exists between men of God in the Old Testament and those in the New Testament relative to their ideas and understanding of the future life. This distinction is neither a result of ignorance nor superstition, but rather the lack of revelation from God concerning the subject. The revelation of Scripture has always been progressive, building on what has already been revealed toward a fuller understanding. Therefore, the ideas of the ancients about the afterlife are sometimes fuzzy and hazy.

The book of Job is inspired by the Holy Spirit, but the beliefs, thoughts, and understanding of Job and his friends are not. We see them grappling with ideas that are beyond their limited understanding. Job's words of desperation are the voice of human grief, not the final word of God on the subject of the afterlife.

KEY STATEMENT: *“Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; cause me to understand wherein I have erred” (6:24).* What charge is Job responding to here? What insight does this statement give us to the problem Job has understanding why he is suffering?

OUTLINE:

I. Eliphaz’s Speech (Job 4-5)

- A. Reminds Job Of Their Philosophy (4:1-11)
- B. Recounts His Own Vision Of God’s Greatness (4:12-21)
- C. Chastening Comes From God (5:1-7)
- D. Advises Job To Seek God (5:8-16)
- E. God’s Chastening Benefits The Recipient (5:17-26)
- F. Conclusion (5:27)

II. Job’s Speech (Job 6-7)

- A. Finds Eliphaz’s Words Insipid (6:1-7)
- B. His Only Hope Is In Death (6:8-13)
- C. His Friends Brought Affliction Instead Of Kindness (6:14-23)
- D. Challenges Them To Show Him His Sin (6:24-30)
- E. His Anguish And Hopelessness (7:1-10)
- F. Asks For An Explanation From God (7:11-21)

SUMMARY:

Eliphaz is the first friend to speak, and shows the only hint of kindness from the three friends. Eliphaz speaks, even though he knows Job won’t like what he has to say (4:1-2). He wonders if Job himself has forgotten the lessons that he taught others for years (4:3-6). Their philosophy is revealed--God always punishes evildoers and rewards the righteous (4:7-11). Eliphaz vindicates God and His unexplainable ways by relating his vision which had convinced him of God’s justice and power (4:12-21).

Eliphaz says there is no man who Job can turn to (5:1-7), so he should turn to God while he can (5:8-16). He believes Job will experience great blessings, peace and prosperity from God after all of this is over, and he has been chastened by Him (5:17-26). This describes the position of all three of Job’s friends, and neither one sways from it throughout all the discussions (5:27).

Job complains of his grief and being struck by God (6:1-7). He wishes God would fulfill his request for death and take away a hopeless man’s pain (6:8-13). His friends have deceived him, becoming tormentors instead of sympathizers (6:14-23). Job challenges them to expose the sin of which they so confidently accuse him (6:24-30).

Job can find no rest (7:1-2), no comfort (7:3-5), and no hope (7:6-10). Therefore Job sees no reason to refrain his mouth from complaining to God (7:11). Job wonders why he is worth the trouble to God to terrify and test him (7:12-18). How long until God turns away from afflicting him (7:19)? Why has God chosen to mercilessly afflict him (7:20-21)?

OBSERVATIONS:

- 1) **Eliphaz.** Was from Teman, probably in the land of Edom. The Temanites were noted for their wisdom (cf. Genesis 36:9-11; Jeremiah 49:7,20; Obadiah 8-9). Of Job’s three friends, he is the

only who shows any sympathy and consideration to Job for his suffering.

- 2) **Job Begins To Turn On God.** When Job can find no answers to his questions, he comes up with his own answers... and God does not fare very well in Job's explanations!
- * 6:4 -- God has smitten him with poisonous arrows.
 - * 6:8-10 -- God should go ahead and finish crushing him completely.
 - * 7:16-21 -- God should leave him alone, quit testing him, and let him catch his breath.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize this section in one or two sentences.*
- 2) *Each of the human characters in this story are plagued with incomplete and distorted knowledge, yet each comes up with his own wrong explanations. What should this teach us about our own understanding of the world around us (cf. Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23)?*
- 3) *What is Eliphaz's philosophy on suffering (4:7-9)? What is the implication about Job's plight?*
- 4) *What is Eliphaz's advice to Job (5:8)? What is Job's response to Eliphaz's words of hope—why won't they work (6:11-13; 7:21b)?*
- 5) *Was everything pretty 'black and white' to Eliphaz? Is there any benefit to that attitude when looking at some of the gray areas of life?*
- 6) *How do Job's friends speak to him? What do they lack? Suppose they were right all along with their philosophy... what do they still lack? What does this teach us about comforting others who sorrow regardless of the reason they sorrow (6:14-15; 16:2-5)?*
- 7) *Job's confusion is understandable. What did he originally believe about suffering (4:3-9)? What does he know now that changes it (6:24-30)? What is his next mistaken belief (7:16-21)?*

CLOSING THOUGHT: “According to Eliphaz, Job had grown callous in the midst of riches and allowed unrighteousness to creep into his life. The misfortune befalling him was God's judgment, a warning to mend his ways (5:17). Job could either turn from his sin and be restored to divine favor or persist in his evil and anticipate the continuing heavy hand of God... Job asked for a bill of particulars. What sins had he committed? Where had he gone wrong (6:24)? It seems as if Eliphaz had dismissed the ambiguity of the situation too easily. His simplistic explanation allows no alternative, no uncertainty, and not even some qualification. Eliphaz allowed no place for ambiguity in his scheme of things.” (Morris Inch, *My Servant Job*).

KEY STATEMENT: *“For He is not a man as I am, that I may answer Him, and that we should go to court together. Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both” (9:32-33).*

What conflicting views of God does Job express here?

OUTLINE:

I. Bildad’s Speech (Job 8)

- A. Repent And Seek God (8:1-7)
- B. Learn The Lessons Of History (8:8-10)
- C. The Path Of Those Who Forget God (8:11-18)
- D. The Path Of Those Who Return To God (8:19-22)

II. Job’s Speech (Job 9-10)

- A. God Is Great But Unapproachable (9:1-13)
- B. How Can I Answer Him? (9:14-20)
- C. I Am Blameless (9:21-24)
- D. There Is No Mediator Between Man And God (9:25-35)
- E. Job Pleads With God (10:1-17)
- F. Let Me Die In Peace (10:18-22)

SUMMARY:

Bildad begins his speech adding insult to injury—telling Job that he is full of hot air and accusing his dead sons of being sinners like Job (8:1-4). If Job would seek God, Bildad insists that God would restore him (8:5-7). Then Bildad appeals to tradition as being the storehouse of all wisdom and knowledge (8:8-10). He concedes that sometimes the wicked do prosper for a time until God intervenes and destroys him—his inference, like Eliphaz’s, is that Job had the appearance of being righteous because of all his blessings, but now God has straightened out that inequity (8:11-17). He then insists that Job’s future is in his own hands (8:19-22).

Job acknowledges that God is great, wise, and mighty (9:1-10), but He is detached and inaccessible to man (9:11-13). Job cannot find God’s moral purpose. He believes that God has another side that is much darker, a side that does not balance His power with justice (9:14-20). Job claims to be blameless—which at one time was true—but thinks that means nothing to God (9:21-24). Job’s life and convictions have all become vain (9:25-31), because there is no one to arbitrate between him and God (9:32-35).

Job turns to speak to God now. He gives free course to his complaint and pleads with God not to act like an unjust man would act (10:1-7). He appeals to God to remember that he is God’s own handiwork and it would be a waste for God to cast him away now (10:8-12). Yet he asks God if He will use that same power to consume him (10:13-17). Finally, Job begs for a little respite from his pain before slipping into the darkness of death (10:18-22).

OBSERVATIONS:

- 1) **Bildad.** His speech begins with a rude, stinging tongue, but somehow ends with tones of genuine friendship. Bildad’s philosophy and theology are very simple, yet very shallow. He can only see life as it conforms to his pattern for it—at least Job’s eyes have been opened a little because of his own suffering.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize this section in one or two sentences.*
- 2) *How does Bildad treat Job in this discussion?*
- 3) *What does Bildad appeal to in order to establish the case of his argument (8:8-10)?*
- 4) *Is tradition always right? Is it sometimes right? Does the past deserve our consideration? Why or why not? What use should we be able to make of the past?*
- 5) *How would you describe Job's attitude in his response?*
- 6) *What does Job charge God with in each of these verses?*

* 9:15 --	9:22a --
* 9:16 --	9:22b --
* 9:17 --	9:23 --
* 9:18a --	9:24a --
* 9:18b --	9:24b --
* 9:19 --	
- 7) *Job concludes with the question "If it is not He, who else could it be?" Do you have an answer for his question?*
- 7) *Job says some very harsh things about God. How can God be so patient with Him and then finally justify and vindicate Job in the end?*

CLOSING THOUGHT: "The thoughts form a serious problem of faith for many devout Christians. Here in the Holy Bible a righteous man speaks words that are blasphemous... Why are such words in the Bible? *First*, I suggest that the Bible is a revelation of human nature as well as the divine Mystery. Job is acting the way human beings act in time of pain. We who believe that God is all-understanding must believe that He understands Job, and the countless million others who have stormed and raged against Him in their time of agony. *Second*, Job is being honest with himself, his comforters, and with God. The comforters are committing a sin that is peculiar to the devout. They are tailoring the facts to fit their dogma. Job relentlessly exposes the facts. They would cramp truth to fit into their mold. Job seeks to express the truth. *Third*, the Book of Job is not ended on the note of denial. God accepts Job, who has blasphemed, and then accepts the comforters after Job's intercession. The comforters do not blaspheme. Their words about God are pious and decorous. Evidently piety and decorum are not enough..." (Andrew W. Blackwood Jr., *Out Of The Whirlwind*, pp.72-73).

KEY STATEMENT: *“What you know I also know; I am not inferior to you. But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God” (13:2-3).* Why is this discussion no longer going to do any good between Job and the three friends? Where is Job looking for answers?

OUTLINE:

I. Zophar’s Speech (Job 11)

- A. Severely Rebukes Job (11:1-6)
- B. Majesty Of God (11:7-12)
- C. Hope For The Penitent (11:13-20)

II. Job’s Speech (Job 12-14)

- A. Claims To Understand As Much As His Friends (12:1-3)
- B. God Is Responsible For All This (12:4-12)
- C. Affirms The Power Of God (12:13-25)
- D. Wants To Speak With Wise God Instead Of Foolish Friends (13:1-12)
- E. Emboldened To Challenge God (13:13-19)
- F. Questions And Challenges God (13:20-28)
- G. Man Is Born To Trouble (14:1-6)
- H. If A Man Dies Will He Live Again? (14:7-22)
 - 1. Is There Hope For A Man? (14:7-12)
 - 2. There Has To Be Hope For Man (14:13-17)
 - 3. There Cannot Be Hope For A Man (14:18-22)

SUMMARY:

Zophar begins with a caustic, judgmental rebuke of Job (11:1-6). He then raises God to sublime heights talking about His wisdom and strength (11:7-11). Then he gets in another jab at the suffering Job (11:12). If Job will repent and confess his sins to God, then he would be restored to God’s favor (11:13-19). Otherwise, Job is doomed (11:20).

Job responds with sarcastic humor (12:1-6). Zophar may be the only one who makes Job laugh! As the first cycle of speeches ends, Job sees that His friends really do not understand the things of God, and will not be able to help him. Job insists that God is responsible for this—that even the unknowing animals know this (12:7-12). He then claims that the world shows God’s power, but not His justice (12:13-25).

Job no longer wants to speak with unknowing friends, but with the all-knowing God (13:1-12). He boldly maintains his own integrity and issues a challenge to God (13:13-19). Job wants a hearing with God (13:20-28). He complains about the suffering of life which comes to all men—not only is God’s treatment of him unfair, but also His treatment of men in general (14:1-6). Then Job vacillates between despair (14:7-12)... hope (14:13-17)... and despair again (14:18-22)

OBSERVATIONS:

- 1) **Zophar.** He is arrogant, prejudiced, and ignorant of his own ignorance. His mind is made up, and he sees his task not to search for answers, but to convince Job that he already has the answers. He sees few hazy, gray areas in life. To him life holds few problems and is suspicious of anyone who finds problems in life. He knows that the solution is for Job to seek God and live righteously. But what does Zophar not realize?

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- 2) **Job Struggles With Belief In A Resurrection.** His knowledge was still incomplete about the resurrection of the dead, so he struggles with the hope that there is, even though he feels there is not!
- * The testimony of experience seemed to be against it (14:7-10,14)
 - * The phenomenon of nature suggests a resurrection though (14:7-9)
 - * The nature of man demands a resurrection (14:13)
 - * The nature of God demands a resurrection (14:15)
 - * Job's faith eventually triumphs (19:26)

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize this section in one or two sentences.*
- 2) *When someone doesn't have enough intellectual ammunition to do battle, like Zophar, what do they often resort to?*
- 3) *How understanding was Zophar of Job's words? What was his biggest fault?*
- 4) *What does Zophar really contribute to this discussion? Do you sense any progression in the arguments of each of these three friends? Is there any indication that they have softened their stand or opened their mind to any other explanations?*
- 5) *His friends have been speaking to Job like he is ignorant and inferior. Now what does he see about them (12:1-3; 13:1-2,12)? Do you think that in any way influences Job to take on God next (13:13-19)?*
- 6) *Explain how Job struggles with both faith and unbelief, hope and despair (14:7-22).*

CLOSING THOUGHT: "I sometimes wonder about the wisdom of writing concerning things we know so little. My earlier theories on child training proved unrealistic when confronted with the actual situation. They became fewer and less certain with each succeeding child. Perhaps Zophar felt proficient at spinning theories because he had experienced so little of living. He touched life only in an incidental fashion. Prejudice closes the door to life's rewarding nuances, and sophistry slams down the windows, leaving us with the stale air of our make-believe worlds.

Job's response to his associate's prattle is genuinely humorous, "Truly then you are the people, and with you wisdom will die!" (12:2). How somber Zophar must have appeared as he lectured exasperated Job. On he went without letup until the patriarch broke in with his comment. And Job's tortured expression must have eased for the moment at the prospect of the epitaph, "Wisdom Perished With Zophar." (Morris A. Inch, *My Servant Job*, p. 71).

JOB 15-17

Lesson 7

KEY STATEMENT: *“O earth, do not cover my blood, and let my cry have no resting place! Surely even now my witness is in heaven, and my evidence is on high” (16:18-19).* What is Job asking for (cf. Genesis 4:10; Revelation 6:9-10)? What is Job confident will happen?

OUTLINE:

I. Eliphaz’s Speech (Job 15)

- A. Accuses Job Of Iniquity (15:1-16)
- B. Wicked Man Is Troubled All His Life (15:17-35)
 1. Lifelong Trouble Of The Wicked (15:17-26)
 2. Inevitable Doom Of The Wicked (15:27-35)

II. Job’s Speech (Job 16-17)

- A. Job Complains Of His Mistreatment (16:1-17)
 1. Friends Are Without Pity (16:1-5)
 2. God Has Broken Him (16:6-14)
 3. Grief Is Never-ending (16:15-17)
- B. Job Cries Out For Vindication (16:18-17:5)
 1. He Has A Witness In Heaven (16:18-22)
 2. He Calls On God As A Pledge (17:1-5)
- C. Job Is Resigned To Despair (17:6-16)

SUMMARY:

Eliphaz accuses Job of confusing the issue with slick speech in order to justify himself, but that his words really condemn him (15:1-6). Then Eliphaz wonders what Job could possibly know that they do not, because they have the agreement of older wise men (15:7-13). Then he assures Job that God puts no trust in righteous men, much less sinful men like Job (15:14-16). In his dissertation on the way of the wicked, Eliphaz seems to say to Job “it happens to the wicked man just exactly the way it is happening to you... doesn’t that tell you something?” (15:17-35).

Job then complains of the mistreatment by his friends (16:1-5). They have told him what they would do if they were him (cf. 5:8ff), now he tells them what he would do if he was them (16:4-5). He complains that God has broken him and turned him over to his enemies (16:6-14). His grief is never-ending even though he has done no wrong (16:15-17). Then he cries for a witness to vindicate him even in heaven, if not before death then after death (16:18-22). In the back of his mind he holds to the belief that he must ultimately be exonerated.

Job is beaten, he is ready to die, but he calls on God to ultimately stand up for him and silence his accusers (17:1-5). He has become a reproach to everyone else except himself, because he still maintains his righteousness (17:6-9). The suffering Job, after seeing a momentary flicker of light (cf. 16:18-19) lapses back into despair (17:7,10-16).

OBSERVATIONS:

- 1) **The Friends Have Exhausted Their Arguments.** “As Job stubbornly maintains his integrity, the comforters, with equal stubbornness maintain their argument. But as Job develops through his inward struggle, they become less and less tolerant. The reader is apt to grow weary of their repeated emphasis upon what they have already emphasized. But the inspired writer has a purpose

in mind. He intended to expose the hollowness of the popular faith in material retributive justice, and no one could say that he failed in this... He expressed with vivid insight and keen logic a faith that was inadequate for his day, and is inadequate for ours. If it sounds flat and unconvincing when stated by Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, has the passage of the centuries improved it greatly? Is success a reward for piety, and failure the inevitable result of impiety? Do we worship God for the trinkets that fall from His hand, or for the sake of God alone? Doth man worship God for nought?" (Andrew W. Blackwood Jr., *Out Of The Whirlwind*, p.89).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize this section in one or two sentences.*
- 2) *Eliphaz accuses Job of pride (15:7,9,11). Is he right about Job?*
- 3) *Does Eliphaz hold out any ray of hope for Job in this speech?*
- 4) *How does Eliphaz (and the others for that matter) talk in circles about Job and his condition (15:6,17-35)?*
- 5) *Does the fact that one is older mean he knows more than the younger, as Eliphaz implies (15:10; cf. Psalm 119:98-119)?*
- 6) *What has Job learned about the proper way to treat those who suffer (16:1-5)?*
- 7) *How does Job think God has treated him (16:7-16)? How does he think he has treated God (16:17)?*
- 8) *What little sliver of hope for justice does Job hold to (16:18-19)?*

CLOSING THOUGHT: "The Hebrew word 'witness' (Job 16:19--*rh*) has no real equivalent in English. Perhaps 'sponsor' is the closest to its meaning. It means not merely one who knows that the accused is innocent, but one who will see his innocence is recognized.

"No longer does Job believe that he will receive justice on earth. Not yet has he seen the light of life after physical death. But still he fights for justice. He is not battling now for survival, only for the final recognition, in heaven, that Job was a righteous man. He has already cried that God is his sponsoring Witness. Now he calls upon God to be his Bondsman" (Andrew W. Blackwood, Jr., *Out Of The Whirlwind*, p.92).

KEY STATEMENT: *“Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! That they were engraved on a rock with an iron pen and lead, forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and he shall stand at last on the earth” (19:23-25).* What is Job confident will ultimately happen?

OUTLINE:

I. Bildad’s Speech (Job 18)

- A. Reproaches Job (18:1-4)
- B. The Utter Destruction Of The Wicked (18:5-20)
- C. Confident Affirmation (18:21)

II. Job’s Speech (Job 19)

- A. His Friends Respond With No Mercy (19:1-5)
- B. His God Responds With No Justice (19:6-12)
- C. His Family Responds With No Loyalty (19:13-20)
- D. Job Cries Out (19:21-29)
 - 1. Pleading For Pity (19:21-22)
 - 2. Confident Of His Own Vindication (19:23-27)
 - 3. Confident Of Their Judgment (19:28-29)

III. Zophar’s Speech (Job 20)

- A. Triumph Of The Wicked Is Short (20:1-11)
- B. The Wicked Is Completely Cut Off (20:12-28)
- C. God’s Judgment Upon The Wicked (20:29)

IV. Job’s Speech (Job 21)

- A. Triumph Of The Wicked Is Not Short (21:1-16)
 - 1. God Prospers Them (21:1-15)
 - 2. But Still I Don’t Envy Their Way (21:16)
- B. The Wicked Is Rarely Cut Off (21:17-26)
- C. Rejects Their Beliefs As Falsehoods (21:27-34)

SUMMARY:

Bildad tells Job that when Job quits speaking foolishness, then they can talk (18:1-4). He then describes the complete upheaval of the wicked, making it clear, with sort of a cold satisfaction, that Job is the wicked man that God has in mind for destruction (18:5-21)

Job is tormented by three things. First, the continuous character attacks by his friends. They are neither ashamed to accuse him or elevate themselves by putting him down (19:1-5). Second, he perceives that God’s injustice and wrath have overwhelmed him. He sees no way of escaping it (19:6-12). Third, his lack of support from family and friends. They treat him like a stranger (19:13-20). He cries for pity from his friends (19:21-22). He is confident of a day when he can plead his own case before God (19:23-29). He longs for that day when he will be vindicated (19:23-27) and his friends will be punished (19:28-29).

Zophar’s passions are stirred and must speak (20:1-3). He believes that the triumph of the wicked is short-lived, yet God will bring him down unto utter destruction (20:4-11). Even though the evil that he does tastes sweet in his mouth, it will turn to bitterness in his soul; he has no peace and no relief from the troubles God sends upon him; the world will bear witness against his evil (20:12-28). He believes God’s judgment is preappointed and sure upon the wicked man (20:29).

Job doesn't believe they will listen to his words (21:1-3). He asks if the wicked perish in their sins—like his friends believe—then why do they prosper all their lives (21:4-15). Even though he believes God prospers them, Job still shirks their wicked ways (21:16). Job then asks them two questions: How often do you really see the wicked destroyed (21:17-18)? And, what lesson can the wicked really learn if God punishes his children instead of them (21:19-21)? Their words are emptiness (21:27-34).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize this section in one or two sentences.*
- 2) *What have these conversations between Job and his friends degenerated to become?*
- 3) *Who does Job feel has turned upon him (19:1-19)? Explain whether or not each of these whom he mentioned had or had not actually turned upon him.*
- 4) *In the Christian age, the word “redeemer” carries a high and glorious concept... but is that what Job had in mind (19:25-27)? What was the “redeemer” in the mind of ancient men (Leviticus 25:25; Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Ruth 4:1-12; Numbers 35:9-28)?*
- 5) *What does Zophar say about the prosperity of the wicked?*
- 6) *What does Job say about the prosperity of the wicked?*
- 7) *Is Job starting to develop the same intellectual smugness that he so despised in his friends? What causes man to develop such an attitude?*

CLOSING THOUGHT: “...long before the time of Job’s friends down to our own the religious man has tended to distort the facts. God is the impartial pourer of His gifts on godly and ungodly alike (Matt. 5:45), and the great scourges of nature have normally smitten godly and ungodly alike. While from Scripture, Church history and personal experience we can find a goodly number of examples of God’s judgment on the wicked, we can as easily find at least as many examples of the sufferings of the righteous. More than that, the reverse is also true. The worst king of Judah, Manasseh, also reigned the longest... Though, ‘*Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*’ (2 Tim. 3:12) is a New Testament statement, ‘*For thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*’ (Psalm 44:22; cf. Romans 8:36) is equally true for the Old Testament... When a crowded congregation breathes Hallelujah at some outstanding testimony of God’s keeping, it is apt to forget the many who have gone to prison, and death with praise in their hearts to God” (H.L.Ellison, *Job From Tragedy To Triumph*, pp.74-75).

JOB 22-26

Lesson 9

KEY STATEMENT: “*But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold*” (23:10). Job is convinced that all of this suffering will finally accomplish something for him—what is it?

OUTLINE:

I. Eliphaz’s Speech (Job 22)

- A. Job’s Wickedness Is Great (22:1-11)
- B. God Sees Job’s Great Wickedness (22:12-20)
- C. Return To God And Be Restored (22:21-30)

II. Job’s Speech (Job 23-24)

- A. Has Looked But Cannot Find God (23:1-9)
- B. The Ways Of God (23:10-17)
 - 1. Confidence In Himself (23:10-12)
 - 2. No Confidence In God (23:13-17)
- C. God Allows The Oppression Of The Wicked (24:1-12)
- D. God Gives Security To The Wicked (24:13-25)

III. Bildad’s Speech (Job 25)

- A. The Greatness Of God (25:1-3)
- B. The Sinfulness Of Man (25:4-6)

IV. Job’s Speech (Job 26)

- A. The Uselessness Of Job’s Friends (26:1-4)
- B. The Thunder Of God’s Power (26:5-14)

SUMMARY:

Eliphaz, long past consideration for Job’s feelings, sarcastically asks Job why God has responded thus if Job is so righteous (22:1-4). Unable to dispute Job’s claim of goodness, Eliphaz invents wild, unsubstantiated charges of Job’s sins (22:5-11). Borrowing from Job’s own words (cf. 21:14-16 with 22:17-18), Eliphaz implies that Job is the very kind of man he himself condemned (22:12-20). Eliphaz then, in beautifully spoken words, assures Job that if he will return to God then God will restore him (22:21-30).

All of that sounds good to Job—if he could just find God (23:1-9). If God was to hear Job’s case from his own mouth, Job believes He would have to admit Job’s innocence. In spite of every test that he believes God has thrown at him, Job knows he will come forth pure and blameless (23:10-12). Then Job criticizes God for terrorizing man without any accountability for His actions (23:13-17). He then charges God with allowing wickedness to flourish and the innocent to be oppressed (24:1-12). He even contends that God gives temporary security to the wicked, thus encouraging their actions (24:13-24). He closes with a challenge to prove him wrong (24:25).

Bildad cannot really refute Job’s words, but Job’s attitude and conclusions are completely wrong. All Bildad knows is that God is glorious (25:1-3) and man is sinful (25:4-6).

Job says their words are useless (26:1-4). He agrees with their varied descriptions of God’s greatness (26:5-13), and adds that, together, they have not even scratched the surface of God’s greatness (26:14).

OBSERVATIONS:

- 1) **Job's Progress In Faith.** Notice how his faith is beginning to progress through his trials:
 - From death he shall not return (10:21)
 - He shall not awake (14:12)
 - His witness is in heaven (16:19)
 - His redeemer lives (19:23-29)
 - He will find God as a friend (23:6)
 - He will come forth from this test like gold (23:10)
- 2) **Irony Of Their Praise For God's Greatness.** Throughout the book, both Job and his friends present God as powerful, wise, majestic, and awe-inspiring. Yet, that very thing should cause them to see that His ways are above and beyond their limited ability to debate. But it doesn't matter; the friends are bold to speak for Him, Job is bold to speak against Him, but neither ever tries to listen to Him.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize this section in one or two sentences.*
- 2) *As Eliphaz tries to "exalt" God, what does He make God appear to be toward man's struggles (22:1-4)? Does that really exalt God?*
- 3) *What does Eliphaz do when he cannot substantiate his charge against Job as a sinner worthy of punishment (22:5-11)? Do people still do that today?*
- 4) *Job had sought God, like Eliphaz advised, but not found God. What does Job intend to do if he ever does find God (23:3-9)?*
- 5) *What does Job believe the end of this test will establish (23:10-12)?*
- 6) *Job concludes the debate with lofty statements about God and his ways (26:5-14). What should his knowledge of those ways have taught Job all along?*

CONCLUSION: Job has won the debate and he knows it (24:25). He has shown the theories and arguments of his friends to be foolish and inconsistent with the facts. Suffering does not always come as a result of sin. Job wins this point. So why does the book not end here? The picture does injustice to God. Job has accused God of being uninterested in the plight of mankind, being unfair in His dealings with man, and he has claimed that there is no moral order in the universe. Those accusations must be answered and settled before this book can ever be completed. Not only that, but Job needs to recant these words if he is ever to serve as an example of faith to us and as a lesson of man's love for God to Satan.

KEY STATEMENT: “*My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live*” (27:6). Have all the arguments of his friends convicted Job of anything? Have they convinced him of anything?

OUTLINE:

- I. Job Maintains His Integrity (Job 27)**
 - A. Job Maintains His Integrity (27:1-6)
 - B. The Hand Of God Against The Wicked (27:7-23)
- II. Job Exalts Wisdom (Job 28)**
 - A. Man’s Search For Hidden Treasures (28:1-11)
 - B. Wisdom Is More Elusive And Precious Than Gold (28:12-22)
 - C. Only God Knows Wisdom (28:23-27)
 1. To Fear God Is To Know Wisdom (28:28)
- III. Job Reminisces About The Past (Job 29)**
 - A. When He Had God (29:1-6)
 - B. When He Had Blessings And Was A Blessing To Others (29:7-17)
 - C. When He Had Security (29:18-20)
 - D. When He Had Respect (29:21-25)
- IV. Job Mourns About The Present (Job 30)**
 - A. His Degradation (30:1-15)
 1. Mocked By The Vilest Of Men (30:1-8)
 2. Lower Than The Low (30:9-15)
 - B. His Illness (30:16-19)
 - C. His Isolation From God (30:20-23)
 - D. His Distress (30:24-31)
- V. Job Calls For Judgment Upon Himself If He Has Sinned (Job 31)**
 - A. If He Has Lusted (31:1-4,9-12)
 - B. If He Has Been Deceitful (31:5-8)
 - C. If He Has Mistreated His Servants (31:13-15)
 - D. If He Has Mistreated The Poor (31:16-23)
 - E. If He Has Trusted In Wealth (31:24-28)
 - F. If He Has Hidden Sin In His Heart (31:29-37)
 - G. If He Has Taken Without Giving Back (31:38-40)

SUMMARY:

Job ends this debate with a fierce and passionate self-vindication. If God will not bear witness to it, then Job himself will (27:1-6). Job is confused, convinced that God is generally harsh with the wicked (27:7-23), but some of the wicked He chooses to overlook (cf. 21:7-26).

Job exalts wisdom. Man may be able to dig deep and mine the world’s riches (28:1-11), but he can never approach the depths of wisdom that are more precious than any of those earthly riches (28:12-22). Such wisdom is unattainable because it resides with God alone (28:23-27). But the fear of God is wisdom for man (28:28).

Job longs for the days before his suffering began. Those were the days when he had God—he feels like he lost God long ago (29:1-6). “It is most striking that it was his fellowship with God that stood out in his memory; all the rest was derived and received its meaning from this” (Ellison).

In those days God blessed him, and he became a blessing to others (29:7-17). The secure life he had planned for himself has instead become his greatest nightmare (29:18-25). He is now an outcast to the outcast, lower than the lowest class (30:1-8). Those who might best identify with him mistreat him (30:9-15). His pain is great, but his despair is greater because he feels like the hand of God has been on him to crush him (30:16-31).

Job is willing to accept his just punishment if he has done any of these things that deserve punishment. Notice all the “if... then” statements in chapter 31. *If* he has spoken deceit (31:5-7), been enticed by a woman (31:1,9), despised his servant (31:13), withheld from the poor (31:16-21), trusted in wealth (31:24-25), worshipped sun and moon (31:26-27), committed other sins (31:29-34), or took and did not give back to the land (31:38-39)... *then* he is willing to suffer the consequences for those sins (31:8,10-12,14-15,22-23,28,36-37,40).

OBSERVATIONS:

- 1) **The Debate Ends.** “So the third round ends in inevitable confusion, the confusion that must arise when orthodoxy turns its back on experience and creates a world to suit its theories, and when experience ignores revelation and seeks to make itself the measure of truth” (H. L. Ellison, *A Study Of Job From Tragedy To Triumph*, p.88)
- 2) **Wisdom.** To not be exhibiting much wisdom, Job shows a real insight into the value and real source of wisdom.
 - It does not originate with men (28:11)
 - It cannot be bought with money (28:15)
 - It is far more valuable than the most precious jewel (28:16-19)
 - God only “*knows its place*” (28:23)
 - The fear of the Lord is wisdom (28:28; cf. Proverbs 9:10)“Neither Job’s friends nor Job had been particularly concerned with the *fear of the Lord*. Self-vindication, the vindication of orthodoxy, yes, but no one had laid “*his hand upon his mouth*” (40:2) and listened to what God had to say. In their zeal for orthodoxy, for their conception of God, Job’s friends had gone far down the evil path, while they slandered him. Now the curtain goes up on the second part of the drama, and we are to see whether they can find true wisdom in spite of their disasterous start” (H. L. Ellison, p.91).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize this section in one or two sentences.*
- 2) *In what does Job have faith (27:1-6)?*

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- 3) *Is it possible for man to obtain this elusive characteristic of wisdom (28:1-28)? How can he do it (28:28)?*
 - 4) *How does Job answer the accusations Eliphaz has flung at him (29:1-25; cf. 22:4-11)?*
 - 5) *Where did Job's relationship with his neighbor (29:7-25) grow from (29:1-6)?*
 - 6) *How do you know when you have really hit the bottom (30:1-15)?*
 - 7) *What was the real heart of all the trouble Job was experiencing (31:35)?*
 - 8) *Explain Job's apparent confusion and contradictions when he discusses the workings of God in the world.*

CLOSING THOUGHT: “The words of Job are here ended. He stands face to face with a mystery that is thus far wholly unexplained. He has no theory, and can imagine none upon which his present sorrows can be accounted for. His friends undertook to silence his complaint, but he has silenced them. He holds fast to his faith in God, but he does so notwithstanding troubled questionings of which he cannot rid himself, that have arisen in his soul, and notwithstanding the presence of facts which he can neither escape nor explain away, and which seem to be in direct contrariety with the divine attributes (23:15-16)... there is an unrest in his soul which he cannot compose” (William Henry Green, *Argument From The Book Of Job*, pp.240-241)

KEY STATEMENT: “Although you say you do not see Him, yet justice is before Him, and you must wait for Him” (35:14). How does Elihu answer the statements of Job, which the other friends were unable to answer?

OUTLINE:

I. The Introduction Of Elihu (Job 32)

- A. Anger Of Elihu Is Aroused (32:1-5)
- B. Reason For His Speech (32:6-22)
 - 1. To The Friends -- Reason For His Initial Silence (32:6-14)
 - 2. To Job -- Reason For Breaking His Silence (32:15-22)

II. Elihu Contradicts Job (Job 33)

- A. Elihu Gently Pleads With Job To Listen (33:1-7)
- B. Elihu Disputes Job’s Claim (33:8-13)
- C. How God Speaks To Man (33:14-33)
 - 1. Night Visions (33:14-18)
 - 2. Chastening (33:19-22)
 - 3. Messenger (33:23-30)
 - a. Elihu Is That Messenger (33:31-33)

III. Elihu Contradicts Job’s Friends (Job 34)

- A. Elihu Harshly Contends With Job’s Friends To Listen (34:1-9)
- B. Elihu Argues That They Have Attributed Wickedness To God (34:10-37)
 - 1. God Exhibits Justice (34:10-15)
 - 2. They Hate Justice (34:16-20)
 - 3. God Is Righteous In Judgment (34:21-30)
 - 4. They Had Been Unrighteous In Their Judgment (34:31-37)

IV. Elihu Defends God (Job 35)

- A. Folly Concludes It Doesn’t Make A Difference Whether Or Not We Sin (35:1-8)
 - 1. Job Had Concluded That It Doesn’t Matter To God (35:1-3)
 - 2. But Elihu Says It Does Matter To Yourself (35:4-8)
- B. Wisdom Concludes That Justice Is Before God (35:9-16)
 - 1. Men Cry Out To God In The Bad Times (35:9,12)
 - 2. But Not In The Good Times (35:10-11)
 - 3. We Must Trust In God In His Time (35:13-16)

V. Elihu Proclaims God’s Righteousness (Job 36:1-23)

- A. He Speaks In Defense Of God (36:1-4)
- B. God Is Mighty And Just (36:5-12)
- C. Job Can Choose To Sin Or To Learn From God’s Chastening (36:13-21)
- D. Who Can Question The Goodness Of God? (36:22-23)

VI. Elihu Proclaims God’s Majesty (Job 36:24-37:24)

- A. God Is Great (36:24-37:13)
 - 1. Man Cannot Know His Works (36:24-37:10)
 - 2. God Uses These Works For His Own Purposes (37:11-13)
- B. Man Is Feeble (37:14-24)
 - 1. Asks If Job Understands God’s Works (37:14-18)
 - 2. Challenges Job To Speak Words Worthy Of God’s Time (37:19-24)

OBSERVATIONS:

- 1) **Elihu.** He is the last character in this discussion. His name means “He is my God”.
 - Young man (32:6-7). Shows respect for age but not for their philosophy (32:6-9).
 - Sympathetic to Job’s condition but not his accusations (33:6-7)
 - Points out the errors of Job and his friends (32:12; 33:8-13; 34:7-8,10-12,17,31-33; 35:1-8; 36:21)
 - Introduces a new theory—that suffering is Divine chastisement which is designed to lead a person to repent (33:19,29-30; 34:31; 36:21,31; 37:11-13).
 - Elihu’s view of God is that He is so majestic He is not obligated to give us a reason for His actions, we must simply wait to learn and understand them in His own time (33:12-13; 35:14).
- 2) **Preparing The Way For Jehovah.** Elihu perceives in both Job’s self-justification and his friend’s inability to answer him, that God is presented as being unjust (33:8-13; 34:10-12). No wonder his wrath is kindled! His words prepare the way for Jehovah to speak from the whirlwind (38-41).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize this section in one or two sentences.*
- 2) *How did Elihu intend to speak differently from Job’s other friends (33:1-7)?*
- 3) *What errors has Elihu observed in listening to this debate (32:12-13; 33:8-11)?*
- 4) *What is Elihu’s philosophy about suffering (33:19,29-30; 36:21)? Why would God use the things of His creation the way He does (37:11-13)?*
- 5) *What does Elihu suggest a man must do to be able to understand God’s ways (35:14)?*
- 6) *What do we need to know to be able to relate to God and accept Him and His ways (37:22-24)?*

CLOSING THOUGHT: “Elihu is not smug as he confronts the reality of innocent suffering. He bids Job and all men to recollect the law of spiritual life, that character grows from the soil of sorrow. Those who achieve almost without exception have known intense pain. But we all know those to whom pain has brought only whimpering and despair. Elihu is closer to the heart of the mystery than were the other friends. But the mystery itself eludes his grasp... Humbly, before the mystery, Elihu admonishes Job, Desire not the night of death. Do not choose sin in addition to your affliction. But turn you in trust to the infinite mystery of God, whose ways man cannot comprehend” (Andrew W. Blackwood, *Out Of The Whirlwind*, pp. 138-139).

KEY STATEMENT: “Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me” (38:2-3). How have the tables now turned on Job in this discussion?

OUTLINE:

- I. God Challenges Job (Job 38:1-3)**
- II. God’s Work In The Physical World (Job 38:4-38)**
 - A. The Foundation Of The Earth (38:4-7)
 - B. The Sea (38:8-11)
 - C. The Morning (38:12-15)
 - D. The Depths (38:16-18)
 - E. The Light And Darkness (38:19-21)
 - F. The Elements (38:22-30)
 - G. The Stars (38:31-33)
 - H. The Clouds And Rain (38:34-38)
- III. God’s Work In The Animal World (Job 38:39-39:30)**
 - A. The Lion And Raven (38:39-41)
 - B. The Mountain Goat (39:1-4)
 - C. The Wild Donkey And The Ox (39:5-12)
 - D. The Ostrich (39:13-18)
 - E. The Horse (39:19-25)
 - F. The Hawk And The Eagle (39:26-30)
- IV. God Challenges Job (Job 40:1-5)**
 - A. God Confronts Job (40:1-2)
 - B. Job Answers (40:3-5)

SUMMARY:

Job had been confident that he knew the workings and the ways of God (cf. 27:11)... now God calls on him to prove that claim and demands that Job answer *His* questions (38:1-3). God then asks Job a series of rhetorical questions.

Where was Job when God plotted and constructed the world (38:4-7)? Was Job the one who set the boundary for the seas so that in all their power and fury they could not wash away the land (38:8-11)? How many mornings has Job caused to rise (38:12-15)? What about the depths of the sea or even the depth of death’s pit—the realm of the unseen—has Job seen their bottom (38:16-18)? Does Job know the ways of light and darkness, or did they exist before him (38:19-21)? We take the forces of nature for granted--we always know they are going to work--but *how* do they work (38:22-30)? What control does Job have over the stars and constellations that God put into the heavens to regulate days, nights, months, years and seasons (38:31-33)? Can Job call down the rain or lightning to do his bidding--and was it Job who gave man the ability to think (38:34-38)?

Next God turns to living creatures, and we see His compassion and concern for those depend-ing on Him for their welfare. As strong as the lion is, and as indiscriminate as the raven is about what it eats, it is still God who provides for them, not Job (38:39-41). Is it Job who insures that new life springs forth and survives out of the sight of men, or is it God (39:1-4)? Can Job control the wild, undomesticated animals?

God is the one who set them free (39:5-12). Does Job have the same creative genius as God, who made an ostrich which survives its own lack animal instincts (39:13-18)? Did Job give the horse strength and courage (39:19-25)? Was it Job's wisdom which gave the hawk and eagle the ability to fly (39:26-30)?

“In His speech to Job, Jehovah asked questions which were intended to make Job realize the great distance between God and man” (Homer Hailey, *A Commentary On Job*, pp. 349). Job finally gets the hearing before God that he wanted. He had planned what he would say and how he would answer God (cf. 13:18; 23:3-7), and now that God has finally spoken to Job, Job has nothing to say (40:1-5)!!

OBSERVATIONS:

- 1) **God's Thundering Voice Puts Everything Into Perspective.** It reassures Job that God is alive, that He is here, that He cares, and that He is ultimately in control.
- 2) **God Introduces Job To Himself.** “Through God's omniscience, the patriarch realizes that he cannot hide; through His omnipresence, he must not shirk; through His omnipotence, he can achieve.” (Morris Inch, *My Servant Job*, pp. 92-93).
- 3) **Job Asked For Answers--Instead He Got Questions.** He was hit with so many questions—quickly and overwhelmingly—so that suffering and confused, he fell prostrate before God.
- 4) **God Stresses What Job And The Friends Had Already Admitted.** That God is great and His ways are past understanding. Therefore, He should not be questioned by ignorant men (38:2-3)!

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize this section in one or two sentences.*
- 2) *Until Job learns a little more about running the universe, what kind of position is he in to question God's running of the moral universe?*
- 3) *Elihu had shown a great amount of patience before he finally spoke up, but who has shown more patience than even him?*
- 4) *God challenged Job to answer His questions (38:2-5; 40:1-2). Did Job actually answer God's questions (40:3-5)? What does he say? Will this discussion be over before Job acknowledges certain things about God (cf. 42:1-6)?*

CLOSING THOUGHT: “It is not the design of God to offer a vindication of His dealings with men in general, or a justification of His providence towards Job. He has no intention of placing Himself at the bar of His creatures, and erecting them into judges of His conduct. He is not amenable to them and He does not recognize their right to be censors of Him and of His ways. The righteousness of His providence does not depend upon their perceiving or admitting it. The Lord does not here stand on the defensive... He is the sovereign Lord of all, accountable to no being but Himself. He does not appear to vindicate Himself, but to rescue Job” (William Henry Green, *Argument From The Book Of Job*, pp. 286-287).

KEY STATEMENT: “Would you indeed annul my judgment? Would you condemn Me that you might be justified?” (40:8). In his attempt to find answers to his dilemma, what has Job actually done? How does Job now see both God and himself (42:5-6)?

OUTLINE:

- I. Job’s Weakness Vs. God’s Strength (40:6-41:34)**
 - A. God Challenges Job To Take His Place (40:6-14)
 - B. The Behemoth (40:15-24)
 - C. The Leviathan (41:1-34)
 1. His power (41:1-11)
 2. His description (41:12-34)
- II. Job’s Response (42:1-6)**
- III. The Conclusion (42:7-17)**
 - A. Job’s Three Friends Are Rebuked (42:7-9)
 - B. Job’s Possessions Are Restored (42:10-17)

SUMMARY:

God is not content to leave this discussion with Job only admitting his own inadequacy. God challenges him to look at himself and see if he is qualified to sit in judgment of God (40:6-9). If Job is qualified to do that, then let him act like God (40:10-13). Then if Job can do the things of God, He will acknowledge that Job has the power to save himself (40:14).

Then God turns to two of His greatest living creatures “behemoth” and “leviathan”. Calling Job’s attention to two of God’s creation, God then asks how Job, who would not dare go up against these powerful creatures, if he would be willing to go up against Him! God created both Job and “behemoth” (40:15), and only God can subdue the “behemoth” (40:15-24). Man is terrified to even face Leviathan, therefore how does any man think he can stand against God (41:1-11)? How can Job stand before God in pride and arrogance when he cannot even stand before the “king over all the children of pride”, the Leviathan (41:12-34; see v. 34)?

Now that Job sees and understands God, he can do nothing but repent (42:1-6). God’s wrath is kindled against Job’s three friends, who in all their attempts to glorify God had spoken falsehood about Him. Job is instructed to offer sacrifices for them and make intercession for them as he used to do for his children (42:7-9; cf. 1:5). God then restored Job’s losses two-fold (42:10-17).

OBSERVATIONS:

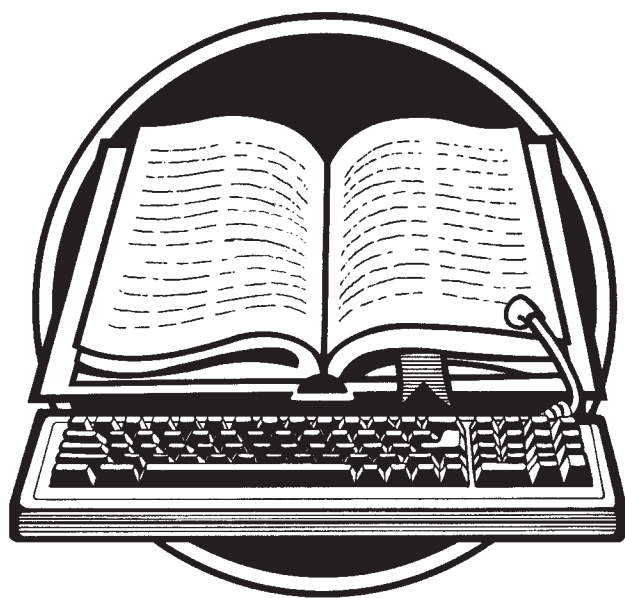
- 1) Job Has Been Given An Answer.** Not the one that he expected, but actually one that was more important--that the answers to all of his questions lie in a realm human wisdom cannot reach. He has rediscovered the fundamental truth that man is not God (40:15; 41:10; 42:5-6). A man can be content not to know all, as long as he knows that God does.
- 2) Man Can Pour Out His Heart To God.** “One bold message in the Book of Job is that you can say anything to God. Throw at Him your grief, your anger, your doubt, your bitterness, your betrayal, your disappointment--He can absorb them all” (Philip Yancey). But at the same time, we sure better be ready to listen when He answers.

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- 3) **When Job Humbled Himself Then God Exalted Him.** Until then, God made sure he remained abased (1 Peter 5:5-6). He was restored when he humbled himself. Then he was able to intercede for his friends who had not yet humbled themselves (42:7-10).
 - 4) **Job No Longer Seeks For Vindication.** “The passionate cry for vindication has been forgotten, for it matters not what men may say, if he knows that his fellowship with God has been restored” (H. L. Ellison, *A Study Of Job From Tragedy To Triumph*, p.126).
 - 5) **The Friends Of Job...** who had thought of him as an outcast from God, can now only be restored to God’s favor through his intercession.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1) *Summarize this section in one or two sentences.*
- 2) *Did God ever tell Job why he suffered or what His purpose was for Job? What did He tell Job?*
- 3) *Why was Job able to intercede for his friends?*
- 4) *At first glance, it seems that God doubled everything Job had except his children--but how is it true that God actually had doubled the number of Job’s children too?*
- 5) *What have you personally learned from this book?*

CLOSING THOUGHT: “When they are making a Persian rug, they put it up vertically on a frame, and little boys, sitting at various levels, work on the wrong side of it. The artist stands on the right side of the rug, the side on which people will tread, and shouts his instructions to the boys on the other side. Sometimes a boy will make a mistake in the rug... ‘What happens when the boy makes a mistake?’ ‘Quite often the artist does not make the little boy take out the wrong color. If he is a great enough artist, he weaves the mistake into the pattern’... You and I are working on the wrong side of the rug. We cannot watch the pattern developing. I know I put in the wrong color very often. I put in black when God meant red, and yellow when he meant white; and the other workers with whom I make my rug make mistakes too. Sometimes I am tempted to say, ‘Is there Anybody on the other side of the rug; am I just left to make a mess of my life alone? Is there Anybody there?’ Then, through the insight which comes back with returning faith, I realize that instead of making me undo it all or letting my life’s purpose be ruined, God puts more in. I wonder if sometimes He alters the pattern? It isn’t what it might have been; but because he is such a great artist I haven’t spoiled everything. So, at the end, when he calls me down off my plank and takes me round to the other side, I shall see that just because He is such a great Artist, no mistakes of mine can utterly spoil His plan. If only I will work with Him, ‘simply trusting every day’, I think one day I shall find my mistakes and my calamities and my distress and my failures and all my pain, woven into the pattern, and I shall say, ‘It is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.’ Some such faith I must have to believe in a God of love who puts us into a world where things can go so utterly wrong” (Leslie D. Weatherhead, *Why Do Men Suffer*, pp. 134-135).



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