

Lesson One

The book of Job is a neglected book. **Chapters 1,2, and 42** are frequently read but the other 39 chapters are regularly ignored.

. Job was a rich man and served as a king – **Job 29:25; 3:13,14**

He was a judge – **Job. 29:21**

The book of Job is showing us that answers are not fast nor easy when it comes to the topic of suffering and God's authority over these things.

Many people associate the book of Job with grief and hardship. People associate Job with hardship the way they associate Judas with betrayal.

Many people who have some bible knowledge think of grief and hardship when they think of Job.

You don't have to wait until you are "*over the hill*" to experience grief and suffering. What we define as "*suffering*" is different for each of us, and it changes as we grow older as well. As we grow older and stronger in our Christian Walk, we continue to experience suffering.

Our easy answers to suffering and God will be dismantled by this book.

Notice where the book of Job is in the Old Testament. It is located among the wisdom books. Not only is this book considered wisdom literature, but you will notice that this is not a history book.

Job is not a history book as if you were reading **Genesis** or **1 & 2 Kings**. You are to read this book of Job like you were reading the **Psalms** or **Lamentations**. It is poetry. This is why we see these cycles of speeches in the book.

The book of Job tells us about how we should think about God when we are suffering. The purpose of the book is to explore God's policies regarding suffering in the world, especially when the righteous or innocent suffer.

Ultimately, we will see that the way God operates the world is more complicated than people can imagine, and God's way cannot be reduced to a simple formula or principle.

The book opens with a man in the **land of Uz**. The **land of Uz** is important for the setting of the book. This is not happening in Israel. The book is a universal book written to all people for all time about the problem of suffering and how God runs the world.

There is nothing in this book where we will say, "*This point only applies to Israel and the laws it was governed by under the Law of Moses.*"

The land of Uz was probably somewhere in the Edomites' land.

Lamentations 4:21

There are varying estimates as to when the book was written, many between 1800 and 2000 B.C.

The Man (1:1, 4-5) - The text wants to emphasize the righteousness of Job. Job was *“blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.”* Job is a man who is wholeheartedly trying to please God.

He has integrity and is not false or hypocritical in his faith. Not only was Job personally upright, he also was concerned about the righteousness of others. **Verse 5** tells us that he offered burnt offerings on behalf of his children in case they had sinned in their lives.

Job takes the initiative in spiritual leadership. The point of the text is to emphasize that what is about to happen to him is not because of personal sins. Job is not the one on trial. Job is a man of complete integrity. This is a key foundation to the book of Job.

Blessings (1:2-3) - The other important point about the life of Job is to know that God has richly blessed him. He is the greatest person in all the east.

Wealth and Lifestyle

7,000 sheep - Sheep produce wool, milk, meat, cheese

Feta cheese and ricotta cheese are from sheep's milk

How much do sheep eat?

Using a 130lb. ewe as our baseline each sheep would need between 3 and 3.5 lbs. of food per day

Alfalfa or clover hay, or grass with mixed hay

24,500 lbs. of food per day

100 sheep need 30 to 100 acres depending on grazing availability

2100 acres = 3.28 square miles

7000 acres = 10.93 square miles

3,000 camels - Camels provide milk, meat, hair for textiles, human transportation, bearing loads, materials for tents, clothing, bedding, and accessories as well as yarn

3,000 camels need 1500 acres or 2.34 square miles

Camels eat up to 9lbs of vegetables per day

27,000 lbs. of food per day

500 yokes of oxen - Likely means 1,000 oxen, 2 per yoke typically

A Virgate is the amount of land able to be plowed by a pair of oxen in a plowing season. This is equivalent to 30 acres

23 square miles could be plowed by this many oxen per season

Oxen eat up to 30 lbs. of food per day

30,000 lbs. of food per day

500 female donkeys - Donkeys guard sheep, assist in breaking young calves, provide recreational riding, are able to carry heavy loads, and are a good companion animal.

Donkeys eat up to 5% of their body weight in food daily

A typical weight for a donkey is 400 to 500 lbs

16 lbs. of food per day

8,000 lbs. of food per day

Donkeys don't need as much space to themselves as they are more social

One-third of a square mile

He had 7 sons and 3 daughters. These are full, perfect numbers. The number 7 and the number 3 are perfect and complete numbers, and these numbers add up to 10, which is another complete number.

Notice that the text does not say that he had these ten children but they *“were born to him”*. This indicates how God had blessed him with these children. This is what we would call the ideal family.

God’s Message - This is the message that righteous people suffer. Joseph suffered unjustly. Daniel and his three friends suffered for righteousness’ sake. All the prophets of God suffered for God’s sake. All the apostles suffered for the sake of Jesus. Stephen suffered and was killed for preaching the gospel. The ultimate example is Jesus who suffered and lived a perfect life. You do not have to do something wrong to suffer.

Suffering does not mean you have sinned. Jesus clearly taught this truth to his disciples. - **John 9:1–3**

Notice that the assumption is sin for the suffering this man has experienced. No one sinned that made this man blind. Being born with a disability or experiencing physical suffering in life does not mean that someone sinned.

Jesus makes the same point in **John 11**. Lazarus did not sin so that he died early in life. Mary and Martha did not sin so that Lazarus died. Jesus said. **John 11:1–4**

Notice that Jesus addressed this in **Luke 13:1-5** also.

Again, the implication is that those who were killed by Pilate must have been worse sinners than those who were not killed. Jesus again dismantles that kind of thinking completely. Jesus uses this to remind the people to be prepared in their lives through repentance or else they will suffer the judgment of God.

Therefore, this is the message that we must learn. God did not establish a life principle that says that if you suffer, you must have sinned.

The book of Job starts with his righteous life so that we would clearly see that this is not how God ordered the universe. **Job 2:3** makes this truth even more clear when God says that Job was afflicted *“without cause.”*

So often we want to assume that suffering means sin was committed. Yet we are taught here in these first few verses of Job that our suffering does not equate that you must have sinned.

Jesus, the perfect and sinless Son of God, suffered and died. You cannot look at His life and say that this is the reason for His suffering and death. This is not how God runs the world.

The Sons of God and Satan (1:6-7) - The scene opens with a heavenly assembly, the sons of God presenting themselves before the Lord. Immediately we desire to know who these *“sons of God”* are.

To understand them as *“angels”* (NIV) is probably too precise and too presumptive. This seems to be a convening of certain spiritual beings before the Lord.

There are two reasons to not be troubled by this picture.

First, this assembling of dignitaries before the king is common in ancient Near Eastern literature. The king would summon his attendants, receiving reports from them, taking counsel from them, and giving directives to them.

Second, there are other places in the scriptures where we see this summoning on spiritual dignitaries before the throne of God - **Isa. 6:8; Ps. 82** It is the **1 Kings 22** text that gives us the closest picture to what **Job 1** is likely picturing. - **“1 Kings 22:19–23**

So, we have a picture of the Lord as the enthroned king with various spiritual beings gathering before Him. In this gathering we have one who is called Satan among them. We must remember that **“Satan”** is not a name but a title. The word means **“the accuser.”**

The Hebrew word “Satan” simply means “the accuser, one who opposes, prosecutor”
It is not a name until the New Testament. Satan first and foremost is a LITERARY DEVICE
The primary function is to set up the question of the book - “Does Job serve God for nothing?”
Satan is not mentioned after chapter 2

Secondly this is a being who obeys God. He acts on God’s orders. His concern is for God’s wisdom

Besides the book of Job, this title appears in only two other places in the Old Testament. **1 Chron. 21:1; Zech 3**

Our understanding of the accuser (Satan) comes primarily from the New Testament, not the Old Testament.

The Lord asks where Satan has come from, and his answer is a picture of causing trouble everywhere. We should not think that the Lord does not know where Satan came from or what Satan is doing. These questions and answers are for us so that we can understand what is about to happen.

Remember that the first two chapters are setting up the occasion for the poetry that is found in **chapters 3-42**. Satan is bent on our ruin and discrediting God - **James 4:7**

Satan is described as accusing us day and night before our God - **Rev. 12:**

Questioning God and Job (1:8-12) - Notice who starts this discussion. It is God who speaks to Satan and asks if Satan has considered the righteousness of Job. The Lord says that Job is blameless, upright, fears God, and turns away from evil.

This gives us a picture of what the apostle Paul meant in **Eph. 3:10**. The Lord tells this heavenly assembly to look at Job.

The Lord calls Job **“my servant.”** What a wonderful designation to be given by our Lord! The Lord says that this is my servant, and Satan should consider his righteous life.

Satan then asks the key question: **Does Job fear God for no reason?** Notice that Satan does not disagree with the assessment of Job’s righteousness. Satan makes the challenge that Job is righteous only because God has put a hedge around him, protecting him from disaster and blessed the work of his hands.

Satan makes a very important challenge of God. Satan asks why Job fears God and why Job is righteous. If being rich is the result of righteousness, then who wouldn't be righteous?

Satan says Job does not serve you, God. Job serves himself. The only reason he serves you is because you have blessed the work of his hands and made him rich. Satan is stating that people only serve God because He is good to them. Job is virtuous and innocent for his own benefit. Therefore, remove the hedge and then let us see what happens.

The Lord gives permission to Satan to strike all that he has. But the Lord limits Satan from touching Job (1:12).

Disaster Strikes (1:13-19) - What we read about in **verses 13-19** is just a staggering amount of disaster hitting the life of Job. A messenger comes to Job to report that the Sabeans took his oxen and donkeys and killed his servants.

The Sabeans were a people inhabiting Arabia, near the country where Job dwelt. They were known for robbery and survived by plundering their neighbors.

Then another messenger comes to report that *the fire of God* fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants.

While *"the fire of God"* might suggest a great fire, it most likely refers to lightning, as thunder was seen as God's voice and lightning was seen as His fire. And as the prince of the power of the air was permitted now to arm himself with this dreadful artillery of heaven, he might easily direct the zigzag lightning to every part of the fields where the sheep were feeding and so destroy them in a moment.

"The prince of the power of the air" [Eph 2:2] is permitted to have control over such destructive agents.

Then another messenger comes to report that the Chaldeans raided his possessions, took his camels and killed all the servants. The Chaldeans inhabited each side of the Euphrates near Babylon, which was their capital. They were also mixed with the wandering Arabs and lived like them. They were the descendants of Chesed, son of Nahor and brother of Huz, from whom they had their name Casdim, which we translate Chaldeans. They divided themselves into three bands, to more speedily encompass, collect, and drive off the three thousand camels. They most likely mounted the camels and rode off.

Finally, another messenger comes to report that while his children were feasting in the oldest brother's house, a great wind came across and caused the house to fall, killing his children. This was the greatest of Job's losses, and therefore Satan reserved it to the last, that if the other provocations failed, this might make him curse God. They died by a wind of the devils raising, but which seemed to be the immediate hand of God. They were removed at a time when he most required their support to help him cope with his other losses.

What Satan does is particularly sinister. Not only is this a staggering amount of loss all occurring within a moment's notice. Not only does Job have it all and then lose it all in a single day. Job's losses and their occurrence seem like God's judgment. Notice **Deut. 28:31-35**

This sounds just like what Job has experienced and what Job is going to experience in **chapter 2**. Satan has made it appear that God has struck Job down for sinfulness and disobedience.

The Response of Job (1:20-22) - So, what will Job do? In **verse 20** Job shows expressions of pain and mourning by tearing his robe and shaving his head. But notice that Job falls to the ground and worships.

Falling to the ground is the physical posture of recognizing and accepting a significant act of God. **Gen. 47:31; 1 Kings 1:47; Ex. 4; Ex. 12:27**

Job sees this disaster as coming from the hand of God and yet Job worships God. Further, listen to what Job says in **Job 1:21-22**

Whether God gives or takes away, God must be praised. This is the godly, righteous response. Job does the exact opposite of what Satan says Job will do. Both Job and God are vindicated. Job has shown that he will serve God no matter what. Further, God is vindicated. God can bless people and people will serve Him, not because of the blessings, but because of who God is.

Our Message Today - The question that Satan asks is the question that is before us today. ***Do we serve God for nothing or only because he has put a hedge around us?*** Do we serve God because we love God and if we lost everything would we still worship and serve God? Why do we serve God? Will we still serve God if we lost our house, our cars, our wealth, and lost our jobs? Will we still serve God if all our children died in a single day? Will we still serve God if our spouse died?

Will we still serve God even if there is no physical benefit that we receive for doing so? We must see that this is the call of true discipleship.

Jesus taught true discipleship when He called His disciples. He did not offer His disciples homes to stay in. He did not offer them comfort or wealth. Jesus offered them a stone for a pillow and persecution for proclaiming His name. Those apostles proved that they served God for nothing. Daniel and his three friends proved that they served God for nothing. Joseph proved that he served God for nothing.

What did Jesus say in **Matt. 16:24**. This is the very picture of what it looks like to serve God for nothing! We come to this strong faith by recognizing what Job recognized. Nothing I have is deserved. Nothing I have is from my own hand. I came into the world naked and nothing. Everything that I have since birth has been given to me by God's hand.

Notice how **chapter 1** concludes. ***"In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong."*** This is the goal through our suffering, through tragedy, and through trials. Do not sin and do not charge God with doing wrong. God must not be served from selfishness. God must be served and worshiped for who He is. He is God. He is the Almighty Creator. Live for Him. Worship Him. Love Him.

Lesson Two

God and the Satan (2:1-3) - The first three verses of **chapter 2** start again just as we read in **Job 1:6-8**. It is a day when the *sons of God* were presenting themselves before the Lord. Satan is still doing all that he does: going to and fro through the earth.

He is the roaring lion seeking someone to devour - **1 Pet. 5:8**

As we saw in **chapter 1**, God's question is not for His benefit but for the reader's benefit. God is showing us the motive and purpose of Satan. There is only one new statement made in this discussion which is found in **verse 3**. *"still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."*

God declares that Job maintained his integrity. He has remained blameless and has not cursed God to his face as Satan declared he would do. We should also notice that God takes ownership of what has happened. We have learned in our studies throughout the scriptures that there is nothing that happens in this world that is not under God's rule. We cannot try to justify or defend God by saying that Satan did this action against Job outside of the power of God. Satan is not more powerful than God. Further, Satan needed permission to do what he did.

Not only this, but God also constrained what Satan could do to Job (**1:12**). What God says here is important for our consideration about how God runs the world regarding suffering. This action against Job did not happen without God's knowledge or agreement.

God takes responsibility for what happened in **Job 2:3**. God does not say that Satan did it (though he did). Rather, God says that He did it himself: *"You incited me against him to destroy him without reason."*

But this is not the only time where the book tells us that God did this. Look at **Job 42:11**. It is important to observe that God does indicate that the answer to the problem of Job's suffering is not his fault. God's answer is not that things in the world operate outside of His control. God is pictured as fully in charge. God even takes responsibility for what has happened.

The problems that come from this issue cannot be solved in two or three chapters. We must be patient and let God explain as we move through the length of this text.

We should also acknowledge that God again asserts Job's righteousness. God says that He destroyed Job *"without reason."* This is a critical component of this book. Job is righteous. Therefore, nothing that has happened to him is because he sinned. This suffering is undeserved.

Satan's Accusation (2:4-6) - Satan denies that Job has passed the test and that the trial of God is complete. Satan declares that people will give all they have for their life. People only deep-down care about themselves. Since humans only care about themselves this is the reason why he did not curse you. Harming Job will lead him to fail, and he will curse you to your face. Satan considers health problems our breaking point. Satan may be correct. I have seen many people curse God and give up on God when their health fails.

People do care about themselves. But do they care about themselves so much that they will only serve God when their health is good?

So, Satan says that God must stretch out His hand and touch Job's bone and his flesh and then he will curse you to your face. God tells Satan that Job is in his hands. However, he must spare Job's life. If he kills Job, then we cannot see if Job will curse God or not.

The Suffering - 2:7-9 - Satan goes out from the presence of the Lord strikes Job with loathsome sores (some translations read boils) from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. The intensity of his suffering is so great that he takes a piece of broken pottery and scrapes himself with it while sitting in ashes.

This is probably the ash heap that was outside of the city where the trash was collected and burned.

Job's wife comes along with a solution for her husband. ***“Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.”*** Job's wife becomes a temptation for him. If Job listens to her advice, then Satan is right. Job would have been living for God for the benefits. We see in her exactly what Satan challenges. If you take away the benefits people will not serve God, any longer. She seems exasperated that God has not kept her righteous husband in the favored condition he deserves.

Therefore, to her way of thinking, death is an appropriate response. She does not hate her husband but sees that he needs relief, and death is the only way to achieve it. We are going to see this thinking even in the words of Job later in the book. Death appears to be the only relief during suffering. Those who draw near to committing suicide and those who follow through are usually looking for relief from the pain in their lives.

In some areas, doctors assist suicide to alleviate suffering from health issues. Her response is not irrational from an earthly way of thinking. This is the way people think today. If things are going to be this bad, why live? Job's wife amplifies the point: if things are going to be this bad for living a righteous life, why be righteous and why live?

Keep in mind before we are too critical of her. She has lost everything just like Job. Those were her children that died also. Those were her possessions that were stolen. That was her wealth that was lost. Until **chapter 2** she has lost just as much as Job has. Satan is afflicting Job, but there are other people that are suffering. So often we forget that our lives are interconnected with other people.

The choices we make and the things we experience in life affect more than us. Our sins affect other people and their sins affect us. Our trials in life affect other people and other people's trials affect us.

This is an interesting side point that is made in the book. In this way, one trial becomes many people's trials. Job is experiencing suffering and Job's wife is experiencing suffering. Her solution is to curse God and die.

Job's Response 2:10 -Job's response is faithful and amazing. We must be ready to receive good from God and we must also be ready to receive adversity. God does not do evil things - **Jam. 1:13**.

The Hebrew word for **adversity** can also mean trouble, bad, or disagreeable. This seems to be the idea of what Job is saying.

He is not speaking about receiving from God what is morally good and morally evil. Rather, he is speaking about receiving the good things in life and the bad things in life. This is an important truth that we must consider. How lopsided our faith is when we so readily receive good from the Lord but balk at Him when we receive adversity from Him!

Messages for Today - Suffering is part of what we must expect in the Christian life. We learned this in **chapter 1**. Even the most righteous individual will experience suffering. Christians are not blocked from receiving the worst kinds of difficulties and pains in life. Many times, it is the godly and the righteous who receive worse treatment than the world. Further, the righteous do not receive a less intense suffering because of their faith in God. Job experiences the most traumatic of trials.

Endurance will be built into our faith when we recognize that everything we possess belongs to God. God can give and can take away. We may just have a miserable life from start to finish. We are not in control of this. God is in control. Our righteous life and faith in God do not compel God to meet our life expectations. Further, endurance is built into faith when we have a determination to worship God no matter what happens.

We must have a mental fortitude to be willing to live for God and continue to worship Him, even if that means we have lost everything in life, including our health. We will appreciate and value whatever we receive. Even if we lose our family support.

Endurance is what we are called to have in Christ. Listen to what was said to the persecuted Christians in the book of Revelation - **Rev. 13:1**; Or to say this as Job did: **“Shall we receive good from God and shall we not receive adversity” (2:10). “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (1:21).**

Throughout this, Job did not utter any words considered sinful.

The Arrival of Job’s Friends (2:11-13) - When Job’s three friends hear about the adversity and troubles that struck Job, they went to Job. Their names are Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. We do not know as much about the locations from which Bildad and Zophar come. But we do know about Teman, which is where Eliphaz comes from.

Teman is a city in Edom that was known as a city that possessed wisdom - **Jer. 49:7; Obadiah 8-9.**

Wisdom is pictured as coming to Job in these three friends. We should be happy to see these three friends. Wisdom is in them, and they are coming to Job. Notice the reason for their coming is stated in **verse 11**. These three have made an appointment to meet at the same time so that they can show sympathy and comfort.

When they see Job, they are shocked. They do not even recognize him because he has been so physically destroyed by this trial. The boils and sores on his body have rendered him unrecognizable.

They expressed their grief by mourning, tearing their garments, sprinkling dust upon their heads, and sitting on the ground. These are conventional gestures of grief in the ancient Near East. **Lam. 2:10**

They are very sympathetic and recognize the immense suffering of Job. This is what the text says in **verse 13**. Thus, **they sit with Job in silence for 7 days**. Again, we might think this is strange, but this represents a complete time of mourning with Job. Ezekiel does the same thing when he meets the exiles, sitting among them for seven days - **Ezek. 3:15**

The point of this paragraph is to show these men as true friends who possess wisdom. If you are in the depths of suffering, imagine what your closest friends would do for you.

These three friends have come to show Job sympathy and comfort, and this is what they are doing.

Before we move forward into the discussions that Job and the three friends have with each other about why this has happened, I want us to take a step back and consider some of the important messages that come from these first two chapters.

One of the facets of this account is that God puts limitations on what Satan can do. In the first encounter, the Lord tells Satan:

“Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.” (Job 1:12)

God tells Satan what he can and cannot do. Satan can do anything with what Job has but nothing can be done against his body. In the second encounter we see similar limitations.

“Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.” (Job 2:6)

God establishes boundaries to what can happen during the trials of Job. This sets up an important truth as we read the book of Job: ***God is in control.*** Satan is not God and Satan does not operate independent of God’s power.

God limits what Satan can do. It also appears that Satan needs permission to act in the adversity against Job. The reason this is important is because there has been the temptation by Christians to picture the problem of suffering as if Satan is another god who acts outside of the sovereignty of God.

God is in full control of Satan. Whatever Satan is doing; Satan is doing within the constraints of God’s will and rule. We should understand this because if Satan is not operating under the rule, will, and power of God, then God is not God. Thus, we never see Satan acting outside the knowledge or power of God.

Satan afflicted Job (2:7). But the text also says that God did also (2:3; 42:11). The scriptures often tell us that it is God who is testing us. We are told that the Lord tested Abraham when He told him to offer up his only son. **Heb. 11:17; Gen. 22:12.**

The Lord tested Israel on many occasions (**Ex. 15:25; 16:4; Deut. 8:2; 13:3; Judges 2:22; 3:1; Ps. 11:5; Prov. 17:3; Jer. 9:7; 11:20; 20:12**)

I want you to see the frequency by which God says that he tested His people. - **Deut. 8:2**

This knowledge gives us hope. God is in control of the circumstance, He is ruling over the trial, and nothing is happening outside of His knowledge. Our hope is that we know God loves us. All we need to do is look at the cross to see the amazing, sacrificial love God has for the world. So, he did not send His Son to save us only to destroy us through trials and suffering.

God puts limitations on what can happen to us. But there is always the need for the testing of our faith. (**1 Cor. 10:6–13**)

After speaking about these tests that Israel experienced in the wilderness and failed, the apostle Paul tells us that these things serve as an example for us so that we do not fall like they did (**1 Cor. 10:11-12**).

Many translations read this as *“no temptation has overtaken you”* but there are others like the NRSV and NET that read *“no testing” or “no trial.”* The word that is translated *“temptation”* or *“trial”* simply means, *“to put to the test or prove.”* The context of **1 Cor. 10** is the testing that Israel experienced.

Therefore, we should read this text as a promise regarding our trials and temptations. God is sovereign over these events in our life. There are limits on what we have received so that it is not beyond our strength.

God will not let us be tested beyond our strength. Satan is limited and needs permission. Satan cannot act beyond the power and knowledge of God. - **James 5:10–11.**

Lesson Three

Cursing The Day of Birth (3:1-10)

Job 3 opens with the words that Job cursed the day of his birth. We must not think of Job cursing the day of his birth in the way that we use the word cursing. We speak of cursing as an anger-laced tirade upon anyone or everyone.

As you read these first **10 verses** you can tell that Job wishes that the day of his birth did not exist. Job's response to his pain and circumstances is one of significant distress. Job curses his day of birth. Job does this in several ways, but the bottom line is that he wants the day to be removed from history.

When we read **verses 3-4**, we see Job declaring that his birthday is not a day of celebration, but a terrible day. Pregnancy and birth are regarded as a time of joy and celebration. But Job says that for him, the news of his pregnancy and birth should have been regarded as grief.

In **verse 6** Job says that the day of his birth should be taken off the calendar. He simply feels the crushing weight of hopelessness. He is in extreme pain. Notice how often Job speaks of his circumstances as darkness in this chapter. It is black, it is dark, and there is no light. All is dark and there is no hope for Job. All his happiness has vaporized. All his joy has disappeared. It is a time of utter despair, a pain that is so great that he views his birthday as a disaster.

Verse 8 is possibly referring to people who perform rituals or ceremonies with elements we would recognize as witchcraft. I don't believe Job is literally asking for this type of person to carry this thing out.

It may be that his frustration and utter devastation is influencing him to use language extreme in severity to convey his desire to have never been born. It could be like someone saying the phrase "*I would do anything for...*" but it ends up not being the literal case.

By *leviathan* some understand the greatest and most imminent dangers; and others, the devil, whom the enchanters are desperate enough to attempt to raise by their incantations. The *leviathan* was a formidable sea monster, though its exact type is debated. Catching or even raising the leviathan was hazardous, as indicated by **Job 41:1-34**. The seamen, known for using strong language particularly when experiencing intense emotions such as anger or fear, are now working to catch this sea creature. They find themselves and their vessel in significant danger from him. They revert to their old habit of swearing and cursing, lamenting both their birth and the day they undertook this risky and challenging task.

Others understand this *leviathan* mystically, as it is used in **Isa 27:1**, for the great enemy of God's church and people, called there also the reptile or dragon, to wit, the devil, whom the magicians use to raise with fearful curses and imprecations.

Job breaks the seven-day silence with a cry from his heart and soul. He is not speaking to anyone. He is not speaking to God. He is just expressing his pain. Job is not cursing God. Even the questions that Job expresses are not questioning God but just questioning life.

Job's Lament (3:11-19) - Job's lamentation belongs with other biblical psalms of grief, including **Jer. 20:14-18; Lam. 3:1-18**.

In **Job 3:11-19** we see Job expressing the thought that death is the only way for him to have rest and peace. He speaks about why he is living through this anguish and the reason he thinks this way is declared in **verses 17-19**.

In death the weary are at rest, wicked cease from turmoil, prisoners are at ease, and the slave is free. Death appears to be the only relief from his suffering. Job is not the only person to express this idea. Isaiah declared that for the righteous only death brings peace from the pains of life. **Isaiah 57:1-2**.

Job seeks relief from his suffering and pain. Job does not bewail his financial losses. He does not bewail the loss of his health. He does not say that he cannot believe he has lost so much or how he is so sick. When he speaks of his health, he just describes what he looks like. He does not cry out about the death of his children.

Why wasn't I given the luxury of dying at birth? What's the benefit of having that happen? **3:13**—rest compared to **3:26**—Job has no rest. Job is addressing challenging questions. Is a God who would allow such things to happen worth holding on to in faith? Is it possible to continue to believe in a good God in a world where righteousness no longer has any apparent reward?

Notice the repetition of these “*why*” questions in verses **11, 12, 16, 20, and 23**. But in poetic language this is not the seeking of a reason intellectually but forms the part of the complaint. These questions are expressions of pain and signify the great loss experienced.

The suffering is not only external, but it is internal. We are internally restless and externally shattered. Job is at a loss, and he just wants peace from this turmoil internally and externally. In **verses 13-19** Job says that it does not matter who you are or what status you enjoy in life, death brings rest to all, and this is what makes death seem delightful to him.

Job thinks he has lost his relationship with God. The standard belief was that the righteous are blessed by God and the wicked are cursed by God. Therefore, if one is cursed, then this must mean he is out of God's favor. This is the essence of Job's cry. Why is all of this going on if this is the fate of the righteous? We can validate that this is Job's thinking through the book as we read it carefully. We see this point particularly expressed in **Job 29:2-6**

3:17—There is no more trouble from the wicked, no tasks to complete, slaves are free

Darkness of the Soul (3:20-26)

3:21-22 - To a person in misery, death is better than any treasure. Job continues to describe the darkness he sees and feels. There are days too dark for the sufferer to see any light at all. There are experiences too extreme for the hurting to have hope. There are valleys too deep for the anguished to find relief.

Job feels hedged into misery (**3:23**). This is an interesting declaration because Satan said that Job was hedged in by God's blessings. Job says he is hedged in by God to misery. His misery is so great that he cannot eat (**3:24**). Ultimately, there is no ease, no quiet, and no rest. Only trouble comes (**3:26**). So, what are we to make of this chapter and what can we learn about God from this?

3:20-23 - Job sees the world as a whole and can't help but wonder why people in misery are burdened with life while the release of death eludes them.

Point to Consider

3:24-26 -I have no rest; what I fear has happened. Consider the possibility of losing all items covered by insurance. Most of what we fear **does not happen** in our lives. But for Job, it did. **Chapter 3** is not the ramblings of a crazy person. Job is utterly crushed and speaking out of the bitterness of his misery. He does not blame God.

Messages For Today - Do we ever wonder why a wealthy person who "had it all" would commit suicide? Do we think they are crazy or selfish? Are we inclined to say things like "I would never take my life if I had their money" or "How bad could it have possibly been?" **Remember Robin Williams.**

First, faith is not two dimensional. We are not supposed to look at Job and draw the conclusion that he suffered, and he trusted God. To boil down the message of Job to this level of simplicity hurts us when we suffer because suffering is not this simple. There is despair in suffering. There is darkness in trials.

One of the great things we learn from Job in this third chapter is that faith and despair are not incompatible. I can have faith in God and yet feel the crushing weight of trials that cause me to feel broken. Christianity is not happy, sunshine, and rainbows.

Christianity is not *"put a smile on your face"* and pretend you have no pain. Sometimes I think we communicate to others that the way to handle suffering is to pretend that there is no pain. Trials can hurt us so deeply that we can be like Job and see no light but only darkness. Job is not the only person in the scriptures that we see experiencing this difficulty. Notice what happened to Elijah. - **1 Kgs. 19:1-5.**

Listen to Moses: Num. 11:10-15.

Listen to Paul: 2 Cor. 1:8.

Faith and despair are not incompatible. We can feel these things and still have full faith in God. There is not something wrong with us when we hit the dark times. David said this beautifully in **Psa. 23:**

Pain and darkness will be in our lives. But what will we do when we enter the darkest valley? What will be our response?

Second, we serve a God who allows such unfiltered questions and laments. This chapter shows the despair of trials. God can handle us crying out in pain and expressing our feelings. God does not tell us to limit our feelings or expressions of pain. Consider how many psalms are expressions of this kind of hurt, pain, suffering, and questioning! One of the reasons we are drawn to the Psalms in pain and suffering is because we are reading about others who feel the same way as we do.

Here is Job, feeling the same way we do through the pain of the trial. But listen to what we are told to do by God. - **Heb. 4:14-16.**

We have Jesus who can sympathize with our weaknesses. He is our friend who has also endured temptations and trials. Jesus was deeply distressed and troubled. **Mk. 14:33** – *"Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is."* He sympathizes with us. So let us draw near to the throne of grace and receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.

Pain is not incompatible with faith. Sitting in the darkness of the trial does not mean we have to hide our pain and pretend that we are not hurting. We will enter the darkest valley. What will be our response?

God says to come to Him because we have Jesus as our sympathetic high priest, who hears our cries of pain, and will give mercy and grace to help.

Lesson Four

Eliphaz' First Speech (4:1-5:27)

Who can be righteous before God (4:1-21)

4:3-4 — Eliphaz praises Job for the help and encouragement he has given to many others. In **verse 4** Eliphaz specifically mentions the words Job has used to help people in trouble in the past. This is a reminder to us that our words have an impact. We can lift others up and help people from stumbling with our words.

4:5 — Eliphaz tends to downplay Job's plight. It reminds me of when people were hurling insults at Jesus on the cross and saying how He could save others but not Himself — **Lk. 23:35**.

Job has been all but destroyed. Eliphaz is putting the severity of Job's situation on the same level as the people's troubles whom Job comforted. It is highly unlikely that anyone Job comforted lost everything in the manner Job did.

4:6 - There is an indirect accusation of Job, hinting at him being responsible for this situation. (Even Job's wife didn't blame him).

In verses 7-11, Eliphaz outlines the consequences for the wicked. You reap what you sow (**4:7-9**). This is a principle that is repeatedly taught in the scriptures. **Gal. 6:7; Prov. 22:8; 1 Cor. 9:11; 2 Cor. 9:6**.

4:7 - This is a key foundational truth for these three friends. You always reap what you sow. So, Job should have confidence in his blamelessness. If you have done nothing wrong, then you have nothing to worry about. But Job needs to consider something according to Eliphaz: Who being innocent has ever perished and who has been destroyed that was upright?

4:8 - A popular phrase although not a true one *"It takes one to know one"* comes to mind. This is another accusation of Job, saying his trouble is his own fault.

4:9 - Eliphaz describes the quick downfall and death of evil people. Remember how all of Job's possessions went away, and then his health in quick succession. Without knowing the whole story this explanation would seem to prove Eliphaz correct when he says Job's evil has caught up with him.

4:10-11 - Even the fierce lion dies when food runs out. However, the lion has not done anything wrong. It could also suggest that Job has no one left to consume, like how the lion ran out of prey.

4:12-17 - Eliphaz then appeals to the supernatural. He says that he received a vision or a dream. Essentially, Eliphaz is saying that God gave him a message to give to Job. The advice he is giving Job is godly advice and Job needs to listen and follow it. The message begins in **verse 17**: *"Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?"* Eliphaz says that Job should reconsider his position. Yes, Job is righteous, but can anyone really be pure before God?

4:17-21—How can a man be right before God? Even angels sin, so what does that say about us in our clay houses in the dirt?

Vs. 21 - In saying we die without wisdom it is probably a comparison to God's level of wisdom. We may have some but compared to God's wisdom it's pretty much nothing. Everybody sins; we all make mistakes we are *mortal men*! It's like Eliphaz is accusing Job again while provoking him to make a confession. Eliphaz is using a generality and applying it to a specific problem, blaming Job since people aren't perfect.

Notice what the Apostle Paul said to the church at Rome — **Rom. 3:23**

Psa. 14:3; Eccl. 7:29

However, this does not prove Job's situation is a result of any sin that he committed. Since we have the luxury of knowing what occurred in **chapters 1 and 2**, we know this for a fact.

Make your appeal to God (5:1-27)

In **chapter 5** Eliphaz shifts his advice. Eliphaz said in **chapter 4** that you are righteous, and you should put your confidence in your righteousness. But understand that you are not that righteous.

Now Eliphaz warns Job not to be a fool because devastation certainly comes to fools. Vexation kills a fool. His dwelling is cursed, his children are far from safety and crushed, and no one delivers them. So do not show irritation and jealousy like a fool. **Prov. 27:3**

Ver. 1. thru Ver. 5. - Job and his friends engage in a heated argument, which is best resolved quickly if they cannot settle it themselves. Eliphaz, assured of his position, encourages Job to select arbiters by stating, "**Call out now; Is there anyone who will answer you?** If anyone else suffers as you do. Can you name a saint who faced such dire circumstances as you do now?

Did any good man curse his day as you? You will find none of the saints that will be either your advocates or my antagonists. Which saint will you turn to? Whichever way you turn, you'll find they all agree with me.

Eliphaz offers two arguments, asserting that these perspectives are universally acknowledged among the saints: The sin of sinners directly tends to their own ruin (**Job 5:2**): Wrath kills the foolish man and therefore he is foolish for indulging in it. It is a fire in his bones, his blood, enough to put him into a fever. Envy is the rottenness of the bones and so slays the silly one that frets himself with it.

Eliphaz says, "Your quarrel with God harms you the most. Your anger at your troubles and envy of your prosperity increases your misery. Job had told his wife she spoke as the foolish women; now Eliphaz tells him he acted as the foolish men. Or it may be meant thus: *If men are ruined and undone, it is always their own folly that ruins and undoes them. They kill themselves by some lust or other; therefore, no doubt, Job, you have done some foolish things, by which you have brought yourself into this calamitous condition.*

Their prosperity is short and their destruction certain, **Job 5:3-5**. He seems here to parallel Job's case with that which is commonly the case of wicked people.

5:5 – This might be referring to those who took away Job's camels (Chaldeans, **1:17**) as well as oxen and donkeys (Sabeans, **1:15**). Eliphaz may be defending some of the human perpetrators of Job's calamity.

Ver. 6. through Ver. 16. - Eliphaz, having touched Job in a very tender part, in mentioning both the loss of his estate and the death of his children as the just punishment of his sin, that he might not drive him to despair, here begins to encourage him, and puts him in a way to make himself easy. Now he changes his voice and speaks in the accents of kindness, as if he would atone for the hard words he had given him.

5:6-7 - Eliphaz broadens his view on who deals with trouble, perhaps implying Job is one of many to suffer. Perhaps an attempt to lessen Job's opinion of the severity of the trouble. He accused Job of jealousy. **5:2.** You cannot help but notice that Eliphaz' description of the fool sounds like what has happened to Job. Evil is the root of trouble. Everything happens for a reason. Actions have consequences.

5:7 - You can't escape trouble if you're living (although he is accusing Job of wrongdoing). This leads Eliphaz to bring his full advice to Job (**5:8-16**). Eliphaz says what he would do is make his appeal to God. You will notice that this appeal to God is not to ask for help, but an admission of guilt. The Hebrew word translated "*appeal*" refers to seeking an oracle to find your offense or discover the pathway to appeasement. Eliphaz tells Job to admit his guilt and it will all be better.

5:8 – This is at odds with what Job exclaimed in **1:21**. God was the *first* one Job looked for. If I were in your place, instead of wasting my time, and irritating my soul with useless complaints, I would apply to my Maker and confidently commit my cause to Him. You need to be humble because God reaches down to help the humble (**5:11-13**).

5:11 - If you commit your cause to God (**5:8**) He will lift you up. This implies that Job has been pursuing his own ends and has not included God in his plans.

5:12-14 - Eliphaz admits Job is wise but says he has acted wrongly.

5:17-27 - This is God's discipline to Job, but don't worry, He will renew, restore and strengthen you. Perhaps this is an attempt to boost Job after implying he was wrong, wicked, jealous, envious, etc. Eliphaz ends his speech with beautiful pictures of the restoration Job will receive if he simply repents. When restoration comes Job will receive great blessings and then everything will be okay.

5:20 - Job's food sources have been largely cut off. War; raiding bands of Chaldeans and Sabeans. When you repent, then God will not allow danger to come near you (**5:21-22**). We won't have anything to accuse you of after you are holy again. You will not have anything to fear. Everyone has an animal they fear or avoid, like spiders, snakes, or wolves.

5:24 - Wherever you establish your residence, it will be secure; and when you assess your assets, everything will meet your expectations. **5:25** – Offspring will be many. **5:26** – You will go to your grave at a ripe old age. The emphasis is that it's not Job's time yet. This opposes what Job desires from **chapter 3**.

5:27 - Eliphaz finishes his speech by rallying support from his friends by including them and to strengthen his case that Job is wrong and should turn back to God. Eliphaz is not the only one to feel this way since he has included Job's other friends as well. He attempts to end his speech on a strong note. It's logical to think that Job's friends must have spoken together on their journey to see him. When people hear bad news they speculate, and Job's friends most likely did the same thing.

If Job does what Eliphaz says, then Satan is correct in his accusation. It will confirm that Job is only interested in God's blessings, not righteousness. If Job seeks restoration at any cost, then Job does not serve God for nothing but for what he receives.

Thus, Eliphaz is telling Job to fear God for the rewards of righteousness, just like Satan said people will do. Therefore, as we read Job's responses going forward in this book, we must consider that Job pursuing his own vindication shows that he does not serve God for prosperity and health, but that righteousness is at the forefront of his thoughts.

Thoughts about the arguments of Eliphaz

Up to this point in our studies we have repeatedly notice how people use scriptural principles found in God's word incorrectly. This is what we have with Eliphaz. Eliphaz says all kinds of truthful things. In fact, **5:13** is quoted by Paul and used to the Corinthians in **1 Cor. 3:19**

So Eliphaz is not speaking unbiblical things. Eliphaz says that God uses suffering to restore sinners to a proper relationship with Him (**5:17**).

Notice Job 5:17–18

The scriptures confirm this in **Prov. 3:11-12**; **Heb. 12:5-6**

Proverbs and Hebrews may even be quoting Eliphaz. Suffering is disciplinary. The scriptures bear this out. So where is the error? The error is twofold. **First**, while God uses suffering to restore sinners it does not mean that all suffering is because of sins to bring a person back.

Second, Eliphaz looks at what happened to Job and draws the conclusion that he must have sinned, and repentance will fix it. But the error is to look at the outcome and declare that Job must have sinned. This is why the first two chapters were so important to the study.

Job is not experiencing this suffering because of his sins. So, while what Eliphaz says is true as a general principle, it is not an absolute rule and it is not true in Job's life, the lives of the apostles, or the lives of Jesus.

Lesson Five

Chapter 6 — Job's Reply to Eliphaz

Eliphaz ended his speech, certain it was clear and relevant enough to be undisputed. Job dismisses his arguments as weak, continuing to defend his complaints. Job doesn't give a point by point refute to anything his friends say but takes some of their points into account in his reply to them.

Faithfulness brings no relief (6:1-13)

Ver. 1. through Ver. 7 - Eliphaz, in the beginning of his discourse, had been very sharp upon Job, and yet Job heard him patiently till he had said all he had to say. To judge a discourse impartially, one must hear it fully. But, when he concluded, Job makes his reply, in which he speaks very feelingly.

Job begins his response by saying that if Eliphaz knew his pain then he would understand why he speaks the way he does. Job is experiencing significant distress. **6:4** — Job knows it isn't chance or bad luck, or the trouble that man is born to, but that it is God who is behind the tragedy. He has been shot by God with arrows. **6:5** – Job says that it is easy for his friends who feel no pain nor want to forebear complaints, which is no more than the donkey and the other brute creatures do. His devastation is the basis for his complaint.

The words of Eliphaz have been no help (**6:6-7**) - **6:6** - Can anyone take delight in what is distasteful? Much less can I feel satisfied with misery. **6:7** — I have no appetite - The sense may be, those grievous afflictions, which I dreaded the very thought of, are now my daily, though sorrowful bread. Job is starving for helpful words as food for his soul. But Eliphaz did not provide it.

Thus, Job returns to his plea that God would not restore him but finish destroying him so that he could finally be at rest (**6:8-13**). Ungoverned passion often grows more violent when it meets with some rebuke and check. The troubled sea rages most when it dashes against a rock. Job had been courting death, as that which would be the happy period of his miseries, **Job 3**.

Eliphaz had sternly rebuked him, but he repeats his statement more forcefully here. It is poorly expressed and serves as a warning rather than something to emulate.

6:8-9 — As Job had no hope that he should ever be redeemed from his present helpless state, he earnestly begs God to shorten it by taking away his life.

6:10 — I can deal with pain if God kills me because I know I'm right with Him. Job did not request a life free from troubles.

6:11-13 — I'm so weak, I can't bear this. His only consolation is that he has not denied the words of the Holy One. Job knows that he has not turned his back on God. Job declares that he has no hope. Repentance is not the fix because he has nothing to repent from. Yet Job is begging for God to do something because he does not believe he will last much longer in this trial. His strength is not stone, and his flesh is not bronze.

Friends brings no comfort (6:14-30)

Ver. 14. through Ver. 21. Eliphaz was harsh in his criticism of Job, and his companions agreed with his views. Job laments their cruelty, seeing it as worsening his suffering and justifying his wish to die.

6:14 — Rejecting a friend is bad but ... Job says that his friends have not brought him comfort or sympathy. Listen to this key responsibility for a friend: *“He who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty”* (6:14).

Job says that when you withhold kindness from your friend you no longer fear God. This sentence could also be saying that there should be kindness shown to Job even if his friends thought he had forsaken the Lord. His friends, rather than being a help, are like the promise of a river that has turned into a dry riverbed (6:15-21). Job was seeking relief from his friends, but his friends did not follow through with what Job hoped for.

Job continues in **verses 22-30** telling these friends that he did not ask anything from them for words of help and love. Tell me what my sin is, and I will be silent (6:24)! Job says that he can take truthful words, but what have you given me (6:25)? You treat my words like wind you are not really listening to me (6:26). It is easy for you to say the words you are saying and have all the answers, but it is no help (6:27). Job asks his friends to just look at him. I do not deserve what has happened to me (6:28). So, take back your malicious words because my integrity is at stake (6:29).

6:28-30 — Look at me and tell me is their injustice with me? It's like when you tell your kids to look at you and repeat what they just said when you strongly suspect they are lying. It's more difficult to look someone in the eye and be dishonest.

Job's lament (7:1-7) Continues

7:1-3 - Life is tough and is hard work (even if you are very wealthy! Job proceeds to justify his desire of death. Are his days not fixed, determined, and full of labor like those of a hireling? As a servant earnestly desires the shadow, wearied with the toils of the day, and longing for repose, and as a hireling looked for the reward of his work, so do I long for death to relieve me of my miseries, and bring me to that reward which God has promised to bestow in mercy to every man according to his work.

7:4 — I have so little rest, that when I do lie down I long for daylight, that I may rise. Nothing can better depict the state of a man under continual afflictions, his days and nights being spent in constant anguish, utterly unable to be in any one posture, so that he is continually changing his position in his bed, finding ease nowhere.

7:5 — Job's frustration must be great with his painful sores. The miserably ulcerated body, exposed to the open air, and in a state of great destitution, was favorable to insects that sought places in which to deposit their eggs, which might have produced the worms in question. In this disease, the skin becomes rigid and cracks at the joints, with pus continuously oozing from the fissures. To something like this the words may refer, My SKIN is BROKEN and become LOATHSOME.

7:6 — The days seem futile. In almost every nation the whole of human existence has been compared to a web; and the principle of life, through the continual succession of moments, hours, days, weeks, months, and years, to a thread woven through that web.

7:7 - Job is still praying in pain, though he is devastated and has no joy. He turns his speech to God. Perhaps observing that his friends grew weary of hearing it. If men will not hear us, God will: if men cannot help us, God can: for His arm is not shortened, neither is His ear heavy.

God scrutinizes humans (7:8-21)

7:8-10 - Job ends his response to Eliphaz declaring that God scrutinizes humans. He looks at their lives closely. Again, Job feels that he does not have much life left in him and that he will speak with boldness about his circumstances.

7:11 - Job will speak from his pain without restraint. I will make my complaints! Given that my condition is unlikely to improve, I will express my concerns in this document.

7:12 — Am I so great, and powerful, and dangerous a creature, that you need to use extraordinary power and violence to rule and subdue me? Am I as fierce and unruly as the sea, which, if you did not set a watch over it, and bound it, would overwhelm the earth, and destroy mankind upon it? Or am I a vast and ungovernable sea monster, which, if you did not restrain it would overturn ships, and destroy men in them, and devour all the lesser fishes? Have I behaved myself towards men, with such rage and violence, as to need such chains to be put upon me?

The word "*guard*" could also be written as a watch, place of confinement, prison, guard post, and other similar words. Job feels he is a prisoner to his circumstances and God has put him there.

7:13 - Quiet and refreshing rest in sleep is the gift of God, and a blessing the greatness of which no one who has not for a time been deprived of it will duly appreciate.

7:14 –There is no doubt that Satan was permitted to haunt his imagination with dreadful dreams and terrific appearances; so that, as soon as he fell asleep, he was suddenly roused and alarmed by those appalling images. He needed sleep but was afraid to close his eyes because of the horrid images which were presented to his imagination.

7:15, 16 - Job was so weary of life, that he would have preferred any violent death to its continuance, while wasted to a skeleton, and filled with pain; he so loathed life, that he besought God to withdraw his supporting hand, and then he should expire. This seems to have been his meaning. — He would not destroy his own life. He wants God to stop analyzing him because he is going to die soon (**7:16**).

7:17 - verse 17 sounds like **Psa. 8**. In **Psalm 8** it is exclaimed as a blessing. How amazing that God has made much of us for we are nothing. What is man, that you should magnify him? and that you should set thine heart upon him? Job uses all kinds of persuasion with God.

7:18 - Job declares that it is terrible that God pays so close attention to humans. God is pictured as being petty. He is like the police officer who gives tickets for going 56 mph in a 55-mph zone. God has too much time on His hands, and He is nitpicking Job's life

7:19 - This is a proverbial expression and exists among the Arabs to the present day; the very language being nearly the same. It signifies the same as, let me draw my breath; give me a moment's space; let me have even the twinkling of an eye. I am urged by my sufferings to continue my complaint; but my strength is exhausted,

my mouth dry with speaking. Suspend my sufferings even for a short space as is necessary to swallow my spittle, that my parched tongue may be moistened, so that I may renew my complaint.

7:20, 21 - Job does not admit guilt but makes the point that even if he had, his sin would not justify God's present attitude and action toward him. God could simply forgive whatever small offense He may have found in Job but prefers to punish instead. Job asks God how someone as small as he could do anything to God and why he is God's target. He feels he is about to die without God telling him why this has happened.

Messages For Today

Let us consider two points that Job makes regarding other humans and about God that we should consider for help in suffering and trials.

First, regarding one another, we need help through trials (**Job 6:14-30**). Job correctly observes that he was hoping that his friends would be like a refreshing river in a dry desert. He needed words of relief and comfort. However, that is not what Job found. There was no kindness to be found in his friends. The scriptures speak about the need for us to be those kinds of true, godly friends with each other. - **Prov. 17:17; 27:9-10; Eccl. 4:9-12.**

We should not run from the troubles of others. Be a dependable, godly friend to each other when calamity and adversity hits. There is no doubt that one of the reasons God gave us this body of believers who are to be joined and knit together is so that we can help and encourage each other through trials and temptations. Be dependable. Be the encourager, like Barnabas, to one another.

Second, let us consider what Job says about God. Is God the fault finder who seeks to find every little unknown error and makes us miserable and afflicts us when we make any misstep? This is the way Job feels. But this is not God's disposition toward us. The scriptures never speak of God as a nitpicking, wrathful God who is looking for any reason to lash out against us. We have read in the prophets the longsuffering nature of God. When God presents himself at Mount Sinai, this is the presentation of God: **Ex. 34:6-7.**

In trials remember that we have a God who loves us and has not pushed us beyond the strength that God supplies for us (**1 Cor. 10:13**). His goal is not our destruction but our salvation. Trials are allowed by God to refine our faith to make us what God desires so that we can be His child and enjoy eternal life with Him. Hold strong through trials and continue to trust in God.

Lesson Six

Chapter 8 Bildad's Speech (8:1-22)

Job's friends are like Job's messengers: the latter followed one another close with evil tidings, the former followed him with harsh censures: both served Satan's design; to drive him from his integrity, to drive him from the comfort of it.

Eliphaz did not reply to what Job had said in answer to him, but left it to Bildad, whom he knew to be of the same mind with himself in this affair. Those are not the wisest of the company, but rather the weakest, who desire to have all the talk. Allow others to speak in turn and remain silent while they do. Eliphaz endeavored to demonstrate that Job's severe afflictions were indicative of his inherent wickedness. Bildad is much of the same mind, and will conclude that Job is a wicked man unless God speedily appears for his relief

Despite Job's pain and tough situation, Bildad is tired of hearing him speak. You will notice as you read Bildad's speech that he is not interested in comforting Job in his suffering but in defending *retribution theology*. *Retribution theology* is simply the belief that blessings are given to the righteous and suffering and punishment falls on the wicked. Therefore, if you are suffering you must have sinned. You are wicked. If you are physically blessed, then you must be righteous. Notice that this is all Bildad has to offer Job.

Ver. 1. through Ver. 7.

We thought Job spoke a great deal of good sense and much to the purpose, and that he had reason and right on his side; but Bildad, like an eager angry disputant, turns it all off with this, "***How long will you speak these things?***" Bildad assumed Eliphaz's remarks were sufficient to silence Job, rendering his own comments irrelevant. Thus, as Caryl notes, criticisms are frequently based on misunderstandings. Men's meaning is not taken a right, and then they are gravely rebuked as if they were evil doers.

Bildad compares Job's discourse to a strong wind. Job had excused himself with this, that his speeches were but as wind (**Job 6:26**), and therefore they should not make such ado about them: "***The words of your mouth be like a strong wind?***" (says Bildad) blustering and threatening, boisterous and dangerous, and therefore we are concerned to fence against them.

Vs. 2 - Bildad criticizes Job for his words (**Job 8:2**). Finish up, Job. Your words amount to nothing. In essence, Bildad calls Job a windbag. This is probably not what Job expected Bildad to start off with. Bildad is already harsher than Eliphaz was. Will you still go on to charge God foolishly? Your heavy affliction proves that you are under God's wrath; and His wrath, thus manifested, proves that it is for your sins that he punishes you.

Vs. 3 – Bildad is stating that God is afflicting Job. Can He afflict you for nothing? He is just, His judgment is just; and He could not inflict punishment unless there is a cause.

Vs. 4—Bildad implies Job's children have sinned and have therefore been dealt with according to God's justice. One aspect of Job's grief over his children is that they are dead. Not only this, but they died while at a feast at their oldest brother's house (**1:18**). We know from **1:5** how Job would carry out priestly duties after

these feasts by offering animal sacrifices for each of his children in case they had so much as a wrong thought toward God.

Job couldn't do this for the last feast since his children were all killed during it. Job would likely be in turmoil wondering if any of his children had sinned at that feast. Since he couldn't consecrate them afterward like usual, he would have to worry about his children and wonder if they were holy during that last feast.

8:5-6—Bildad tells Job to look for God and plead for mercy, THEN he would take care of you. Bildad is saying whatever Job has done wrong that he has rejected God. If Job claims innocence, then Job must be implying that God is unjust and perverts' justice. Because Bildad strongly believes in the retribution theology, then God is just and only sinners suffer. Therefore, Job must have sinned.

This is why Bildad doubts Job's innocence (**8:4-6**). Bildad's point is that all who sin against God get what they deserve. Your children sinned and they were delivered as the consequence of their sin (**8:4**). Yet Job, *"if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore your rightful habitation"* (**8:6**). Bildad is not suggesting Job is pure and is pointing out that he cannot be pure. Notice **verse 5**, *"If you will seek God and plead with the Almighty for mercy...."* Bildad's point is that Job is not pure but if he becomes pure then he will be restored.

8:7—Bildad offers some encouragement to Job by saying that the best hasn't come and gone, but his later days will be better than his former days.

Ver. 8. through Ver. 19. Bildad addresses the downfall of hypocrites and evildoers, highlighting the inevitable end of their hopes and joys. He will not be so bold as to say with Eliphaz that none that were righteous were ever cut off thus (**Job 4:7**).

Bildad takes it for granted that God, during His providence, does bring wicked men, to shame and ruin in this world. Whether this will certainly prove that all who are ruined must be concluded to have been hypocrites he will not say, but rather suspect, and thinks the application is easy. Bildad affirms that hypocrites will lose all their hopes and triumphs.

8:8-9 - Bildad defers to the wisdom of *"bygone ages"* to prove his point. He is using a generality which can't easily be pinned down and is rather elusive. He asserts that everyone present knows nothing compared to this older wisdom. This is like when people refer to the *"good 'old days"*, which usually involves very filtered memories and skewed perspective on things rather than a clear picture of what happened. Bildad tells Job that his lack of understanding these principles of wisdom is his problem.

8:10 - Bildad asserts his opinion that Job is in the wrong but refers to old wisdom to clue Job in rather than what Bildad speaks of. This reminds me of when someone not very well versed in the bible tries to use it to make a point and says something like *"It's in the bible somewhere, I know it is"*.

8:11-13 - Bildad says the godless are like plants that wither before their time, much like it appears Job has. He pushes this point further using metaphors to describe human dependence on God. Without being connected to God in righteousness, humans wither to insignificance.

Consider what Bildad just said: *if you are hopeless, then you are godless*. This whole issue is simple to Bildad. God does not reject the blameless man, and He does not strengthen evildoers Your loss means you have done something wrong.

Karma and Retribution Theology - Before we consider Job's response, we need to consider what Bildad has said. We are often drawn to this **retribution theology**. So many people hold to the idea of **karma**. People want to believe that what goes around comes around.

If you do something wrong, then you are going to get what you deserve. *What goes up must come down*. We use these ideas when we speak and sometimes use these ideas toward others who suffer. Sometimes we will even use this idea in a malicious way. When we see the wicked prosper, then they will come crashing back down to earth at some point. This is all basically **karma**. **Karma** is a critical concept in eastern religions like Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism.

What we are attempting to do is create some kind of control for the future. **Karma** is the concept that good intentions and deeds contribute to future happiness. Bad intentions and bad deeds will contribute to future suffering. As Christians we cannot subscribe to this kind of thinking.

God does not teach **karma**. Further, we must consider that **karma** is not true in society. Doing good does not mean tomorrow will be good and doing bad does not mean that tomorrow will be bad. Life does not work like this.

Karma taken to its fullest extent teaches reincarnation and rebirth. You are amassing good deeds so that when you are reincarnated after death, you will be something good and positive and not something awful and painful if you amassed bad deeds.

God has not created a system where if you do something bad you will be punished in life for your bad act. Nor has He created a system where if you do something good you will be rewarded in life for your good act. Doing good does not mean you will have a good life. Being righteous does not mean that you will have a comfortable life. God does not rule the world in this way.

We gravitate to this thinking because we want to believe that we have control over our future. We want to believe that we can control what will happen to us tomorrow. This belief system makes us feel better about ourselves when we are not suffering. You must have done something wrong for your suffering, so that won't happen to me because I am not a sinner like you. The scriptures destroy this system: **1 Pet. 4:19**.

Notice they are suffering while doing good. The book of Job intends to destroy **retribution theology**. Job was blameless, upright, feared God, and turned from evil and he lost everything. **Karma** is not true, and God does not run the world in this way.

A flat tire does not mean you did something bad and having no traffic does not mean you did something good. We must work to rid ourselves of this **retribution theology**. Bildad thinks he is giving godly advice. Yet the way he applies godly principles are utterly false.

8:14-18—The godless person is cut short, denied and forgotten. Nothing he does endures or works the way he wants it to work. Such people, subdued by the strong habits of sin, hope on fruitlessly, till the last thread of the web of life is cut off from the beam; and then they find no more strength in their hope than is in the threads of the spider's web.

8:20-22—If Job were indeed a sound character, without guile or hypocrisy in his professed piety, Bildad was assured that his prosperity and comfort would return, and his enemies would be put to shame; but if a wicked man, he would never be raised above his calamities but would sink under them.

Bildad seems to have formed in his mind a fixed rule of Providence concerning this. Yet there was a fallacy in his reasoning and that of his friends, arising from their distinguishing between the present state of trial and discipline, and the future state of retribution.

Hence, they concluded, that Job denied the justice of God and the advantages of piety, because he maintained that in this world wicked men often prospered, and godly men were afflicted.

Job's Response (9:1-10:22) - In this and the following chapter we have Job's answer to Bildad's discourse, wherein he speaks honorably of God, humbly of himself, and feelingly of his troubles; but not one word by way of reflection upon his friends, or their unkindness to him, nor in direct reply to what Bildad had said. Job knows he is blameless.

Ver. 1-13 - Bildad began with a rebuke to Job for talking so much, **Job 8:2**. Job makes no answer to that, though it would have been easy enough to retort it upon himself; but in what he next lays down as his principle, that **God never perverts judgment**, Job agrees with him: I know it is a truth, **Job 9:2**.

"It is so of a truth, that wickedness brings men to ruin and the godly are taken under God's special protection. These are truths which I subscribe to; but how can any man make good his part with God?" In His sight shall no flesh living be justified, **Ps 143:2**

How should man be just with God? Some understand this as a passionate complaint of God's strictness and severity, that He is a God whom there is no dealing with; and it cannot be denied that there are, in this chapter, some peevish expressions, which seem to speak such language as this. I see this as a humble admission of human sinfulness, especially his own, acknowledging that if God judged us solely by our sins, we would be beyond redemption.

9:2 - Job begins his response to Bildad by declaring that he understands the principles Bildad is proclaiming. Bildad began with a rebuke to Job for talking so much. Job makes no answer to that, but lays down as his principle, that God never perverts judgment.

9:3 - God can ask a thousand puzzling questions which those that quarrel with Him, and arraign His proceedings, cannot give an answer.

9:4 - The answer is very easy. You cannot produce any instance, from the beginning of the world to this day, of any daring sinner who has hardened himself against God, has obstinately persisted in rebellion against Him, who did not find God too hard for him and pay dearly for his folly. Such transgressors have not prospered or had peace; they have had no comfort in their way nor any success.

9:5 - There is nothing firmer than the mountains. When we refer to removing mountains, we are typically discussing something that appears impossible; however, through extraordinary means, it is feasible for them to be relocated. They can be moved without notice and can be made to lower their elevation. God possesses the authority to level and overturn them in His wrath; He can disperse the mountains with the same ease as a farmer spreads molehills, regardless of how elevated, vast, or rugged they may be.

9:6 - There is nothing more fixed than the earth on its axle; yet God can shake the earth out of its place, heave it off its center, and make even its pillars tremble; what seemed to support it will itself need support when God gives it a shock.

God has power to shake the earth from under that guilty race of mankind which makes it groan under the burden of sin, and to shake the wicked out of it yet He continues the earth, and man upon it, and does not make it, as once, to swallow up the rebels.

9:7 – There is nothing more constant than the rising sun, it never misses its appointed time; yet God, when He pleases, can suspend it. He that at first commanded it to rise can countermand it. Once the sun was told to stand – **Jos. 10:12, 13.**

and another time to retreat - **Isa 38:8.**

This was to show that it is still under its great Creator. Thus, great is God's power; and how great then is His goodness, which causes His sun to shine even upon the evil and unthankful, though He could withhold it! He that made the stars also, can, if He pleases, seal them up, and hide them from our eyes.

9:8 - If God pleases, He preserves the course and order of nature; and this is a continued creation. He alone, by His own power, spreads out the heavens and keeps them spread out, preventing them from rolling together like a scroll.

He treads upon the waves of the sea; that is, He suppresses them and keeps them under control so that they return not to deluge the earth which is given as a reason why we should all fear God and stand in awe of Him.

9:9 - He makes the constellations; three are named for all the rest, Arcturus (Bear), Orion, and Pleiades, and in general the chambers of the south. The stars of which these are composed He made at first, and put into that order, and He still makes them, preserves them, and guides their motions. He makes them to be what they are to man, and inclines the hearts of man to observe them, which the beasts cannot do. Stars, both visible and those near the Antarctic pole that we cannot see, are under divine control.

9:10 - Job here says the same that Eliphaz had said (**Job 5:9**), and in the original in the very same words, not declining to speak after him, though now his antagonist. God is a great God, and does great things, a wonder working God; His works of wonder are so many that we cannot number them and so mysterious that we cannot find them out.

9:11 - Job can see the workings of God's power but is unable to perceive Him and understand why He does the things He does.

9:12 - God cannot be questioned. When He acts, no one can change His mind. He acts with incontestable sovereignty. He removes our comforts, health, wealth, relationships, friends, and even life whenever He chooses.

9:13 - If God will not withdraw His anger, it is of no use to contend with God; He cannot be successfully resisted; all His opposers must perish.

Ver. 14. through Ver. 21 - What Job had said of man's utter inability to contend with God he applies to himself, and in effect despairs of gaining His favor. I think it arises from the sense he had of the imperfection of his own righteousness, and the dark and cloudy apprehensions which at present he had of God's displeasure against him.

9:14 -What am I going to say to God? I cannot contend with my Maker. He is the Lawgiver and the Judge. How shall I stand in judgment before him?

9:15 - Even if I believe I'm righteous and my heart doesn't condemn me, God knows my hidden faults that I can't comprehend. God can charge me with them, and therefore I would not answer.

9:16 - He had no reason to think that there was anything in his prayers to recommend them to the divine acceptance. It is solely due to God's grace and compassion, who answers prayers before they are called upon.

9:17,18 - Every man must expect the wind to blow upon him and ruffle him, but Job was broken with a tempest. Every man, amid these thorns and briars, must expect to be scratched; but Job was wounded, and his wounds were multiplied. Every man must expect a cross daily, and to taste sometimes of the bitter cup; but Job's troubles came so quickly upon him that he had no breathing time, and he was filled with bitterness.

9:19 - If it's about God's strength, no one can match Him, He wins. He is just and can't be summoned.

9:20 - I'm afraid I would say something stupid even though I know I'm innocent. Compared to God I would be proven perverse. Job isn't in the wrong in this situation. Probably since he remembers that he has sinned in his life can he say that God would prove him perverse even though he is innocent in this case.

9:21 - Seriously, my life is terrible now and I hate it.

Ver. 22. Through Ver. 24 - Job briefly addresses the key issue in his dispute with his friends. They maintained that those who are righteous and good always prosper in this world, and the wicked are in misery and distress. Job asserted that it is a common thing for the wicked to prosper and the righteous to be greatly afflicted. This is where he and his friends differed; and they had not proved their assertion, therefore he abides by his: *"I said it, and say it again, that all things come alike to all."*

Job's point is valid: temporal judgments often affect both the good and the bad, with rare distinction between them. In the judgment of Sodom indeed, which is called the vengeance of eternal fire - **Jude 1:7**.

Far be it from God to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked - **Gen. 18:25**.

But, in judgments, the righteous have their share, and sometimes the greatest share. Hence, both the righteous and the wicked are subject to destruction by divine intervention, resulting in a shared fate. Both virtuous and immoral individuals were exiled to Babylon, as noted in **Jeremiah 24:5,9**.

God will be well pleased to see how the same scourge which is the perdition of the wicked is the trial of the innocent and of their faith, which will be found unto praise, honor, and glory, **1Pet. 1:7; Psa. 66:10**.

9:22 – **There is a major turning point in this verse.** Job believes God destroys people regardless of whether they are wicked or righteous. He believes God's dealings with man to be arbitrary and out of the hands of the people involved. God is involved with His creation, but the people He made are basically along for the ride and helpless before Him.

9:23-24 - Not only does it seem that God allows disaster for the innocent, but He mocks at the people it happens to. Everything is reversed and messed up. The judges of the earth are blinded and unable to perform their tasks properly.

9:25-35 - Job grows more and more querulous and does not conclude this chapter with such reverent expressions of God's wisdom and justice as he began with. Those that indulge a complaining humor do not know what indecencies, nor to what impieties, it will hurry them. The beginning of that strife with God is as the letting forth of water. When we are in trouble we are allowed to complain to God, as did the Psalmist, but we must by no means complain of God, as Job here is doing.

9:25,26 - How vain the enjoyments of time are, which we may be quite deprived of while, time continues. Our day may be longer than the sunshine of our prosperity; and, when that is gone, it is as if it had not been. The remembrance of having done our duty will be pleasing afterwards; so, will not the remembrance of our having got a great deal of world wealth when it is all lost and gone. ***"They flee away, past recall; they see no good, and leave none behind them."***

9:27-28—There is no pretending things are okay. I am unable to do this because of fear of my troubles. His complaint of his present uneasiness is excusable. He knew better, and, at another time, would have been far from harboring any such hard thoughts of God as now broke in upon his spirit and broke out in these passionate complaints. My afflictions have continued so long upon me, and increased so fast, that I do not expect God will ever clear up my innocence by delivering me out of them and restoring me to a prosperous condition. Right or wrong, I must be treated as a wicked man; my friends will continue to think so of me, and God will continue the afflictions upon me which give them occasion to think so.

9:29 - If I'm condemned, why do I still have to wait around for my death and go through the motions of living?

9:30, 31 - Job saw his afflictions coming from God. These issues affected how his friends viewed him. He expressed concerns that these ongoing problems were damaging both his comfort and reputation.

9:32 - He complains that he was not on even terms with God. I could venture to dispute with a man like me, but God is infinitely above me; I shall certainly be cast if I contend with Him. Job knows he and God aren't equals.

9:33 - The word mediator signifies an arbiter, or umpire, appointed to decide in a disputed cause. Laying his hand upon both refers probably to some ancient ceremony, expressive of his relation to both parties. Job alludes to this to show the inequality of the contest. This cry for a Mediator is at once an expression of the soul's deepest need, and, as has well been called, 'an unconscious prophecy.'

9:34, 35 -Please stop destroying me and let me not fear Him. Let me recover the sight of His mercy and not be amazed with the sight of nothing but His terrors, and then I would speak and order my cause before Him. But the cloud remains; God's wrath still weighs on me, consuming my spirit as much as ever, and I don't know what to do.

Lesson Seven

Chapter 10 Job - In **chapter 10** Job returns to his lament. Like any of us going through troubles, we can't understand, Job wants to know why.

Ver. 1. through Ver. 7 - Here is a passionate resolution to persist in his complaint, **Job 10:1**. Faced with the overwhelming presence of God's majesty, he decided to alleviate his concerns by expressing his thoughts. Job begins with vehement language: *"My soul is weary of my life, weary of this body, and impatient to get clear of it, fallen out with life, and displeased at it, sick of it, and longing for death."*

Faith and patience can help us endure life's challenges without becoming overwhelmed or cruel toward ourselves, even when circumstances are particularly difficult. Job, being weary of his life and having ease no other way, resolves to complain and speak. Losers often feel entitled to speak, and unchecked passions and appetites tend to justify their actions by claiming they can't help themselves. However, wisdom and grace should be used to control these impulses.

Job will complain, but he did not accuse God of unrighteousness or unkindness. Although he was unaware of the specific reason for God's dispute with him, he assumed it was his own responsibility and accepted all the blame. He will speak, but it shall be the bitterness of his soul that he will express. If I speak amiss, it is not I, but sin that dwells in me, not my soul, but its bitterness.

A humble petition to God. He will speak, but the first word shall be a prayer, and, it is a good prayer, **Job 10:2**.

Job seeks relief from his suffering, asking for forgiveness: *"Do not condemn me; do not separate me forever from you."* Though I endure hardship, let it be a father's discipline, not a judge's punishment. It is the comfort of those who are in Christ Jesus that, though they are in affliction, there is no condemnation to them, **Ro. 8:1**.

We are chastened of the Lord that we may not be condemned with the world, **1 Cor. 11:32**.

When hardships occur, there is often a reason behind them. God does not become angry without a reason. It is useful to identify the cause so that we can address, reduce, and discontinue the behavior leading to the issue. Allow conscience to perform its duty and assess us honestly, as in **Gen. 42:21**.

10:1-2 - Job hates his life and states what he would say to God. This is a change from **9:12** when Job said that God couldn't be questioned. Perhaps knowing why would offer some small amount of comfort in his misery. *"Do not condemn me;"* do not separate me forever from thee. Though I lie under the cross, let me not lie under the curse; though I smart by the rod of a Father, let me not be cut off by the sword of a Judge.

10:3 - Does God oppress? Does he favor the wicked and their plans? He thinks it unbecoming the goodness of God, and the mercifulness of His nature, to deal so hardly with His creature as to lay upon him more than he can bear. Far be it from Job to think that God did him wrong, but he is at a loss how to reconcile his providences with his justice, as good men have often been, and must wait until the day shall declare it.

10:4 - He is sure that God does not discover things, nor judge them, as men do: He has no eyes of flesh, for he is a Spirit. Eyes of flesh cannot see in the dark, but darkness does not hide from God. Eyes of flesh are in

one place at a time and can see only a little way; but the eyes of the Lord are in every place and run to and fro through the whole earth.

10:5 - Men grow wiser by experience and more knowing by daily observation; with them truth is the daughter of time, and therefore they must take time for their searches, and, if one experiment fails, we must try another. But it is not so with God; to Him nothing is past, nothing future, but everything present. The days of time, by which the life of man is measured, are nothing to the years of eternity, in which the life of God is wrapped up.

10:6 – **Job** thinks it strange that God should prolong his torture, and continue him under the confinement of this affliction, and neither bring him to a trial nor grant him a release, as if he must take time to enquire after his iniquity and use means to search after his sin.

10:7 - He perceived that it seemed improper use of His omnipotence to detain an innocent prisoner, merely because no one had the power to release him from his grasp.

Ver. 8. through Ver. 13 - Job views God as his Creator and sustainer, emphasizing his reliance on Him for existence. This is a primary concern for everyone.

God made us. Our parents were only the instruments of His power and providence in our production. These bodies have been formed with intricate detail as described in (**Job 10:8**) and display remarkable complexity. The soul also, which animates the body, is His gift.

Job takes notice of both the body and the soul here. The body is made as the clay (**Job 10:9**), cast into shape, as the clay is formed into a vessel, according to the skill and will of the potter. Human beings are like earthen vessels, originally made from clay, and easily broken. The created entity should not question its creator about the reasons for its creation.

The formation of human bodies in the womb is described by an elegant similitude (**Job 10:10**, *“Did you not pour me out like milk, And curdle me like cheese,”* and by an induction of some particulars, **Job 10:11**. Although humans are born without garments, the body naturally possesses both protection and versatility. The skin and flesh are its clothing; the bones and sinews are its armor, not offensive, but defensive. The heart and lungs are protected and hidden to prevent injury. The admirable structure of human bodies is an illustrious instance of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator.

The soul is the life, the soul is the man, and this is the gift of God: Thou hast granted me life, breathed into me the breath of life, without which the body would be but a worthless carcass. God is regarded as the Creator of spirits, having endowed us with life and the power of reason. He has granted us existence and favor, which are considered valuable gifts. These gifts enable us to receive and appreciate further blessings.

Job's perspective improved compared to when he viewed life as burdensome and questioned why he did not pass away at birth. There was a time when he experienced good fortune and believed that his position was secure.

(**Job 10:9**): Remember, I pray, you made me. What then? Why - **Ps 139:1-13**.

This phrase is often used in requests, "We are like clay, and you are the potter." As stated in **Isa. 64:8** –

Your hands have created and shaped me, **Psalm 119:73**.

You created me; will you now return me to dust (**Job 10:8**)? **Job 10:9 - Ps 138:8**

You made me, and know my strength; will You then suffer me to be pressed above measure? Was I meant to feel unhappy? Was I preserved only to be reserved for these calamities?" If we use the fact that we were created and are sustained as a motivation to perform our duties, we can also use it as a rationale for seeking assistance.

Job did not know how to reconcile God's former favors and his present frowns, but concludes (**Job 10:13**), ***“And these things You have hidden in Your heart; I know that this was with You.”***

When God changes His way, though we cannot account for it, we are bound to believe there are good reasons for it hidden in His heart, which will be manifested shortly. Known unto God are all his works.

Ver. 14. through Ver. 22 - Here we have, Job's passionate complaints. He often complains about this harsh topic which, although not justified, can be excused. He complained not for nothing, as the murmuring Israelites, but had cause to complain. If we think it looks ill in him, let it be a warning to us to keep our temper better. He complains of the strictness of God's judgment and the rigor of His proceedings against him and is ready to call it justice bordering on severity.

10:14 - If I take one false step, misplace a word, or cast a look awry, I shall be sure to hear of it. My conscience will remind me that this pain is a consequence of my actions.

10:15 - God is out to get me! Righteous or not, I'm His target. He is so oppressed and overwhelmed with his troubles that he cannot look up with any comfort or confidence. From external conflicts to internal anxieties, he experienced profound confusion. This included not only the shame of his downfall but also the critical judgments from his peers.

10:16-17—As if this wasn't bad enough, if I were prideful, you would strike me again. As it is, you increase my troubles with these “friends” of mine who have come against me. He complains about the severity of the execution. God (he thought) did not only punish him for every failure but punished him in a high degree. His affliction was, very grievous, exceedingly marvelous. God hunted him as a fierce lion hunt and runs down his prey.

10:18-19 - He laments his existence and the misery he endures. If this was designed for my lot, why was I brought out of the womb, and not smothered there, or stifled in the birth? This was the language of his passion, and it was a relapse into **the same sin he fell into before**. He had just now called life a favor (**Job 10:12**), yet now he calls it a burden, and **quarrels with God for giving it**, or rather laying it upon him.

10:20-22 -If I can't die, please leave me alone so I can have some peace and happiness before I die.

Messages For Today

I want to look at one of the concepts Job Grasps that is important for us to consider. Job points out that he cannot stand in the presence of God. God is too mighty and too immense to be able to do so.

It does not matter how blameless Job is, to stand in God's presence is a frightening proposition.

We see this truth pictured for us a few times in the scriptures. **Isaiah 6:5** sees a vision of the Lord's throne room which causes him to declare, **Ezekiel 1:28** sees a vision of the Lord's throne room.

When John sees a vision of the Son of God, *"I fell at his feet as though dead"* (**Rev. 1:17**). I think people have this strange idea that you can just stand before God. But the scriptures constantly show us that you cannot be in the presence of God. That is why people could not enter the tabernacle or the temple. When God came to Mount Sinai, all the people and animals had to stay back. Job expresses this truth and recognizes that he needs a mediator to act on his behalf.

God gives us that mediator. The high priest in the days of the temple and the tabernacle gave us this picture. There was only one person who could come into God's presence and that was the high priest, one time a year, after offering sacrifices for himself and for the people.

Hebrews 9:14,15 resets this vivid picture and points out that Jesus is our high priest.

What Jesus does is make the impossible possible. **Heb. 9:24**.

No one can come before the throne of God. But through Jesus we can draw near to the throne with confidence and find grace and mercy to help us in our time of need - **Heb. 4:16**

We have the mediator we need. We have the access we need. We can present our troubles and despair to God. The sacrifice of Jesus purifies our consciences so that we can approach the throne of God. May we always be thankful and grateful for what God has done through Jesus so that we can approach Him. Jesus is our mediator. God is near us.

Lesson Eight

Zophar's Speech (11:1-20) - Zophar is the most abrasive of Job's friends. This is even more apparent after his 2nd speech. Job's wounds were yet bleeding, his sore still runs and ceases not, but none of his friends bring him any oil, any balm; Zophar, the third, pours into them as much vinegar as the two former friends had done.

Ver. 1. through Ver. 6 - It's unfortunate that even wise and good men, like Zophar, can be driven by heated arguments to intemperate passions. Eliphaz began with a very modest preface, **Job 4:2**. Bildad was harsher on Job (**Job 8:2**). But Zophar falls upon him without mercy.

Should a man full of talk be justified? And should his lies make men hold their peace? Is this the way to comfort Job? Those that engage in controversy will find it very hard to keep their temper. All the wisdom, caution, and resolution they have will do little to prevent their breaking out into such indecencies as we here find Zophar guilty of.

Zophar represents Job otherwise than what he was, **Job 11:2-3**. He would have him thought idle and impertinent in his discourse, and one that loved to hear himself talk. He gives him the lie and calls him a mocker; and all this that it might be looked upon as a piece of justice to chastise him.

As a man that never considered what he said, but uttered what came uppermost, only to make a noise with the multitude of words, hoping by that means to carry his cause and run down his reprovers. Sometimes, it's best to ignore impertinence; silence can be the strongest form of contempt. Should a man full of talk be justified? In the abundance of words, sin was inevitable. Can many words be considered valid excuses? Shall he carry the day with the flourishes of language? No, he shall not be accepted with God, or any wise men, for his much speaking, - **Matt. 6:7**.

Job was not mad, but spoke the words of truth and soberness, and yet was thus misrepresented. Despite Eliphaz and Bildad's attempts to shame him, Zophar harshly attacked a man who was already distressed. Three individuals were pitted against one.

Jophar wrongly accuses Job of claiming purity in his doctrine (**Job 11:4**). It was true that Job was sound in the faith, and orthodox in his judgment, and spoke better of God than his friends did. If he had expressed himself unwarily, yet it did not therefore follow but that his doctrine was true. Job did not claim to be without fault. He acknowledged in (**Job 10:7**), yet he also conceded, **"I have sinned,"** and did not assert flawless perfection.

He had indeed maintained that he was not a hypocrite as they charged him; but to infer that he would not admit that he was a sinner was an unfair insinuation. We ought to put the best construction on the words and actions of our brethren that they will bear; but contenders are tempted to put the worst.

Jophar calls upon God and requests His presence to present a case against Job. So very confident is he that Job is in the wrong that nothing will serve him, but that God must immediately appear to silence and condemn him. We are commonly ready with too much assurance to include God in our quarrels, and to conclude that, if He would speak, He would take our part and speak for us, as Zophar here: **"oh, that God would speak, And open His lips against you,"** When God did speak, he opened his lips for Job against his three friends.

We ought indeed to leave all controversies to be determined by the judgment of God, which we are sure is according to truth. Zophar, unable to persuade Job, wishes God would highlight two key points everyone should accept during suffering: --

1. ***The unsearchable depth of God's counsels.*** Zophar cannot pretend to do it, but he desires that God himself would show Job so much of the secrets of the divine wisdom as might convince him that they are at least double to that which is, **Job 11:6**.

(1.) There are aspects of wisdom that remain unknown. God's way is in the sea. Clouds and darkness are round about Him. He has reasons of state which we cannot fathom and must not pry into.

(2.) What we know of God is nothing to what we cannot know. According to **Eph. 3:9**.

(4.) An omniscient perspective is aware of more of our flaws than we may recognize ourselves; this is one interpretation. David acknowledged that God had given him an awareness of sin and wisdom, as stated in **Ps. 51:6**.

2. **Another important consideration** is the unexceptionable justice of His proceedings.

"Know therefore that God exacts from you Less than your iniquity deserves." or (as some read it), ***"he remits thee part of thy iniquity, and does not deal with thee according to the full demerit of it."***

Note,

(1.) When the debt of duty is not paid it is justice to insist upon the debt of punishment.

(2.) Whatever punishment is inflicted upon us in this world we must own that it is less than our iniquities deserve, and therefore, instead of complaining about our troubles, we must be thankful that we are out of hell, **Lam. 3:39; Ps. 103:10**.

Telling another person that life could be worse is of no comfort or value at all. Of course, life could be worse! But how does that help me with my pain and suffering today? Zophar is telling Job that God has been compassionate toward Job because it would be so much worse if God punished him for all his sins. This is Zophar's great counsel to Job.

11:7-12 - Zophar speaks well concerning God and His greatness and glory, concerning man and his vanity and folly. God sees this concerning man, that man is a vain creature, yet he is a proud creature, and self-conceited. Is such a creature as this fit to contend with God?

11:7 - While God's perfections and the reasons for His ways are beyond human understanding, revelation provides enough knowledge to trust in His wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth.

11:8 - The meaning is, the nature and perfections of God are above the understanding of any of His creatures. It is only His own infinite understanding that can frame a perfect idea of His own perfection. When we cannot comprehend a thing, we say it is beyond our reach; or it is too high or too deep for us. But in what a noble manner does Zophar here express such an impossibility!

11:9 - God's wisdom is too vast to grasp. We cannot fathom God's designs, nor find out the reasons of His proceedings. His judgments are deep. Paul attributes such immeasurable dimensions to divine love as Zophar here attributes to divine wisdom and yet recommends it to our acquaintance. **Eph. 3:18-19**

11:10 - Who can stop God from carrying out justice? Who can control His power or arrange His wisdom and justice?

11:11 - God is a strict and just observer of men. God only does this to worthless men.

11:12 - Shall man, void of understanding, take the confidence to dispute with God? Man, who is naturally as rude and blockish as a wild donkey's colt? No one can comprehend God. He is too high and too deep, and a stupid person like Job could never understand Him

Ver. 13. Through Ver. 20 - Zophar, like the others, urges Job to hope for better times by adopting a better attitude.

11:13, 14 - Zophar gives Job good counsel as Eliphaz did (**Job 5:8**), and Bildad, **Job 8:5**. He would have him repent and return to God. Observe the steps of that return.

- **He must look within**, and get his mind changed and the tree made good.
- **He must prepare his heart**; there the work of conversion and reformation must begin. The heart is then prepared to seek God when it is determined and fully resolved to make a business of it and to go through with it.
- **He must look up and stretch out his hands towards God.**
- **He must stir up himself to take hold on God**, pray to Him with earnestness and importunity and with expectation to receive mercy and grace from him.
- **He must amend what was amiss in his own conversation**, else his prayers would be ineffectual (**Job 11:14**)

Zophar believed Job's family was destroyed due to mismanagement and wrongdoing. Therefore, if he expected God should return to him, he must reform what was amiss there, and, though wickedness might come into his home, he must not allow it to dwell there. Zophar feels that Job is a fool and his words are foolish. Any attempt to understand God is considered as utter folly and Job is empty-headed for trying.

How often people make this mistake and indicate that God cannot be known because He is too great and too deep! Sometimes scriptures are misused to make this point - **Rom. 11:33-34**.

Paul is saying that we cannot understand the mind or the plan of God unless he reveals it to us. We cannot conceive our ideas and plans and think that this is the way God thinks and acts. This passage from Isaiah is also similarly misused - **Is. 55:6-9**.

The point is not that you cannot know God but that you are to exchange your knowledge and way of thinking for God's knowledge and His way of thinking. We are supposed to spend our lives trying to understand God through the words He revealed to us. If we cannot understand and know God, why did He give us this book that contains His mind, His thoughts, and His words?

11:15 - Job was now full of confusion, while he looked upon God as his enemy and quarreled with Him; Zophar assures him that, if he would submit and humble himself, his mind would be composed, and he would be freed from those frightful apprehensions he had of God.

11:16 - You shall forget your misery, as the mother forgets her travailing pains, for joy that the child is born; you shall be perfectly freed from the impressions it makes upon you, and you shall remember it as waters that pass away which leave no taste or tincture behind them. The wounds of your present affliction shall be perfectly healed, not only without a remaining scar, but without a remaining pain."

11:17 - Those that truly turn to God then begin to shine forth; their path is as the shining light which increases, the period of their day will be the perfection of it, and their evening to this world will be their morning.

11:18 - Those who have a good hope, through grace, in God, and of heaven, are certainly safe, and have reason to be secure, how difficult soever the times are through which they pass in this world.

He that walks uprightly may thus walk surely, because, though there is trouble and danger, yet there is hope that all will be well at last. Hope is an anchor of the soul, **Heb 6:19**.

11:19 - It is great mercy to have quiet nights and undisturbed sleep; those that are within the hearing of the noise of war say so. The way to be quiet is to seek God and keep ourselves in His love. Nothing needs to make those afraid who return to God as their rest and take Him for their habitation.

11:20 - Zophar concludes with a brief account of the doom of wicked people. He suspected that Job would not take his counsel, and tells him what would come of it, setting death as well as life before him.

Before we leave Zophar and consider Job's response, I want us to consider where in the scriptures does God promise to make your life better or fully restore you after trials? Does God say that He will restore you after your loved one dies? Does God say that He will restore your life after divorce? Does God say that He will restore your life after a great loss? Where is the promise?

Yet Job's friends continue to tell Job that repentance always brings about physical restoration of what was lost. It is a false hope that humans offer but God does not give.

Lesson Nine

Job's Response (12:1-14:22) - In this and the two following chapters we have Job's answer to Zophar's discourse, in which, as before, he first reasons with his friends (see **Job 13:19**) and then turns to his God, and directs his expostulations to Him, from thence to the end of his discourse.

In this chapter he addresses himself to his friends, and he condemns what they had said of him, and the judgment they had given of his character, **Job 12:1-5**. He contradicts and confronts what they had said of the destruction of wicked people in this world, showing that they often prosper, **Job 12:6-11**.

He consents to what they had said of the wisdom, power, and sovereignty of God, and the dominion of His providence over the men and all their affairs; he confirms this, and enlarges upon it, **Job 12:12-25**.

Ver. 1. thru Ver. 5. - *he condemns what they had said of him, and the judgment they had given of his character,*

The critiques that Job offers to his friends are notable for their sharpness and provide an example of addressing pride and mockery, as well as highlighting potential folly. He criticizes them for their arrogance and the high regard they appear to hold for their own wisdom, especially when compared to him. He represents them as claiming the monopoly of wisdom, **Job 12:2**. He speaks ironically: *"No doubt you are the people, And wisdom will die with you!"* You think yourselves fit to dictate and give law to all mankind, and your own judgment to be the standard by which every man's opinion must be measured and tried, as if nobody could discern between truth and falsehood, good and evil, but you only; and therefore everyone must lower to you, and, right or wrong, we must all say as you say, and you three must be the people, the majority, to have the casting vote.

It is unwise to assume that our absence will result in a significant, irreparable loss, or that we are indispensable. God possesses an abundance of Spirit and can elevate others who may be more suited to fulfill His work. When wise men and good men die it is a comfort to think that wisdom and goodness shall not die with them. Some think Job here reflects upon Zophar's comparing him and others to the wild donkey's colt, **Job 11:12**. He states his position as one who shares in the gifts of wisdom **Job 12:3**.

He says this not to magnify himself. It wasn't a boast to say, I understand as well as you. But he says it to humble them and check the value they had for themselves as doctors of the chair. It is important to recognize that many people possess comparable knowledge, and some may have even greater understanding and application of that knowledge.

When we are tempted to be harsh in our censures of those we differ from and dispute with we ought to consider that they also have understanding as well as we, a capacity of judging, and a right of judging for themselves. Perhaps they are not inferior to us, but superior, and it is possible that they may be in the right and we are in the wrong; and therefore, we ought not to judge or despise them - **Rom. 14:3**

We are not to pretend to be masters - **Jas. 3:1**; While we are brethren, **Matt. 23:8**

Job complains of the great contempt with which they had treated him. Those that are haughty and think too well of themselves are commonly scornful and ready to trample upon all about them. Job found it so, at least he thought he did (**Job 11:4**): I am as one mocked. Job's friends likely meant well, trying to convince and comfort him without cause for this charge. Yet, he feels mocked.

It is common for individuals to perceive reproofs as reproaches and to feel mocked when they are being advised or admonished. This tendency can be detrimental, as it may lead to misunderstandings and negatively impact relationships with friends. Few things are more distressing for individuals who have descended from the peak of success to the depths of misfortune, than being subjected to further humiliation and disrespect when they are already in a vulnerable state.

Please note what exacerbated this issue for him. Two things: --

(1.) That **they were his neighbors, his friends, his companions** and the scoffs of such are often most spitefully given, and always most indignantly received. - **Ps. 55:12-13**

(2.) That **they were professors of religion**, such as called upon God, and said that God answered them: for some understand that of the persons mocking. It is sad that any who call upon God should mock their brethren, and it cannot but lie heavily on a good man to be thought ill of by those whom he thinks well of, yet this is no new thing. - **Jas. 3:9-10**

What supported Job.

(1.) **He could appeal to God**, who would hear him, as stated in **Job 16:20**. My friends scorn me, but my eye poured out tears to God.

(2.) **case was not singular, but very common**: The just upright man is laughed to scorn. By many he is laughed at even for his justice and his uprightness. Note that honest, good people have always faced contempt and mockery; this is not unusual - **1 Pet. 4:12**. It is not difficult to accept our fate, as both prophets and saints were also persecuted. - **Matt. 5:12**

Can we expect to fare better than they? - Being wealthy and comfortable, they scorned him for his poverty. It is the way of the world; we see instances of it daily. Those that prosper are praised, but of those that are going down it is said, "**Down with them.**"

He that is ready to slip with his feet and fall into trouble, though he has formerly shone as a lamp, is then looked upon as a lamp going out like the snuff of a candle, which we throw to the ground and tread upon, and is accordingly despised in the thought of him that is at ease, **Job 11:5**. Even an upright person, who is regarded as virtuous and exemplary, may be viewed with disregard if they face temptation or encounter difficult circumstances.

(1.) What is the common fault of those that live in prosperity. Being full, and easy, and merry themselves, they look scornfully upon those that are in want, pain, and sorrow; they overlook them, take no notice of them, and study to forget them. - **Ps. 123:4**

(2.) What is the common fate of those that fall into adversity. Poverty serves to eclipse all their luster but those that live at ease despise them. How easy it is to push down those who are stumbling when you are not experiencing trouble.

Point to Consider:

Are we quick to assign blame to people who are having problems? Obviously, some people's problems are their own fault.

The tough part which requires discernment is understanding whether someone's problems are because of poor choices or simply troubles that anyone could experience.

In some cases, it's obvious that the problems are the result of bad choices. We can't assume it's always someone's fault that they have troubles.

Ver. 6. through Ver. 11 - Job's friends adhered to the principle that wicked individuals cannot thrive for a long period in this world, anticipating that some notable judgment will inevitably befall them.

Zophar concluded with the assertion that the eyes of the wicked shall fail (**Job 11:20**). Job challenges this principle, asserting that God operates with sovereignty in the management of human external matters.

12:6 - Job further points out that Zophar is provoking God by the words he says. Evil people are the ones who are at ease. Robbers, idolaters, sinners. It is supposed that what is injurious to men is provoking to God.

12:7, 8 - Animals and plants know that God has done this—Just ask them!! We may learn from them that the tabernacles of robbers prosper.

- (1.) Even among the brute creatures the greater devour the less and the stronger prey upon the weaker, and men are as the fishes of the sea. If sin had not entered, we may suppose there would have been no such disorder among the creatures, but the wolf and the lamb would have lain down together.
- (2.) Look at **Isaiah 11:1-10**
- (3.) Ask the herds and the flocks and they will tell you that such a robber is their owner: the fishes and fowls will tell you that they are served up to the tables, and feed the luxury, of proud sinners.
- (4.) The earth brings forth her fruits to them (**Job 9:24**), and the whole creation groans under the burden of their tyranny - **Rom. 8:20,22**

Note, All the creatures which wicked men abuse, by making them the food and fuel of their lusts, will witness against them another day, **Jas. 5:3-4**

12:9 - In all these cases, says Job, the agency must be referred to Jehovah, though they may seem to man to imply imperfection (**Job 12:6; 9:24**). Here is Job's point. Zophar is provoking God because God cannot be explained so simply. Your system of thought is shallow, and God is more complex than your simple theology.

12:10 - God holds everything in His hand. All the creatures, and mankind, derive their being from God.

12:11 - Your ears can tell you what you're hearing just like your tongue tests food. The mind of man has as good a faculty of discerning between truth and error, as the palate has of discerning between what is sweet and what is bitter.

Job seems to appeal to any man's impartial judgment in this controversy.

Ver. 12. through Ver. 25. - This is a noble discourse of Job's concerning the wisdom, power, and sovereignty of God, in ordering and disposing of all the affairs of the children of men, according to the counsel of His own will, which none can resist.

When removed from the heated debate, both he and Job's friends communicated effectively. On this subject Job speaks like himself. There are no complaints or petty reflections, only everything strong and significant.

12:12 - Wisdom and understanding are with the old.

12:13 - God is the source of wisdom and strength.

The rest of the chapter is Job illustrating how God cannot be systematically explained.

12:14-15 - If God does something no one can stop or change it. Who can explain why in one place God gives drought and another place God gives a flood. Job could also be implying God has taken understanding away from His three friends.

12:17-21 - At every level of authority, God can make these people do as He pleases. Who can explain the fate of leaders on earth. Why are some rulers allowed to continue in strength while God strips and overthrows others?

12:22 - Nothing is secret from God.

12:23-25 - He possesses the ability to elevate or humble an individual or an entire nation. He has understanding and can take it away. He can make the people who are supposed to lead go in circles and wander aimlessly. God makes a nation great and then destroys that very nation.

Job's point is that there is no way to systematically explain everything God does. Why was the apostle James allowed to be killed by the sword, but the apostle Peter was set free in Acts? How God runs the world cannot be simply or systematically explained.

Your system of thought is deceitful (13:1-12)

13:1, 2 - Job here comes to make application of what he had said in the foregoing chapter; and now we have him not in so good a temper as he was then. He is very bold with his friends, comparing himself with them, notwithstanding the mortifications he was under.

I know this (everything mentioned in **chapter 12**) because I've seen it with my own eyes and heard it with my own ears and understood it. I'm not inferior to you.

13:3 - I'm up for arguing my case with God. Job has probably grown angrier as his friends accuse him, so he more vehemently defends himself. He probably feels they don't get it and desires to explain things from his perspective. He says he'll do something that he earlier declared impossible or futile in **9:2-3** and **9:12**.

13:4 - The things you say may appear to be logical or appealing in their own way, but it's a bunch of lies. He calls his friends worthless physicians. Job calls them out for making up lies to prove their system true.

13:5 - If you stopped talking it would be true wisdom.

13:6-9 - Do you guys really think you can speak on God's behalf? Job challenges these three friends telling them that they are speaking wickedly on God's behalf. How can you defend God's cause.

13:9 - What if the tables were turned? Can you bear to have the principles investigated which you go upon in your censures, and to have the bottom of the matter found out?"

13:10, 12 - **God** will rebuke you if you show partiality *even in secret*.

13:12 - Your best advice is garbage. Your platitudes are ashes and are as fragile as a clay pot. Your system for explaining life would fall apart when God comes after you.

Job must take his case to God (13:13-28)

13:13-14 - I'll take whatever happens because of what I say. I'm confident I'm in the right. Job was ready, not only to rend his clothes, but even to tear his flesh, through the greatness of his affliction, and saw himself at the brink of death, and his life in His hand, yet his friends could not charge him with any enormous crime, nor could he himself discover any.

13:15 - Even if God kills me, I'll defend my cause TO HIS FACE! This is a high expression of faith, and what we should all labor to trust in God.

13:16 - He will save me, because I trust Him. A wicked man shall never be able to stand before Him. The godless cannot come before God but Job is not godless. Therefore, his appeal to God will be his salvation.

13:17 - Listen up and hear what I have to say! Do not interrupt me but give me due attention to what I am about to say.

13:18 -I've thought it all through and I'm innocent! I have carefully examined my case and am prepared to defend it.

13:19—who can really argue with me? His friends are not able to bring charges of sin against him.

13:20, 21 - Job asks for the same things he asked for in **9:34**. Job doesn't treat his friends' accusations as legitimate points against him. He is convinced of his own integrity. He doesn't consider his friends' accusations as authoritative, but rather just peddlers of opinions and well-dressed lies.

Job is still fearful of God. Job then pleads with God to remove his hand from him because God is terrifying him.

13:22 - Job is asking for the thing he said shouldn't be done in **9:3** and **9:12**. Job says that if God will call for him, he will answer.

13:23-27 - Job knows he has not done wrong and cannot understand why he is God's enemy.

13:23 – Job says that he is ready to be judged. He desired that all his sins might be brought to light, as knowing they would then appear not so many, nor so mighty.

13:24 - Where are you, God? This likely refers to more than just his external hardships, such as the loss of property, offspring, and health. Job might be questioning God's love.

13:25—I'm of no account. Lord, is it for Your honor to trample upon one that is down already, or to crush one that neither has nor pretends to have any power to resist You?

13:26—I'm paying for all the stuff I did when I was young and dumb. He sadly complains of God's severe dealings with him. Job thinks it is hard, that his former sins, long since committed, should now be remembered against him.

13:27—Elihu recalls Job's words from this verse later in the book. I'm stuck here and can't go beyond the limits God has put on me. ***"You put my feet in the stocks, And watch closely all my paths"*** not only to afflict me and expose me to shame, but that You may critically remark all my motions and look narrowly to all my paths, to correct me for every false step, nay.

13:28—What is man? Know that I am a man who is wasting away. The intensity of Job's suffering over these many months has not eased.

Lesson 10

Chapter 14 Job - Job has turned from speaking to his friends, finding it no purpose to reason with them, and here he goes on to speak to God and himself. He had reminded his friends of their frailty and mortality (**Job 13:12**); here he reminds himself of his own and pleads with God for some mitigation of his miseries.

Ver. 1. through Ver. 6 - We are prompted to **consider the origin of human life**. God is indeed its great origin, for he breathed into man the breath of life and in Him we live; but we date it from our birth, and thence we must date both its *frailty* and its **pollution**.

1. ***Its frailty***: (**Job 14:1-3**): Man, that is born of a woman, is therefore of few days, **Job 14:1**. This may refer to the first woman, who was called Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Or it may refer to every man's immediate mother. The woman is the weaker vessel, and we know that the child takes after the mother. Let not the strong man therefore glory in his strength, or in the strength of his father, but remember that he is born of a woman, and that, when God pleases, the mighty men become as women. - **Jer. 51:30**
2. ***Its pollution*** (**Job 14:4**): ***"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"*** If man be born of a woman that is a sinner, how can it be otherwise than that he should be a sinner? See **Job 25:4**. Clean children cannot come from unclean parents any more than pure streams from an impure spring or grapes from thorns. We inherit our innate corruption from our parents, making it ingrained in us. Our blood carries not just the mark of legal conviction, but also an inherited disease. Our Lord Jesus, being made sin for us, is said to be made of a woman, - **Gal. 4:4**

Of the nature of human life: it is a flower, it is a shadow, **Job 14:2**. The flower is fading, and all its beauty soon withers and is gone. The shadow is fleeting, and its very being will soon be lost and drowned in the shadows of the night.

Of the shortness and uncertainty of human life: (**Job 14:1**): Man is of few days. Life is here computed, not by months or years, but by days, for we cannot be sure of any day but that it may be our last. These days are fewer than we think in comparison with the days of the first patriarchs, much more in comparison with the days of eternity.

Humans frequently experience mortality at a young age, preventing them from fully participating in life's activities and endeavors. Life is fleeting and constantly changing, much like a shadow that never stays in one form, as highlighted in **1 Cor. 7:29-31**

Of the calamitous state of human life. Human beings have a limited lifespan, which is often accompanied by periods of sadness. Although our time here is limited, we hope to find joy in those few days. During these few days man is full of trouble, either toiling or fretting, grieving or fearing. No day passes without some vexation, some hurry, some disorder or other.

Our short lifespan causes constant anxiety and doubt about our future. Yet, since man's days are so full of trouble, it is well that they are few, that the soul's imprisonment in the body, and banishment from the Lord, are not perpetual and are not long. In heaven, our days will be plentiful and devoid of any troubles.

On the nature of human life and its inherent imperfections. Some interpret **Job 14:4** as asking, ***"Who can produce something pure from an impure source?"***

Job here laments, as all that are sanctified do, running up the streams to the fountain (**Ps. 51:5**) – Some think he intends it as a plea with God for compassion: *"Lord, be not extreme to mark my sins of human frailty and infirmity, for thou knowest my weakness. Remember, I am human."*

The Chaldee paraphrase has an observable reading of this verse: *Who can make a man clean that is polluted with sin? Cannot one? that is, God. Or who but God, who is one, and will spare him? God, by his almighty grace, can change the skin of the Ethiopian, the skin of Job, though clothed with worms.*

Of the settled period of human life, Job 14:5.

1. Three things are assured here:

(1.) *That our life will come to an end*; our days upon earth are not endless, they are numbered, and will soon be finished, **Dan. 5:26**

(2.) *That it is determined*, in the counsel and decree of God, how long we shall live and when we shall die. The number of our months is with God, at the disposal of His power, which cannot be controlled, and under the view of His *omniscience*, which cannot be deceived. It is certain that our days are in His hands. It is therefore known unto God all His works.

(3.) *That the bounds God are fixed and we cannot pass*; for his counsels are unalterable, his foresight being infallible.

2. These considerations Job here urges as reasons,

(1.) Why God should not be so strict in taking cognizance of him and of his slips and failings (**Job 14:3**):

Given my inherently flawed nature and susceptibility to frequent challenges, which consistently tempt me from external sources, do you closely observe and critically examine my actions to identify my mistakes? **Job 13:27**.

Do you bring me, a flawed being, into judgment with You who can easily identify any mistake, Who dislikes it, condemns it, and has the power to punish it?

The consideration of our own inability to contend with God, of our own sinfulness and weakness, should engage us to pray, Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant.

(2.) Reasons for a less severe approach in his interactions:

"Lord, I have but a little time to live. I must soon depart, and my remaining days are troubled. Please, give me a moment's rest! **Job 14:6**. It is appointed to me once to die; let that one day suffice me, and let me not thus be continually dying a thousand deaths.

Let it suffice that my life, at best, is as the day of a hireling, a day of toil and labor.

I'm willing to endure life's ordinary struggles, but I hope to avoid extreme suffering and not live every day as an execution day.

We can find comfort in difficult times by trusting in God's compassion, who understands and considers our condition.

Click - 14:7-15 - We have seen what Job has to say concerning life; **let us** now **see what he has to say concerning death.**

It is reasonable to consider dying while we are healthy, but it is inappropriate to view it as a distant event when we are already facing serious illness.

Job had already shown that death will come, and that its hour is already fixed. Here he shows that death is a removal forever out of this world. He had spoken of this before (**Job 7:9-10**), and now he mentions it again.

14:7-9 - Even a tree has hope; it can die but be brought back. A man cut down by death will not revive again. If a tree is cut down, leaving just the stump, it can still grow new branches as if newly planted. The moisture of the earth and the rain of heaven are, as it were, scented and perceived by the stump of a tree, and they have an influence upon it to revive it.

14:10 - when man dies it's over. He here describes what occurs,

(1.) Before death: he wastes away; he is continually wasting, dying daily, spending upon the quick stock of life. Illness and aging contribute to the deterioration of physical health.

(2.) In death: he gives up the ghost; the soul leaves the body and returns to God who gave it.

(3.) After death: Where is he? He is not where he was; his place knows him no more.

14:11,12 - he simply remains dead, it's final

14:13 - Please set a time for me to die and remember it!! It was not only a passionate weariness of this life that he wished to die, but in a pious assurance of a better life, to which at length he should arise.

The grave is not only a resting-place, but a hiding-place, to the people of God. The authority over life and death rests with God, who determines the entry into the grave and the eventual resurrection.

14:14 - I would wait patiently for my death if I only knew when it would be.

14:15 - you would call me away from this life and I would come to you. My sins will be forgotten forever.

Ver. 16. through Ver. 22 - Job resumes his grievances, and, although not devoid of hope for future contentment, he finds it exceptionally challenging to overcome his current difficulties.

He complains of the hardships he apprehended himself under the strictness of God's justice, **v. 16-17**. He wanted to escape this world, feeling God's displeasure much like a disciplined child yearns for adulthood.

Job rightfully faced consequences for his sins and transgressions. He admits his guilt and does not claim innocence in the face of his downfall.

He errs in implying that the divine goodness was overly stringent in noting his mistakes and interpreting them in the harshest possible manner. He mentioned this in **Job 13:27**.

God sees all our sins; but He is not severe in reckoning with us, but we are punished less than our iniquities deserve. Job complains of the wasting condition of mankind in general. We live in a dying world. Who knows the power of God's anger, by which we are consumed and troubled, and in which all our days are passed away? - See **Ps. 90:7-11**.

And who can bear up against his rebukes? - **Ps. 39:11**

We see the decays of the earth itself.

- (1.) ***Of the strongest parts of it, v. 18.*** Everything is subject to change as mountains erode, leaves wither and fall, and rocks deteriorate due to the continuous impact of the sea. The water has worn the stones smooth over time. Everything on earth deteriorates over time. It is not so with the heavenly bodies.
- (2.) ***Of the natural products of it.*** The things which grow out of the earth, and seem to be firmly rooted in it, are sometimes by an excess of rain washed away, **v. 19**. Some believe he asks for relief, saying: ***"Lord, my patience is not infinite; even rocks erode eventually; please end this dispute."***

Job begins to think his case is not singular, and therefore he ought to reconcile himself to the common lot. We perceive by many instances,

- (1.) How vain it is to expect much from the enjoyments of life: ***"You destroy the hope of man."***

Death will be the destruction of all those hopes which are built upon worldly confidences and confined to worldly comforts. Hope in Christ, and hope in heaven, death will consummate and not destroy.

- (2) How vain it is to struggle against the assaults of death (**v. 20** – ***"You prevail forever against him."***)

Death's call is unavoidable; resistance is futile. God prevails against man, and he passes away.

Look upon a dying man and see **How his looks are altered**: his countenance is changed in two ways: -- **First**, By the disease of his body. When a man has been a few days sick what a change is there in his countenance! Especially after a few minutes of death.

Death alters one's appearance and then leads to a departure from this world with no return.

Secondly, By the discomposure of his mind. The approach of death will make the strongest and stoutest to change countenance; it will make the merriest smiling countenance to look grave and serious, and the boldest daring countenance to look pale and timorous.

He is now barely involved in his family's affairs, which once meant so much to him. When he is in the hands of the harbingers of death, tell him then the most agreeable news, or the most painful, concerning his children, it is like, he perceives it not, **v. 21**.

The consideration of this should moderate our cares concerning our children and families. God will know what comes of them when we are gone. Let us entrust them to Him and leave them in His care, avoiding unnecessary worries.

How dreadful the agonies of death are (v. 22): While he is alive, his body will experience pain; and while his soul remains within him, it will lament.

Dying is difficult and painful work. It is unwise to delay repentance until one's deathbed when one is least capable. True wisdom lies in making peace with God and maintaining a clear conscience.

Message for Today

Without the resurrection there is no hope for humanity. We are simply suffering the few days that we have and then we die. Our days are few and full of trouble. We are helpless and hopeless in this life.

Human existence is brief and transient. **(14:1-2)**. Humans die and lay low. We breathe our last and that is it **(14:10)**. Like waters that dry up, so we lie down and do not wake up **(14:11-12)**.

There is a massive hopelessness without the resurrection. Just finish me off and let me die when I am in this anguish. The apostle Paul made the same point to the Corinthians: **1 Cor. 15:19**.

God addresses our need and gives us the hope that we need for this life. This is the hope the apostle Peter describes for us. **1 Pet. 1:3-9**

We have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance. This is the hope we need and gives us the ability to have joy even though we are grieved by various trials.

Job hopes that there could be life again. God shows us through Jesus that there is life again because of the resurrection of Jesus. Thus, Paul could say with confidence: **Rom. 6:4-5**

We are not dead and then it is all over. We can endure because we will live again. Death has lost its sting, and God has given us hope through our trials for life again.

Lesson 11

Eliphaz's Attack (15:1-35) - Job may have been confident in the righteousness of his own position, believing that he had not necessarily convinced but at least quieted his three friends; however, it appears that he had not achieved this. In this chapter they begin a second attack on him, each of them charging him afresh with as much assertiveness as before.

Eliphaz here keeps close to the principles upon which he had condemned Job.

Sin prompts your mouth (15:1-6) - Despite Job's words, his friends remain convinced of his sin.

15:2-3 - even though Eliphaz rebukes Job for his long speech he still acknowledges him as wise. He's saying it's unbecoming of a wise man to speak as Job has. We see that the politeness of Eliphaz has completely disappeared. He says that a wise man would not speak with such empty talk. Yet again Job is called a windbag. Eliphaz declares that the wise do not engage in such empty chatter.

15:4 - you don't have respect for God. Your words are useless. Not only this, Eliphaz says that what Job is saying undermines the fear of God, directing people to challenge God and no longer pray.

15:5-6 - Your iniquity is clear from the words you've spoken. You've backed yourself into a corner. You've proven yourself guilty with your own words. Your words are detrimental to those who seek to live faithfully. Your sin is what causes your mouth to speak, and your tongue is misleading.

Before we move forward, we should consider that Job is blameless and upright and the only thing the friends can say is that Job's words condemn him. But Job's words only condemn him because he is not saying what the friends want him to say.

Move forward in history to the time of Jesus. Jesus is blameless, upright, sinless, and perfect. The only thing false witnesses could charge against Jesus was His words. Yet again Jesus did not say anything wrong. Rather, Jesus' words were charged against Him because He did not say what the Jewish leaders wanted Him to say **Matt. 26:62-65**

Job's "wisdom" is corrupt (15:7-16) - Eliphaz now turns to challenge the wisdom of Job. He asks if Job believes he possesses special wisdom. But Job has not claimed to have a monopoly on wisdom. Job is merely questioning the wisdom of his friends.

15:7-9 - Are you a heavenly being who was around before the earth? Can only you have wisdom? We're all on the same page with knowing the stuff you say. Are you senior to us, and better able to give the sense of antiquity and the judgment of the first and earliest, the wisest and purest, ages?

15:10 - Age differs among people (Job mentioned wisdom with age in **12:12**)

Eliphaz says that Job is fighting against the wisdom of the ages. Eliphaz' point is very simple: the older are wiser. Job's ideas are wrong because that is not what the forefathers believed.

Older does not necessarily mean godly wisdom. Although these three friends are advanced in years, Job acknowledges that they do not possess profound wisdom.

15:11 - Job is wealthy because God allowed it. Apparently, Eliphaz thinks Job is being dealt with gently because words from his friends are what he contends with.

Eliphaz takes it ill that Job did not value the comforts which he and his friends administered to him more than it seems he did, and did not welcome every word they said as true and important.

It is true they had said some very good things, but, in their application to Job, they were miserable comforters.

He calls his words to Job *“the comforts of God”* and is agitated why Job does not receive that comfort. Amazingly, Eliphaz says that their words have been gentle words to Job.

15:12-13 - you are losing self-control and showing unrighteous anger. Eliphaz says I can't believe I'm hearing the stuff you're saying! Why are you so careless and mindless of what is said to you, hearing it as if you were half asleep?

Why so scornful, disdainful at what we say, as if it were below, you to take notice of it? What have we said that deserves to be slighted.

15:14-16 - Because Job does not accept their words, Job's heart has carried him away and his spirit has turned against God. Now we have listened to the words of Job, and we have not seen evidence that Job's spirit has turned away from God. Instead, we have seen the opposite.

Job desires to be renewed by God so that they can enjoy a new relationship (**Job 12-14**). But Eliphaz continues to try to show that Job is sinful.

Eliphaz will speak wisdom (15:17-35)

15:17-19 - Eliphaz restates a prior argument that no one can be pure before God. I've seen it and the wise men from old can attest to this. **Vs. 16** - He is clearly pointing his finger at Job, calling him one who is abominable and corrupt, drinking injustice like water.

Thus, Eliphaz ends his argument with Job by telling him that he is imparting wisdom in his words.

15:20 - Eliphaz describes the condition of wicked in this section. The wicked man suffers torment. Wealth and power offer no escape from these terrors.

15:21-24 - The wicked are hopeless and distressed. The wicked have unceasing pain. His prospering will be cut short. He fears death and knows it's coming for him.

15:25-26 - The wicked are stubborn against God.

15:27-30 - You put your riches before God and defied Him and are blinded by their wealth. *“He covers his face with his fatness.”* This signifies both the pampering of his flesh with daily delicious fare and the hardening of his heart thereby against the judgments of God.

15:28 - This verse can be understood in two ways: it either describes a man's violence, indicating he lives in cities made desolate by his actions, or it outlines his punishment, suggesting he will live in desolate cities as an outcast from society. The latter has the more probable meaning.

15:29-31 - The wicked who hide behind their wealth lose their wealth. Eliphaz is clearly putting Job in the category of the wicked. Your wealth was not a sign of divine blessing. Rather, Job is the wicked wealthy who are wiped out by God.

In **verse 30** Eliphaz uses Job's words about how the shoots of a tree will sprout again after being cut down. But Eliphaz tells Job that God will burn up his shoots. Suffering is not inevitable to humans but divinely institutes discipline for sin.

15:32-35 - God will cut his life short and discard the wicked like bad fruit.

15:34 - the company of the godless is barren (somehow present company excluded though)

Does God use suffering to bring people to him? Yes, and we will see that truth made later in this book. We see this truth made in the New Testament that trials refine our faith. But here is the error: is all suffering divinely instituted discipline for sin? No!

Suffering and loss do not mean God is disciplining us, as illustrated by the lives of Job, Joseph, the prophets, Jesus, the apostles, Stephen, and many more. I cannot look at a person, a group of people, or a nation and say that the reason they are suffering is because God is disciplining them.

Lesson 12

Job's Response (16:1-17:16) - This chapter begins with Job's reply to that discourse of Eliphaz which we had in the foregoing chapter; it is the second part of the same song of lamentation with which he had before bemoaned himself and is set to the same melancholy tune.

Click - I need new friends (16:1-6)

16:1-3 - Job begins by stating that he needs to make new friends. Job calls these three "*miserable comforters*" who will not stop blowing hot air with their long-winded speeches.

16:4-5 - If the roles were reversed, Job says that he could pile on them like they are piling on him. But he wants them to strengthen him with their words and comfort him in his pain.

16:6 - Whether I'm silent or I speak, my pain doesn't go away. Job's complaint is as bitter as anywhere in all his discourses, and he is at a stand whether to smother it or to give it vent.

God destroys me (16:7-22)

16:7-8 - Job proceeds to talk about how God has devastated him and his friends have turned against him (**16:7**). He feels completely alone. Even though I'm with friends it's lonely. His body was worn away with diseases and pains, so that he had become a skeleton, nothing but skin and bones. His face was furrowed, not with age, but sickness.

16:9 - The identity of the individual referenced in this verse, continuing to the end of the fourteenth verse, has been a subject of considerable debate among scholars. Some think God, others Eliphaz, is intended.

Eliphaz, who showed himself very much exasperated against him, and perhaps expressed himself with such marks of indignation as are here mentioned. What he said tore Job's good name and thundered nothing but terror to him. His eyes were focused on finding faults with Job, and both he and the others treated him harshly.

Satan was his enemy that hated him, and perhaps, by the divine permission, terrified him with apparitions, and thus he aimed to make him curse God.

God himself. His expressions seem rash if we understand them correctly. God hates none of His creatures; but Job's melancholy did thus represent to him the terrors of the Almighty: and nothing can be more grievous to a good man than to apprehend God to be his enemy.

16:10 - nobody respects me, and they are all appalled when they see me.

16:11 - Now I'm at the mercy of the wicked.

16:12-14 - Things were fine and then he grabbed me and destroyed me in a gruesome fashion, one hit after another.

16:15-16 - I wear rags and lay in the dust - **Ps. 22:15**

We need to hold on to God and draw near to Him even though He feels far away. Consider the words of the song, *“Abide with Me.”* *“When other helpers fail and comforts flee, help of the helpless, O, abide with me.”* Let this be our encouragement. Notice this is what Job continues to say through his suffering and feelings of loss and emptiness. He knows that there is no hope in himself

16:17 - Still, I’ve done nothing wrong

16:18-19 - Don’t let me be forgotten. Let my pain be known always. God will stick up for me; He’s seen all of this. He knows all of it.

16:20 - I cry tears to God. Job is in tears and pain, but His prayer is pure. Despite his friends' scorn, he seeks the Lord.

16:21 - If only someone would plead with God on my behalf. This is probably the most critical point in **chapter 16: 21**. Job desires the very thing we now have as Christians. Job wanted someone to present his case and speak words on his behalf to God. He knows he isn’t equal to God (**9:14-15**).

He knows he can’t find proper words for the almighty (**9:3**). He truly wants someone who understands his situation who can speak directly to God to plead on his behalf. He feels this is his only hope.

We have this hope as our reality. It doesn’t take away the troubles we face, but we know that since Jesus spent time in the flesh, He can truly relate to what we struggle with.

What Job really wants is what Jesus would eventually do—intercede on man’s behalf to God. - **Heb. 9:15;1 Tim. 2:5**

16:22 - Everything Job has to say and wants is made even more important because he feels he is close to death. He wants everything to be made known before he goes down to the dust.

Chapter 17 Job - In this chapter,

I. Job reflects upon the harsh censures which his friends had passed upon him, and looking upon himself as a dying man (**Job 17:1**), he appeals to God, and begs of Him speedily to appear for him, and right him, because they had wronged him, and he knew not how to right himself, **Job 17:2-7**.

But he hopes that, though it should be a surprise, it will be no stumbling-block, to good people, to see him thus abused, **Job 17:8-9**.

II. He considers the unfulfilled promises of a better future that he was given, indicating that his life is nearing its end and that all his expectations will be buried with him, **Job 17:10-16**.

His friends becoming strange to him, which greatly grieved him, he makes death and the grave familiar to him, which yielded him some comfort.

Ver. 1. through Ver. 9 - Job's discourse is somewhat fragmented and interrupted, and he transitions abruptly from one topic to another, as is common for individuals in distress.

17:1, 2 - Job ends his speech with utter hopelessness. He feels that death is near, yet he still must deal with mockers and watch their hostility toward him. They had all promised him that he would be happy if he took their advice. Now all this he looked upon as flattery, and as designed to vex him so much the more. All this he calls their provocation,

17:3 - Who will help me now?

17:4 - Job could be speaking of what he thinks God has done to his friends' ability to reason. Thou have blinded the minds of my friends: therefore, I desire a more wise and able judge. You will not permit them to achieve their goal and will question their confidence.

17:5 - Maybe Job feels his friends are all against him not simply because of what they've said, but to gain an advantage over him, possibly for some of his property. He counts them among those that speak flattery to their friends. They all came to mourn with him. Eliphaz began with a commendation of him, **Job 4:3**. They had all promised him that he would be happy if he took their advice. Now all this he looked upon as flattery, and as designed to vex him so much the more.

17:6 - He has become a byword to everyone. People spit on him, which is the ultimate insult and a sign of rejection.

17:7 - He is the shadow of his former self when you look at him. Continual weeping impairs sight; and any affliction that debilitates the frame generally weakens the sight in the same proportion. Nothing is left but skin and bone.

17:8 - The upright sees this and are appalled. It motivates the innocent to oppose the godless. Maybe Job is telling his friends how they would act IF they were innocent. Wise and good men, when they shall see and consider my calamities, will not be so forward to censure and condemn me as you are, but will rather stand and wonder at the depth and mysteriousness of God's counsels and judgments, which fall so heavily upon innocent men, while the worst of men prosper.

17:9 -The righteous won't back down; neither will Job as he is righteous. The righteous will not be moved by such arguments to change his purpose of well doing; much less will he do any evil action, but grow rather the better by adversity, and add perseverance to his piety.

Ver. 10. through Ver. 16 - Job's friends had pretended to comfort him with the hopes of his return to a prosperous estate again; now he here shows,

It was Job's friends folly to talk so (**Job 17:10**): *"Return, and come now, be convinced that you are in error, and let me persuade you to be of my mind; for I cannot find one wise man among you, that knows how to explain the difficulties of God's providence or how to apply the consolations of his promises."*

Those who seek to comfort the afflicted by suggesting the possibility of their recovery or improvement in this world may not be acting wisely. While such outcomes should not be ruled out, they remain uncertain at best. It is therefore wise to comfort ourselves, and others, in distress, with that which will not fail, the promise of God, His love and grace, and a well-grounded hope of eternal life.

17:10 - The hopelessness of Job continues. He challenges his friends again that they are not wise and do not have the answers to his situation. The phrase “**But you**” (RSV) - might be employed to differentiate his friends from the description of the righteous that he has just provided.

17:11 - Job has given up on the things he would try to do with his life.

17:12 - my friends tell me everything will be okay. Light will be soon. This phrase could have been a common phrase in Job’s time. I think it was meant as a reminder in tough times that good times are around the corner.

Those in deep pain do not need our answers but our love and compassion. There are no answers, so do not try to give answers. Just be compassionate. Be a comforter. Saying empty words like “*Things will get better*” or “*There is gold at the end of the rainbow*” or “*Turn lemons into lemonade*” or some other kind of weak advice or comfort is not helpful and not true.

We do not have the wisdom to know why things are happening as they are. We just need to quietly sit and absorb what is happening. A person may just need a hug and a prayer.

17:13-16 - if I do make death and the grave my home, what could I hope for then? Job ends with pointing out that all he sees in darkness. His only hope is the grave, and he is resigned to his inevitable demise.

Message for Today

The big concept of this discourse is the miserable comforters these three friends prove to be. It is important for us to consider how to avoid the mistakes these men make in offering comfort.

First, we must shorten our words. Less words are more valuable. The more Eliphaz speaks, the more harm he did. Some of the most valuable comforts are *tearful hugs and quiet companionship and compassion*.

Second, we must season our words. The command that we read in **Ephesians** is just as important, if not more so, during suffering - **Eph. 4:29**

Third, our words need to build up the person, use words that fit the occasion, and words that give grace. We have not seen these qualities in the words of these three friends. When you speak, consider your words. What can you say to help? Are your words fitting the occasion? Are your words giving grace to who you are speaking to?

Fourth, we must consider our words. Even if I am speaking the scriptures, am I applying the scriptures properly? The three friends refer to the scriptures in their advice to Job, but they sometimes apply the scriptures inaccurately when describing God and offering counsel to Job.

We should ensure our help aligns with scriptural principles and God's ways. Paul says that God comforts us in our afflictions so that we can comfort those who are in any affliction - **2 Cor. 1:3,4**

Let's genuinely comfort those in distress rather than being ineffective comforters.

Chapter 18, Bildad - In this chapter Bildad makes a second assault upon Job. In his first discourse (**Job 8**), he encouraged him to hope for a positive outcome. He has become more irritable and, rather than being persuaded by Job's arguments, he is even more aggravated.

Bildad doesn't have as many of his own thoughts to attempt to impress on Job in this second time of speaking with him. He mostly refutes points Job has made.

Bildad's Rebuke (18:1-4) - Bildad begins his speech by rebuking Job for not listening to their counsel. Why do you disregard our words and treat us as stupid? Job needs to be silent and submit to what the friends are saying. Further, Job is a fool for not listening to them. Not only this, Bildad continues in **verse 4** by telling Job that he is having a tantrum that they should ignore. Bildad continues to insult Job.

18:2 - How long will you keep talking Job? Bildad was also referring to his other two friends.

18:3 - Why do you think we are stupid? Referring to what Job said in **17:10**. Job had indeed called them mockers, and had represented them unwise and unkind, but he did not count them as beasts; yet Bildad represents the matter,

1. Because his high spirit resented what Job had said as if it had been the greatest affront imaginable.
2. Because his hot spirit was willing to find a pretense to be hard upon Job. Those that incline to be severe upon others will have it thought that others have first been so upon them.

18:4 - Anger is a sin that is its own punishment. Fretful passionate people tear and torment themselves. He tears his soul (so the word is); every sin wounds the soul, - **Pro. 8:36**

Another thought is that Job is tearing off pieces of his skin affected by the sores as he speaks in anger. He was scraping himself anyway, but he was probably tearing away his skin more intensely as he spoke his words with emotion.

Ver. 5. through Ver. 10 - The rest of Bildad's discourse is taken up in an elegant description of the miserable condition of a wicked man, in which there is a great deal of truth, and which will be of excellent use if duly considered--that a sinful condition is a sad condition, and that iniquity will be men's ruin if they do not repent of it.

18:5-6 - The wicked may have some pleasure, some joy, some hope within, as well as wealth, and honor, and power without. But his light is but a little thing and soon extinguished.

18:7 - He is preparing for his own destruction by going on in sin and so treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. God gives him up, as he deserves and desires, to his own counsels, and then his own counsels cast him down.

18:8 - His sinful projects and pursuits bring him into mischief. He is cast into a net by his own feet and runs upon his own destruction

18:9, 10 - Satan is preparing for his destruction. He places obstacles for individuals, regardless of their path, and will succeed. He makes them sinful like himself, he will make them miserable like himself.

Ver. 11. Through Ver. 21 - Bildad articulates the consequences that wicked individuals face in the afterlife, and to some extent, the repercussions they encounter in this world.

18:11-13 - Bildad describes Job's experiences to illustrate his wickedness. The wicked have terrors frighten him on every side, lacks strength, and his skin is consumed. The way of sin is a way of fear, and leads to everlasting confusion, of which the present terrors of an impure conscience are earnest, as they were to Cain and Judas.

18:14 - all that he trusted for his support shall be taken from him, and he shall have nothing to rely upon, not even his own tabernacle. His own soul was his confidence, but that shall be rooted out of the tabernacle of the body, as a tree that cumbered the ground.

Death is terrible to nature; our Savior himself prayed, *Father, save me from this hour*. But to the wicked it is in a special manner the king of terrors, both as it is a period to that life in which they placed their happiness and a passage to that life where they will find their endless misery.

18:15 - The wrath and curse of God lie not only upon his head and heart, but upon his house too, to consume it with the timber and stones thereof - **Zec. 5:4**

Death itself shall dwell in his tabernacle, and, having expelled him, shall take possession of his house, to the terror and destruction of all that he leaves behind. Even the dwelling shall be ruined for the sake of its owner: Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation, rained upon it as upon Sodom, to the destruction of which this seems to have reference.

18:16 - Job's sources of greatness are gone and so are the things he did with what he was given

18:17 - All his honor shall be laid and lost in the dust, or stained with perpetual infamy, so that he shall have no name in the street, departing without being desired. Thus, the judgments of God follow him, after death, in this world, as an indication of the misery his soul is in after death, and an earnest of that everlasting shame and contempt to which he shall rise in the great day.

18:19, 20 - Remember that Job's children died. But this is not an innocent description of the wicked. His children are killed, shocking everyone.

18:21 - this is what happens when you don't know God. Bildad says that the life of wicked people can seem good on the surface but there are dangers that lurk under the surface that will catch up with them. Thus, all the good Job experienced was wiped away because he was wicked, and their wickedness always catches up to them in this life. But the writer of Ecclesiastes observed the opposite - **Eccl. 8:10-11**

The wicked sometimes get justice in this life but not always. Often the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. Justice is not swift and immediate.

Lesson 13

Slide 56 - Job's Response (19:1-29) - This chapter is Job's answer to Bildad's discourse in the foregoing chapter. Despite his irritation and Bildad's impatience, he allowed him to finish his argument and responded appropriately afterward.

Stop attacking me (19:1-6)

19:2 - Job's friends had passed a very severe judgment upon him as a wicked man because he was so grievously afflicted; here Job tells them how ill he took it to be so censured. Bildad had twice begun with a *How long* (Job 8:2; 18:2), and therefore Job, being now to answer him particularly, begins with a *How long* also.

19:3 - Job engages in another personal response to these friends. *“How long will you torment me and break me in pieces with words?”* These friends have shown no shame in attacking and wronging Job.

19:4 - even if I messed up it's me who must pay for it. Job's friends accuse him of wrongs against other people and injustice. Even if he had sinned, this is an unjustified response. Further, if you are going to use my suffering as a case against me, then the accusation belongs to God.

19:5 - you are treating my calamity like a self-evident witness against me. Job's disgrace is being used as the argument against Job. **“Bad things happen to bad people.”** When you operate with that belief, anybody with troubles becomes guilty of sins. Their trouble is their punishment. This idea conflicts with what Eliphaz said in 5:7.

What God has done (19:7-12)

19:6, 7 - Three things Job would have them consider: --

(1.) That **his trouble was very great**. He was overthrown, and could not help himself, enclosed as in a net, and could not get out.

(2.) That **God was the author of it**, and that, in it, he fought against Him: "It was his hand that overthrew me and therefore you need not appear against me. I have enough to do to grapple with God's displeasure; let me not have yours also."

(3.) That **he could not obtain any hope of the redress of his grievances**. He complained of his pain, but got no ease--begged to know the cause of his affliction, but could not discover it--appealed to God's tribunal for the clearing of his innocence, but could not obtain a hearing, much less a judgment, upon his appeal:

“If I cry out concerning wrong, I am not heard.” God, for a time, may seem to turn away His ear from His people, to be angry at their prayers and overlook their appeals to Him, and they must be excused if, in that case, they complain bitterly.

19:8, 9 - Job then describes what God has done to him. Job calls out for help and justice but there is none. His dignity has been taken away, leaving him unsure of how to proceed. God has done all those things that are normally reserved for the wicked.

19:10 - God has demolished him and he is finished.

19:11 - God has kindled His wrath against me and counts me as His adversary.

19:12 - I am doomed because God's whole army rages against me

The results of God's actions (19:13-20)

19:13-14 - It is painful to read about the devastation of Job's life.

19:15 - His own servants slighted him. His maids did not attend to him in his illness. His family is gone, and close friends have forgotten him. This is so true in trials. So many turn against you when you are going through severe trials.

19:16 - Job's servants will not even listen to him when he gives them directions

19:17, 18 - Job is even repulsive to his wife and little children despise him. The mention of his children in this place may suggest that he still had some remaining; that there might have been young ones, who, not being of a proper age to attend the festival of their elder brothers and sisters, escaped that sad catastrophe.

19:19 - Those who he loved has turned against him.

19:20 - Job is nothing more than skin and bones and he is barely alive!

Pleads for mercy (19:21-29)

19:21 - Job appeals with his friends for mercy. Everyone else despises him and his friends are the only hope he has as far as human beings go.

19:22 - why do you assault me as well? Isn't all this calamity enough? Will you persecute my soul, while God is persecuting my body?

19:23,24 - There is irony in **verses 23-24** as Job wishes that his words were inscribed in a book and engraved in a rock to be read forever.

But consider why Job wanted his words kept for the permanent record. - **19:25-27**

The book of Ruth gives us a good understanding of what a redeemer is in the scriptures. Recall that Boaz was the redeemer of Naomi and Ruth. A redeemer was a defender and benefactor, someone who would rescue when a family member was in personal and economic distress.

Job says that God will be his redeemer once the facts are laid on the table. God will be his defender. After his flesh has peeled off, he will meet God out of his flesh (meaning at the height of his suffering).

There may not be anything left of Job, which is why he wants his words permanently written in the record, but God will redeem and vindicate him. At the apex of this book, Job declares that he will see God.

19:26-27 - when it's all over I will finally see God with my own eyes.

19:28-29 - His pain is causing him to hope for something more. Then friends should watch out what God will do to them. You say that this suffering is my fault. Just wait until God comes and vindicates me!

Zophar's Speech (20:1-29) - One would have thought that such an excellent confession of faith as Job made, in the close of the foregoing chapter, would satisfy his friends, but they did not seem to have taken any notice of it, and therefore Zophar takes his turn, enters the lists with Job, and attacks him with as much vigor as before. Though Zophar's speech appears long, it is a very simple message.

20:2— Zophar responds heatedly to Job's words. Being resolved to condemn Job for a bad man, he was much displeased that he talked so like a good man, and, as it should seem, broke in upon him, and began abruptly. The best counsel is too often ill taken from an antagonist, and therefore usually may be well spared. Zophar seemed more in haste to speak than became a wise man; but he excuses his haste with two things: --

20:3 - **That Job had given him strong provocation** and cannot bear to hear it any longer. I have understanding; it's what motivates me to speak.

That his own heart gave him a strong instigation. His thoughts caused him to answer, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. It is important to understand and consider a matter thoroughly before discussing it; however, whether this was done in this instance is uncertain.

20:4-5 - **Zophar** asserts the misery, not only of those who are openly wicked and profane, but of hypocrites, who secretly practice wickedness under a show and profession of religion, because he looked upon Job to be such a wicked man.

He grants that wicked men may for a time prosper, may be secure and easy, and very merry. You may see them triumphing and rejoicing in their wealth and power, their grandeur and success, triumphing and rejoicing over their poor honest neighbors whom they vex and oppress, they feel no evil, they fear none. He lays it down that they will not prosper long. Their happiness is fleeting and will soon give way to perpetual sorrow.

20:6-7 - Zophar plainly shows the destruction of wicked people, implying Job's ruin proves his wickedness and hypocrisy. However great you become in this life; your end is like dung. It is not Job's wisdom and virtue, but his worldly wealth or greatness, that accounts for his excellency, and values himself upon.

He is confident that his ruin will accordingly be very great, and his fall the more dreadful for his having risen so high: He shall perish forever.

20:8-9 – It will be a swift destruction. He will quickly depart and the people who saw him will no longer. His home won't see him either. It will be utter destruction. It will be final: The eye that saw him, and was ready to adore him, shall see him no more, and the place he filled shall no longer behold him, having given him an eternal farewell when he went to his own place, as Judas, **Acts 1:25**

Ver. 10 through Ver. 22. -The instances here given of the miserable condition of the wicked man in this world are expressed with great fulness and fluency of language.

20:10 - His children are brought low and must appeal to the poor for a favor. Zophar says his hands will give back his wealth, implying he didn't rightfully own it anyway. They shall be reduced to the lowest degree of poverty and want to be obliged to become servants to the poor.

20:11 - he is cut off before his time, before living a "full life"

20:12-15 - the wicked man holds onto evil with his words and greedily swallows riches. They don't belong to him, so God causes him to vomit them up. He excessively indulges in carnal pleasures, finding them the most gratifying. That is the satisfaction which he hides under his tongue, and rolls there, as the daintiest delicate thing that can be.

The gall of serpents is full of poison, which from thence is conveyed to their mouths by veins, and the poison of asps or the cobra is most dangerous, and within a few hours kills without remedy.

His ill-gotten goods, for instance, which he devoured with so much greediness shall never thrive with him; but he shall be forced to refund them with a torment far exceeding the pleasure wherewith he got them: God himself shall violently force them from him, and all his other riches together with them.

20:16 - he might die from a snake. Zophar would see it fitting since he accused Job of hiding evil under his tongue, which is the venom of cobras. His ill-gotten riches shall prove as great and as deadly a torture, as if, when he squeezed the poor, he had sucked the poison of asps or been bitten by the viper.

20:17 - he won't see the wonderful things God made.

20:18 - he will hand over what he has made because...

He may endeavor again with new labor to repair his broken fortune; but it shall be in vain: though he should get as much riches as he had before his change, he shall have no joy with them.

20:19 - he stole it anyway and oppressed the poor!

This was the sin of the giants of the old world, and a sin that, as much as any, brings God's judgments upon nations and families. It is charged upon this wicked man,

(1.) That he has forsaken the poor, taken no care of them, shown no kindness to them, nor made any provision for them.

(2.) He has oppressed, crushed, and exploited them. He has misappropriated funds from the hospital, thereby exacerbating the financial hardships of the impoverished.

(3.) He forcibly took their houses without any right, like Ahab's seizure of Naboth's vineyard, using blatant violence rather than deceit or legal manipulation.

20:20 - you are never happy with what you have and indulge every impulsive desire to feed your appetites

20:21 - you greedily consumed all of what you had. None was left for anyone else. You are on a downward spiral; this isn't sustainable.

20:22 - People will pursue you at your peak. The greater fullness you can suppose him to regain of worldly goods, the more he shall be distressed; for the hand of every man whom he hath afflicted shall lay hold on him to demand satisfaction.

Ver. 23. through Ver. 29. - Zophar, having described the many embarrassments and vexations which commonly attend the wicked practices of oppressors and cruel men, here comes to show their utter ruin at last.

20:23 - God will satisfy your appetite—by raining His burning anger into your body.

Rain - This phrase denotes both the author of his plagues, God, and the nature and quality of them, that they shall come upon him like rain; so that he cannot prevent or avoid it.

Eating-As it fell upon thy sons. Zophar argues that Job's sores prove his point.

20:24-26 - he will die a nasty death and be devoured. His riches will have no future.

When he desires and hopes to avoid a lesser danger, he shall fall into a greater.

And though he should draw the shaft out of his body, and the wound in his bowels should be healed, he shall not escape, for terrors shall perpetually accompany him. Nothing but dreadful dangers shall wait for him in those places where he hoped for safety: a fire not kindled by man shall devour him, and the same pestilence or burning fever shall take hold of the rest of his family.

20:27 - heaven and earth will be witnesses and pursuers of him.

20:28 - some of Job's possessions **WERE** carried away. His posterity will be rooted out: The increase of his house shall depart; shall either be cut off by untimely deaths or forced to run their country. Numerous and growing families, if wicked and vile, are soon reduced, and dispersed by the judgments of God.

His goods shall flow away from his family as fast as they flowed into it, when the day of God's wrath comes, for which, all the while his estate was in the getting by fraud and oppression, he was treasuring up wrath.

20:29 - Zophar declares his speech to have God's endorsement behind it.

Lesson 14

Job's Response (21:1-34) - In **Chapters 13-20**, Job's friends use his own arguments against him. In the *first cycle*, they each made their own points which they had probably concluded in their own thoughts and their talks with each other on their way to meet Job. They have shifted to remembering things he says throughout his speeches to use against him when they speak.

Job responds to Zophar, focusing less on his own suffering and more on the broader debate with his friends, since they showed no sympathy for his complaints. They argued that outward prosperity and its continuation could indicate membership in the true church, suggesting that the loss of prosperity proves hypocrisy, even without additional evidence. Job disagreed with this assertion.

Ver. 1. through Ver. 6. - Job here recommends himself, both his case and his discourse, both what he suffered and what he said, to the compassionate consideration of his friends.

21:2-3 - Just listen and then you can make fun of me when I'm done.

21:4 - my complaint is to God, and to him only do I appeal. Let Him be Judge between you and me. Before Him we stand upon even terms, and therefore I have the privilege of being heard as well as you. If my complaint were to men, my spirit would be troubled, for they would not regard me, nor rightly understand me; but my complaint is to God, who will suffer me to speak, though you will not.

21:5-6 - When you look at me with that appalling look it reminds me of my miserable state

Ver. 7. through Ver. 16. - Job's three friends, in their last discourses, had been very copious in describing the miserable condition of a wicked man in this world. "It is true," says Job, "remarkable judgments are sometimes brought upon notorious sinners, but not always; for we have many instances of the great and long prosperity of those that are openly wicked; though they are hardened in their wickedness by their prosperity, yet they still suffered to prosper."

21:7 – Ps. 73, Asaph's complaint - Read

You have frequently asserted that the wicked are invariably punished in this life; and that the righteous are ever distinguished by the strongest marks of God's providential kindness; how then does it come that many wicked men live long and prosperously, and at last die in peace, without any evidence whatever of God's displeasure?

21:8- 12 - The prosperity of the wicked is here described,

[1.] *They are multiplied*, and their family is built up, and they have the satisfaction of seeing it (**Job 21:8**): Their seed is established in their sight.

[2.] *They are easy and quiet*, **Job 21:9**. Whereas Zophar had spoken of their continual frights and terrors, Job says, Their houses are safe both from danger and from the fear of it, and so far are they from the killing wounds of God's sword or arrows that they do not feel the smart of so much as the rod of God upon them.

[3.] *They are rich and thrive in their estates. Job 21:10.* Their cattle increase, and they meet with no disappointment in them; not so much as a cow miscarry her calf.

[4.] *They are merry and live a jovial life (Job 21:11-12):* They send forth their little ones abroad among their neighbors, like a flock, in great numbers, to sport themselves. They host balls and music gatherings where their children, protected by their innocence from mischief, dance and enjoy their time.

Though the parents are not so very youthful and frolicsome as to dance themselves, they take the timbrel and harp; their pipe, and their children dance after their pipe, and they know no grief to put their instruments out of tune or to withhold their hearts from any joy.

(5.) - 21:13 - *They spend all their days in wealth*, and never know what it is to want, and never know what sadness means; and at last, without any previous alarms to frighten them, without any anguish or agony, in a moment they go down to the grave, and there are no bands in their death.

21:14-15 - The wicked attitude toward God. He shows how they abuse their prosperity and are confirmed and hardened by it in their impiety. They mock God and do not see any reason to obey Him.

21:16 - It's up to them to prosper and they do; God doesn't hold *them* back. The wicked think they are prosperous by their own hand.

Ver. 17. through Ver. 26. - Job had largely described the prosperity of wicked people; now, in these verses, he challenges his friends' belief in their inevitable ruin. Notorious sinners often end their lives in either luxury or misery, proving that judging a person's character by their outward condition is unreliable. He reconciles this to the holiness and justice of God. Though wicked people prosper all their days, yet we are not to think that God will let their wickedness go unpunished.

21:17-18 - do the wicked **EVER** have to pay for their ways?? How often do they suffer for their choices? They are not like the chaff that the wind blows away, which is contrary to **Ps. 1:4**

21:19-22 - Furthermore, whether consequences come to the wicked later in life or affect their children, there is no clear evidence supporting the claim that God repays the wicked. The wicked are as apathetic as they are anything else. They don't care about their families (compared to how Job made sacrifices for his children after feasts in case they had a wrong **THOUGHT** about God)

21:23-26 – Job justly inferred that there was no discrimination observed in these dispensations. One haughty sinner comes peaceably to his end, having experienced a continual series of health, indulgence, and success, like cattle that feed in rich pastures.

Some people, though not evil, endure constant pain, sickness, poverty, and distress until they die. Thus, both eventually decompose and become sustenance for worms. The phrase translated as "*His pails are full of milk*" has multiple interpretations.

The word translated as *pails or breasts* is unique in scripture; some believe it refers to milk-pails. But others, supposing it to coincide with the subsequent clause, thus translating the passage, "*His ribs (sides, or intestines) are full of fat;*" and indeed this seems the true sense of the words.

God appears to treat the wicked and the righteous the same (**21:22-26**). The writer of Ecclesiastes made the same observation. - **Eccl. 9:1-3**

Ver. 27. through Ver. 34. - Job rejects his friends' belief that only the wicked suffer visible and remarkable ruin, which led them to wrongly label Job as a wicked man.

21:27-28 - Their wrongful thoughts against Job are stated by him in **Job 21:28**. They do not honestly name Job but insinuate his guilt. Investigate Job's house and family, then question the locations of the wicked's homes. When you compare them, you will notice that Job's house shares similarities with the houses of others in difficult situations, allowing for the conclusion that he was likely experiencing similar circumstances.

21:29-30 - Haven't you guys heard? What are people saying out there on roads you travel? News flash, the wicked get off easy! He is so sure he is right that he is willing to ask the next person who passes by.

Job asserts? *Two things*:

(1.) That impenitent sinners will certainly be punished in the other world.

(2.) That therefore we are not to think it strange if they prosper greatly in this world and fall under no visible token of God's wrath.

21:31-33 - Those in positions of power may not face accountability or criticism, and they eventually pass away peacefully, are buried ceremonially, and rest in the grave like others.

Death ends the prosperity of all individuals: and no one has been, or ever will be, exempt from this fate; indicating that there is no definitive distinction between the righteous and the wicked in the outward workings of Providence.

21:34 - Job questioned why his friends promised him worldly prosperity if he repented and sought the Lord.

For there was no truth in their system; there was falsehood interwoven with all their answers, which rendered them inconclusive, and inapplicable to the subject.

Message For Today - All of this causes us to long for the justice of God. More importantly, we are longing for vindication. This is what Job is crying out for at this point. Job knows that God is just. Therefore, Job knows that God will be his redeemer and defender (**19:25**).

Job believes that he will be vindicated even as his skin is peeling off and his flesh is rotting away. At some point, let all people know that God will vindicate him. Further, Job expresses this to Zophar. The wicked prosper inexplicably in the way God runs the world.

People in the scriptures frequently sought vindication and justice from God. The Psalms are filled with people who desire to see vindication! - **Ps. 26:1**

In the book of Daniel, we read about the shattering of the power of God's holy people. There remains hope for vindication. - **Dan. 12:1-3**

The book of Revelation follows a similar path. The people of God are pictured as being killed for the sake of Jesus (**Rev. 6:9-11**)

Their vindication comes later as they are pictured surrounding the throne of God (**Rev. 7:9-17; 14:1-5**). -
Read

The book pictures nothing in this life as the time of vindication. The righteous are not vindicated now. The wicked and the righteous both die all the same. The death of the wicked is not vindication because we will all die. There is currently a widespread presence of wrongdoing, and it seems that justice is not being served. But God is just.

Amazingly, Job has such a great faith that he knew somehow God would do something to be just against the wicked and vindicate the righteous. He did not know how. But he wanted his life recorded in the book because someday God would vindicate his life.

Job is correct. God will vindicate. The book of Revelation shows this judgment and vindication not until the final day of judgment. Then Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, tormented in judgment forever. - **Rev. 20:10**

On the final day of judgment, records are reviewed, and individuals receive justice for their actions. We endure now, awaiting redemption and vindication. One day God will act because He is righteous, true, and just. May we sing with this hope the song, ***"I Know That My Redeemer Lives."*** Wait for the Lord.

Lesson 15

Chapter 22, Eliphaz - Eliphaz initiates a third critique of Job, which is subsequently followed by Bildad. However, Zophar refrains from participating and withdraws. It was one of the unhappiness's of Job, as it is of many an honest man, to be misunderstood by his friends. He had spoken of the prosperity of wicked men in this world as a mystery of Providence, but they took it for a reflection upon Providence, as countenancing their wickedness; and they reproached him accordingly.

Eliphaz's Attack (22:1-5) - Eliphaz begins by attacking Job again. He declares that God is not moved by human righteousness. God does not care if you are righteous or not because He does not need people, innocent or otherwise! Eliphaz tells Job in essence, ***“So you think you are good? So, what! God does not care.”***

Now consider what Eliphaz has said. In an absolute sense, does God need people? God can exist independently of us. But is it true that God does not care if we are righteous?

Or to use the question of **verse 3**, ***“Does it delight God or give him pleasure if you are righteous?”*** Yes, it does! How did Job's events start? All of this began because God in the presence of the sons of God in the spiritual realm asked Satan, ***“Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?”*** (Job 1:8).

God delighted in the righteousness of Job. The scriptures are filled with declarations that God delights in His people. - **Ps. 35:27; Ps. 18:19**

22:4 - But Eliphaz continues his attack. God does not reprove Job because Job fears the Lord.

22:5 - Obviously, your sins are endless. You are a gross sinner, and God has entered judgment against Job.

Eliphaz Accuses Job (22:6-11)

22:6 - Eliphaz now unloads all kinds of accusations against Job to show that Job deserves the suffering he is experiencing. The summary is that Job has abused his power and wealth. He took people's clothing as collateral which is a violation of: **Ex. 22:25-27**

22:7 - Despite having vast resources, you failed to provide the basic necessities. Job does not demonstrate concern for the needy. Isn't this a common accusation toward the wealthy, that they hate and rob the poor? The accusers who believe this rhetoric are usually only using the poor as pawns in their ongoing feud against “the rich”, who they also automatically label “the oppressors”.

22:8—The mighty owned the land and the favored live in it. Job is accused of acquiring land through improper means, such as force or unfair favoritism, or of assisting others in doing so. This accusation is like the arguments declaring the good fortune and success of some people to be a result of “privilege”. This is simply too short-sighted and agenda-driven to objectively examine where a person's success comes from.

It's usually easier for malcontents to condemn someone in a group they call the “privileged” than examine their narrative and acknowledge it may be flawed. ***

22:9 - you wouldn't help the broken-hearted in tough situations. Job, you are heartless. He has sent away widows empty-handed and crushed the strength of the fatherless.

22:10-11- All of this is why you are in the situation you're in, Job. This is why terror and darkness surrounds Job. Job is described as blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning from evil. Eliphaz is now making up sins to try to prove this theology about how God runs the world.

God Punishes Sinners (22:12-20)

22:12-14 - Eliphaz also charges Job with thinking that God did not see all the sins he had committed. You thought God cannot see in the darkness and the clouds covered your ways.

22:15 - Eliphaz states that Job has associated with the wicked.

22:16 - sometimes used as a possible timeline indicator for the events of Job. Some who study the book say this could allude to these events taking place after the flood.

22:17-20 - This seems to be a sarcastic reference to Job's words in Job **21:14-16**. Eliphaz adduces the foregoing case to refute Job's assertion that God makes the wicked prosperous in the present life.

God gave you (and all the wicked) blessings but the wicked are destroyed before they can enjoy those blessings. Wicked fools assume God is not watching. The righteous rejoice over the wicked being cut off, destroyed by the fires of God's judgment.

Repent and Prosper (22:21-30) - Eliphaz concludes with the same message all the friends have preached to Job. Repent, and God will hear you, shining his light on your path again. God saves the lowly, so humble yourself about your sins.

22:21-23 - don't be at odds with God anymore. This is the way for your life to be good again. Go back to his instructions and meditate on them. Remove injustice.

22:24-25 - Give up your vain riches and then God will be what you value.

Chapter 1 doesn't mention Job losing any gold. It might be the only wealth he has left and Eliphaz thinks Job cares about it more than God.

22:26-27—you will delight in God, and he will hear you again

22:28—you will have control over your own life again and you will act in an upright way

22:29—if someone is brought low you say it's their own fault (Job's friends are excluded, apparently). Eliphaz is accusing Job of the thing which he, Bildad and Zophar have been doing for most of the conversation.

22:30—God even saves sinners—ones just like you, Job

Slide 61 - Job's Response (23:1-24:25) - This chapter begins with Job's reply to Eliphaz. He disregarded his friends' remarks, either because it was futile or he valued Eliphaz's final advice too much.

But he appeals to God, begs to have his cause heard, and doubts not but to make it good, having the testimony of his own conscience concerning his integrity. Here seems to be a struggle between flesh and spirit, fear and faith, throughout this chapter.

Job's despair (23:1-9)

23:1-4 - Job returns to his cry of despair. This time Job does not address the accusations of Eliphaz. Job returns to his cry of desiring to be in a courtroom with God so a just verdict would be rendered to resolve his suffering.

23:5 - Job is ready with arguments for God to set this situation straight. I can comprehend the wisdom of God.

9:10-11 - Job couldn't understand what God was up to but now he has no doubts he can understand it all.

23:6-7 - God would listen to Job's arguments and Job would be found in the right because God would welcome the arguments from an upright person. I have confidence that anyone upright could argue their case before Him, and I would be acquitted if I were to do this.

23:8-9 - Then God would alleviate Job's suffering. But Job cannot find God or enter his plea with Him. But here on earth I just can't understand what God is doing. He is active and moving but how would I know anything about what he's doing?

Job's confidence (23:10-12) - Job continues to declare his innocence. He has not turned against God and has a clear conscience before God. The commandments of the Lord have not departed his lips. Despite his suffering, Job has remained faithful to God. He has not turned to evil but continues to treasure the words of God more than food. He speaks like David speaks about the joy of God's word in **Ps. 19**. - **Read**

23:10 - God knows all about my ways. I'll be fine and come out on the other side of this trial.

23:11-12 - I've been walking according to His will and haven't turned aside. His words are better for me than food.

God is sovereign and terrifying (23:13-17)

23:13 - what God wants, God gets. What He plans, He does.

23:14 - whatever this is, God will complete His whole plan for me. God is thinking of me and the plans He has for me. In **10:13** Job feels that God's purpose for this situation was to judge him guilty.

23:15-16 - see **9:34**—despite Job's brief stint of confidence he admits he is terrified of God.

23:17 - I won't be silent because of this awful situation. I can't understand my way. The sovereignty of God is fearful to Job because this means that this trial will never stop or change. God has decided to destroy me and there is nothing I can do about it.

I want us to consider that we may feel this way in trials but that this is an inaccurate feeling. First, we can approach God and change God's mind. God does relent. God does listen to His children. This means that the sovereignty of God is not fearful but comforting and amazing.

So, we can talk to God about His purposes and pray for certain outcomes by the will of God to help us through our suffering. In fact, God calls for us to pray to Him and have these discussions with Him.

Chapter 24 Job - In **chapter 24** Job moves to describing the evil acts of the wicked. The first verse of **chapter 24** asks the question that is often on the minds of the righteous: ***Why doesn't God do something?*** Why doesn't God bring the wicked into judgment? Why do the wicked continue in their days? What Job is saying is a direct rebuttal of what his friends have said. His friends have said that the wicked get what they deserve.

Yet Job says that he looks around, and he does not see that. Look at **verse 12**.

Why doesn't God do something? (24:1-17)

Ver. 1 through Ver. 12 - The plight of the poor and weak

24:2-4—The wicked take what isn't theirs. They lie, cheat and steal. They extort people who don't have any help. They are cowards for praying on the weak.

24:5—The poor's mission each day is simply to find food

24:6—They must settle for food in the field and leftovers from the vineyards of the wicked

24:7-8—they lack essential clothing and shelter.

24:9—some wicked are so bad that they take the child of a widow as a pledge.

24:10-11—they work hard but remain unfulfilled.

24:12—the people suffer and what does God do about it? Nothing.

Ver. 13. through Ver. 17 - The ways of evil

24:13—some of the wicked rebel against something they don't know or understand. It's not what they believe so they rebel and want nothing to do with it.

24:14—the evil knows what they do is wrong. They must conduct their activities secretly and in darkness.

24:15—the adulterer uses darkness as well as covering his face. What he does is wrong, shameful and he is arrogant thinking nobody will ever catch him or uncover his deeds.

24:16-17—these evil people have nothing to do with the light. They live in a manner opposite to the righteous poor they pursue. These people are the reason people need to lock their doors at night.

Ver. 18. through Ver. 25 - The rest of Job's words cause problems for interpreters. **Verses 18-25** is *an issue in trying to understand what Job is saying* because it does not sound like his words because much of it describes the justice of God coming on the wicked.

So, translations have several ways that they have tried to solve this issue. The ESV and RSV add the words, **"You say"** to indicate that Job is quoting the words of the friends. The NASB, NRSV, NIV, NKJV, and NLT believe likewise because they put this section in quotation marks, indicating that Job is quoting the words of his friends. Only the HCSB (Holman Christian Standard Bible) does not make any changes and hold these words as Job's own words about God.

If we take these as Job quoting the friends, then I personally do not see how Job is advancing the argument about how God runs the world or about his suffering. What we would understand Job doing is saying that if the friends' view is correct then we would already see the wicked punished.

But if these are the words of his friends, Job does not provide a rebuttal after quoting the friends. He does not declare how their ideas are wrong. So, this does not appear to be the best way to look at these verses.

We have seen Job point out that God is not just in the way He runs the world (**9:23-26**) yet at the same time still affirm the justice of God (**13:17-19**), which is why Job desires so strongly to make his appeal to God.

So, we should not struggle with Job expressing a disconnect in his understanding of God. We know the truth of God's character from His word, but it does not feel that way. A great example of this disconnect is how we feel that God is far from us, yet God's word says He will never leave us or forsake us.

David in **Ps. 22** expressed the same disconnect. He asks why God has forsaken him at the beginning of the psalm only to affirm that God had not forsaken him.

I believe Job is doing the same here. Why doesn't God bring His judgment? Why doesn't God do something against the wicked? Yet now Job affirms his belief that God will do something. God will judge the wicked.

24:18-21—you guys seem to think the wicked live short lives of misery before they die sooner than they should.

24:22—God allows the mighty to grow in strength and to be deceived. Not one of them is promised life.

24:23—He provides security for them even though He sees everything they do

24:24—They reach a peak in their efforts but are suddenly done away with. Job overlooks that God is merciful. That the wicked continue to live and even seem to thrive is a reason for Job to believe God approves the wicked in what they do. Job is trying to understand how a just God could destroy a blameless man while allowing the wicked to continue living as they do.

Message For Today - *We also continue to hope in God's justice.* Job wants justice on the wicked now. While this often sounds good to the righteous, the righteous must understand even they are deserving of God's judgment. It is only because of God's longsuffering and mercy have we been granted the time to receive the grace of God and be forgiven.

Instant justice would be disastrous for all human beings. Jesus did not come to judge the world but to save it. Judgment is easy because we are all deserving of judgment. God must save us from our sins. So how can God continue to be just? The scriptures tell us how God is going to handle this problem of mercy and justice. **Revelation 20** pictures the final judgment. - **Rev. 20:11–15**

The apostle Paul gives the same picture: - **2 Cor. 5:10**

There must be a final judgment because God is just, yet what happens in this world is not just. ***God will hold the wicked in account.*** But justice does not come now. Our hope is not right now. God made a promise: ***“Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord”*** (Rom. 12:19).

Just as our vindication does not come in this life so also God's judgment on the wicked does not come in this life. If we believe that God is just, then we must believe in a final judgment. God will deal with evil.

Jesus taught this in **Matt. 13:24-30**. The wheat and the weeds are allowed to grow together until the time of the harvest. Do you remember why the instruction is given to wait? - **Matt. 13:28–29**

The point is that God desires all mankind be saved and He gives time for all to repent.

Consider how Peter spoke of that time for which we wait. - **2 Pet. 3:8–12**

Lesson 16

Bildad's Attack (25:1-6) - Bildad's final words are only six verses long, indicating that the arguments of these friends are coming to an end. Zophar does not speak, which is significant because each friend has spoken in turn. The friends' defense has run out of steam and Job remains unconvinced by their arguments. ***Bildad's final point is that humans cannot be right before God nor found pure.***

From our perspective, ***we are to consider ourselves nothing before God.*** He is lofty, exalted, and mighty. Who are we to stand before God? But we must also understand that this is not God's perspective of us.

God is powerful and does what He pleases. He affects every person on earth with what He has made and does. If the finest points of His creation which people marvel at are not pure to God, how can people possibly be pure?

We are His children whom He loves. This is why we speak about not having self-esteem but God-esteem. Further, God is not tyrannical in which nothing is pure before Him. ***God recognizes purity in our lives and calls for us to be pure - Ps. 24:3,4; 73:1; 119:9; Matt. 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:3***

Job's Response (26:1-14) - In the first four verses of **chapter 26** Job responds that ***these friends have been no help at all.*** They kicked him when he was down, rather than helping. The rest of the chapter is Job's description of the power and majesty of God.

26:2-3 - Job has some sarcastic comments for his friends. He is highlighting his friends' failure to help him since he is the one with no power or strength.

26:4 - For whose instruction have you uttered these things? For me? Do you think me to be so ignorant, that I do not know that which the meanest persons are not unacquainted with, to wit, that God is incomparably greater and better than His creatures?

Job might be referring to the words of the spirit Eliphaz described in **chapter 4** as well as what his friends have said in general up to this point. Bildad just summed up his last short speech with the idea from Eliphaz's spirit that visited him in the night.

The universe reveals the might of God (26:5-14). No one escapes from God, not even the dead. What you see in the universe is just a glimpse of God's vast creations. Job describes the infinite, incomprehensible sovereignty of God. The full range of God's power defies comprehension. His power is infinitely greater than what anyone can imagine!

26:5 - Even the dead on the bottom of the oceans, rivers or lakes know there is no way to hide from God. The living can't see the bottom of a deep body of water.

26:6 - the grave and destruction are plainly exposed to God. Realms humans cannot see are not hidden from God.

26:7 - He stretches out the sky and nothing holds it up, yet it stays. The earth hangs on nothing.

Point to Consider - Think of some of the theories and ideas that have developed about the earth being flat since Job was written. These ideas should show us that time alone does not give us knowledge and age alone does not give us wisdom. Job knew about the earth but thousands of years later people in some societies thought it was flat. With God is knowledge and wisdom. Elihu mentions this in **32:8**

26:9 - God keeps the highest heavens, which is his throne, from our view. -**Isa 66:1**

Its luster and glory should not reach us and dazzle our sight. - **Eze 1:26**

26:10 - He has confined the waters of the sea within shores, ensuring they will always stay within their bounds and turn their fury into foam.

26:11 - When God shows Himself angry by sending thunder, tempests, and earthquakes, the very heavens seem to tremble, and the whole universe to be moved by these tokens of his displeasure. Clark.

The figurative expression, "*the pillars of heaven,*" seems intended to represent the heavens under the idea of an immense fabric supported on stately columns. Their "trembling" and "astonishment" is the animated style of sublime poetry, denoting violent concussions of the air, and agitation of the clouds.

26:12 - This passage probably refers to the separation of the waters at the creation: like the parallel passage **Job 38:8-11**. In both places **Rahab** or "**proud**" is an epithet of the sea. Dr. Hales.

Or it may be no more than the description of a tempest: and if the former part of **Job 26:12** means, that God sometimes by his power raises a violent storm at sea; the latter may be well enough understood of the pride or swelling of the sea itself, allayed again by the same Divine power and will that raised it. Peters.

Rahab, the very name by which Egypt is called, - **Isa 51:9**

Calmat remarks: "*This appears to refer only to the passage of the Red Sea, and the destruction of Pharaoh. Were we not prepossessed with the opinion that Job died before Moses, every person at the first view of the subject must consider it in this light.*"

26:13 – This could be referring to the punishments and restrictions God placed on the serpent in the garden.

"The fleeing serpent" might refer to a celestial constellation, known as the great dragon or serpent. This prominent constellation, occupying a significant portion of the northern hemisphere, can appropriately represent all other constellations or stars that adorn the sky.

Job was well acquainted with the doctrine of astronomy; and knew the nature and names of the stars and constellations, as appears also from **Job 9:9; 38:31**.

26:14 - The works of God are many and wonderful: we know but a very small part of them, and we cannot comprehend all the reasons of His conduct in the government of the world. God is great, powerful, just, and wise. We should not question His actions or examine His works with excessive curiosity.

Job Demands Justice (27:1-23) - The first verse of **chapter 27** reads, *“Moreover, Job continued his discourse and said.”* As we have seen in most of these discussion cycles, Job first addresses the words of the friends and then speaks about God in general. This final discourse is his lengthiest discourse.

Notice how Job begins in **verse 2**. *“As God lives, who has taken away my justice....”* Job charges God with denying him justice. *“Who has denied me justice”* (NIV, CSB, NKJV, NET). God has denied him justice by afflicting him, making his soul bitter.

Job restates his righteousness in these **first six verses** and denies what the friends have said about him. Job strongly declares that God is in the wrong and that he himself is in the right. Job is asking for immediate judgment against the wicked in this section.

27:1 - Job had sometimes complained to his friends that they were so eager in disputing that they would scarcely let him put in a word: *“Suffer me that I may speak;”* and *“O that you would hold your peace!”*

But now, it seems, they were out of breath and left him room to say what he would. They either believed Job was right or lost hope in proving him wrong, so they abandoned their efforts.

Job's response in **Job 26** addressed Bildad's points fully. Job then waited to see if Zophar would respond, but when he did not, Job continued speaking without interruption. Maybe some time had passed between **chapter 26 and 27**

27:2-4 - surely God lives and as long as He does, I will not speak lies. I will always tell the truth.

27:5 - since I previously mentioned I would speak the truth; there's no way I can say you guys are in the right in what you say about me.

27:6 - I will continue to live righteously and know I am doing so.

Job calls for judgment upon all his enemies (27:7-12). Job calls for God to judge these three friends as his enemies. Treat them as opponents. The friends had come to teach Job (in their minds) but now Job is going to teach these friends (**27:11-12**).

27:7 - let those who are against me have the problems of the wicked

27:8 - the godless have no hope after this life

27:9-10 - God won't listen to the evil nor will the evil care about God

27:11 - see chapter **15:18**. Perhaps Eliphaz was saying Job had been concealing knowledge. Job says he will explain God to them and not hide anything.

27:12 - You all know this stuff already. Come on, you've seen it with your own eyes. Why have you forgotten and become useless?

The rest of the chapter is *a description of the outcome of the wicked*. Job confirms that the wicked will be punished.

27:13 - Job now commences his promised teaching; and what follows is a description of the lot or portion of the wicked man and of tyrants. And this remuneration shall they have with God in general, though the hand of man be not laid upon them.

27:14 - Job demonstrates that numerous families are not always a sign of God's blessing; the wicked descendants will face violent deaths or severe poverty.

27:15 - if any survive, the pestilence wastes them away and kills them. None of his widow's care. (Maybe Job saw having more than one wife unholy. It was a practice of man, not God, to have multiple wives at once).

27:16, 17 - he can generate large amounts of wealth of various types, but he won't keep it. The righteous will divide it up.

27:18 - *He builds his house like a moth*] With great skill, great pains, and great industry; but the structure, however skillful, shall be dissolved; and the materials, however costly, shall be brought to corruption. To its owner it shall be only a temporary habitation, like that which the moth makes in its larvae or caterpillar state, during its change to a winged insect.

27:19 - almost overnight his wealth is gone.

27:20-21 - disaster strikes and forces him to run

27:22-23 - he runs to escape, and it pursues him relentlessly

Elusive Wisdom (28:1-28) - In **chapter 28** Job speaks about wisdom. You will notice that there are many similarities about what Job says about wisdom to what Solomon says about wisdom in the Proverbs.

In the first 11 verses Job notes that *there is a mine for silver and gold but where is the mine for wisdom*. The point is that wisdom is elusive. You cannot just go to the store and buy wisdom (**28:12-22**). Job recognizes that wisdom only comes from the Lord.

28:1-2 - Think about how gold and silver are mined out of the earth

28:3-4 - man uses lamps to go into deep, dark places to find precious metals which are mined out of the ground. Far from where anyone is, they hang from ropes and swing to and fro as they go about their work.

28:5 - the earth provides bread (food) but far beneath the dirt comes things formed by fire

28:6 - deep in the earth is where precious stones and metals are found

28:7 - birds of prey haven't seen these places where these precious things are found.

28:8 - the powerful and renounced beasts don't go to those places. Not even the lion.

28:9-11 - Man goes to great lengths and can-do impressive things to find those precious things deep underground. Tough rock, overturning mountains, stuff that isn't easy even with today's technology.

Completing core drills is tough work with modern tools. Digging holes, working with rock, etc.

Vss. 12 – 19 - Job discusses the importance of wisdom and understanding, which he regards as more valuable than worldly wealth. Those that found out all those ways and means to enrich themselves thought themselves very wise; but Job will not own theirs to be wisdom. He supposes them to gain their point, and to bring to light what they sought for (**Job 28:11**), and yet asks in **verse 12** - "***But where can wisdom be found?***"

28:13 - it's so valuable, people don't even know what it's worth. It is priceless – **Pro. 3:15**

28:14 - the oceans and seas openly admit it's not there with them – **Rom. 11:33,34**

28:15 – "***It cannot be purchased for gold.***" Genuine religion and true happiness are not to be acquired by earthly property. Solomon amassed gold and silver in Jerusalem and enjoyed many pleasures, yet he was not happy. **Pro. 3:13-15**

Therefore, to Job, all was vanity and vexation of spirit. If Solomon, as some suppose, was the author of this book, the sentiments expressed here are such as we might expect from this deeply experienced and wise man.

28:16 - Though it is the purest gold which comes from Ophir, together with all the precious stones wherewith that rich country abounds, they are of so little value.

28:17 – Gold is the only metal that always keeps its luster.

28:18-19 - gold and silver, gold of Ophir, stones, (don't even try mentioning coral or crystal, they don't stand a chance), topaz of Ethiopia—**NONE** of it can buy wisdom.

Ver. 20. through Ver. 28. - The question which Job had asked (**Job 28:12**) he asks again here; for it is too worthy, too weighty, to let fall, until we speed in the enquiry. Through careful investigation, it is concluded that **wisdom can be twofold: one hidden in God which remains secret, and another that is revealed to us.**

28:20 - I'll ask again, where do you find wisdom?

28:21, 22 - This knowledge is hidden from the eyes of all living, even of philosophers, politicians, and saints; it is kept close from the fowls of the air; though they fly high and in the open firmament of heaven, yet they cannot penetrate the counsels of God.

Job and his friends had been engaged in a discussion concerning the methods and rationale behind the actions of Providence in the governance of the world.

28:23 - God does all according to the purpose which He purposed in Himself, which He never alters. However, in every will of God there is a counsel: He knows both what He does and why He does it.

Two reasons are presented explaining why it is necessary for God alone to comprehend His own path:

Job 28:24-25 - (1.) All events are now guided by an *omniscient* and supreme Providence. God is *Omniscient*; for He looks to the ends of the earth, both in place and time; distant ages, distant regions, are under His view.

He is *omnipotent*. He is proficient in all tasks and demonstrates precision in His work. For proof of this Job mentions the wind and waters, **Job 28:25**.

God has given an atmosphere to the earth, which, possessing a certain degree of gravity perfectly suited to the necessities of all animals, plants, vegetables, and fluids, is the cause in His hand of preserving animal and vegetative life through the creation.

By the wind, blood circulates in the veins of animals, and the juices in the tubes of vegetables. Without this pressure of the atmosphere, there could be no respiration; and the elasticity of the particles of air included in animal and vegetable bodies. - **Ps. 135:7**

The second reason is mentioned in **Job 28:26-27**. - Because all events were from eternity designed and determined by an infallible prescience and immutable decree. When He settled the course of nature, He foreordained all the operations of His government. Job describes a decree for rain and a path for thunder and lightning. The causes and effects of lightning and rain are ordained by divine purpose. - **Ps 135:7; Jer 10:13**

God meticulously planned every aspect of His providence and devised a precise blueprint for the entire process from beginning to end. Nothing was missing, and no unexpected events could disrupt the order or timing, as everything was planned precisely. Therefore, whatever He does cannot be changed or undone, - **Ecl. 3:14**

28:27 - God established it. Wisdom is with Him.

28:28 - the fear of the Lord is wisdom and turning from evil is understanding. – **Prov. 1:7**

Turning from evil comes first. Wisdom comes later and takes more time and effort since it involves **STAYING AWAY** from evil. You can immediately repent and abandon evil. Wisdom is built up as fearing God becomes a **PRACTICE**, a habit, a lifestyle.

A point Job is making is that we can't find the wisdom (of which God is the source) by using man's methods. The part man has in finding wisdom is knowing where it truly comes from, God, and going to God for it.

Remembering Prior Blessings (29:1-25) - After discussing wisdom, Job paused to allow his friends to comment on his words. Having nothing to add, he resumed discussing his own affairs as detailed in this and the next two chapters.

Chapter 29 depicts recalling happier times before facing trials. Job remembers his prior blessings. It is important to observe that Job's greatest pain is **his belief that he has lost his relationship with God (29:1-6)**. He remembers when God was with him through the darkness (**29:3**), when he was friends with God (**29:4**), when God was with him (**29:5**) and when he enjoyed the blessings of God (**29:6**).

29:1 - again, it's possible some time passed between **chapters 28 and 29**

29:2-5 - Job reminisces fondly of the good 'old days that he wishes would come back. Each verse Job mentions being connected to God in different ways. God watched over him, guided him through troubles, and was his friend. He remembers his children.

29:6 – He possessed a substantial estate sufficient to sustain his large family. His dairy produced a significant amount of butter, and his olive yards yielded an abundant quantity of oil, exceeding expectations.

Job goes on to remember when he was respected by others and blessed by others (**29:7-17**). People respected him because he helped the poor and the fatherless (**29:12**), helped the dying (**29:13-14**), helped the handicapped (**29:15-16**), and helped victims of oppression (**29:17**).

Ver. 7. through Ver. 17. - We have here Job in a post of honor and power. Though he had enough comfort in his own house, yet he did not confine himself to that.

29:7 - Judgment was administered openly in public places, ensuring free access for all to witness the proceedings. This transparency allowed everyone to hear and learn from the judgments given against the guilty. ***Job being a man in authority***, among the children of the east, he was respected by many people for the dignity of his position, his prudence, integrity, and management skills.

29:8-10 - people made way for Job, they stood up, refrained from speaking, and showed respect regardless of position or age.

29:11 - All who heard his words and saw his actions, recognized his dedication to the public good, and honored him as a father to his country. They praised him and prayed for him often.

29:12 - They respected me not for my considerable wealth or authority, but for my impartial justice, compassion towards the afflicted, and steadfastness in advocating their cause and rights against formidable adversaries. This appears to be intended as a refutation of the charges produced by Eliphaz, **Job 22:5-10**, to confute which Job appeals to facts, and to public testimony.

29:13 - people who couldn't help themselves blessed Job for helping them

29:14 - righteousness and justice were continually with Job. They were identifiers of his ways.

29:15 - Job supplied what was lacking and equipped people with what they needed but didn't have.

29:16 - Job is impartial. He helps people he doesn't even know, people whose success couldn't benefit him at all.

29:17 - Job delivered justice by protecting the people from the unrighteous

Ver. 18. through Ver. 25.

His future was bright at that time (29:18-20) - That which crowned Job's prosperity was the pleasing prospect he had of the continuance of it. Though he knew he was generally vulnerable to trouble (**Job 3:26**), he had no specific reason to fear and expected his tranquility to continue.

29:18 – *“Then I said, I shall die in my nest.”* Having made himself a warm and easy nest, he hoped nothing would disturb him in it, nor remove him out of it, till death removed him. He knew he had never stolen any coal from the altar which might fire his nest; he saw no storm arising to shake down his nest; and therefore concluded, Tomorrow shall be as this day; as David said - **Ps. 30:6**.

Even at his peak, he contemplated death calmly. He knew that, though his nest was high, it did not set him out of the reach of the darts of death.

29:19-20 - He was like a tree whose root is not only spread out, which fixes it and keeps it firm, so that it is in no danger of being overturned, but spread out by the waters, which feed it, and make it fruitful and flourishing, so that it is in no danger of withering.

He was respected for his godly wisdom (29:21-25).

29:21 - Job was the darling of his country. Everyone around him was happy with his words and actions, just as David's people were pleased with him (**2 Sam. 3:36**)

29:22, 23 - His wise speeches were as refreshing to his listeners as dew is to dry ground, especially those tailored specifically for them. The early rain refers to the precipitation that occurs around the seeding period, or in the spring, to aid in impregnating and swelling the seeds. It also serves to moisten the soil, facilitating the nourishment of the earth.

His servants opened their mouth to receive my words, and therewith to satisfy their thirst, as the dry and parched opens its mouth to receive the rain.

29:24 - Job was encouraging

29:25 - he had the authority of a commander or general. He dwelt as a king in the army, giving orders which were not to be disputed. Not everyone with wisdom can govern, but Job could, and when needed, he could assert authority like a king in the army.

Even though, he had the tenderness of a comforter. He was as ready to succor those in distress as if it had been his office to comfort the mourners. Eliphaz himself said that he had been very good in that respect (**Job 4:3**)

Points to consider - Job tells us that being in a position of power, being wealthy and seemingly on top of the world doesn't have to be selfish and evil like it's portrayed in our culture today. Our cultural attitudes toward wealth and power are much like the attitudes of Job's friends.

Money doesn't have morals. It isn't good or bad by itself. It doesn't make someone good or bad. It makes them more of what they already are. You **CAN** be wealthy and upright. There are plenty of examples in scripture of God blessing people with wealth.

Lesson 17

Job's Present Misery (30:1-31) - Job recalls his prior blessings and joy and contrasts them with the present misery he experiences. Job is disdained and laughed at (**30:1-15**). Even the worthless and the lowest of the lows are mocking Job (**30:9**). They spit at the sight of him (**30:10**) and promote his calamity (**30:13**). Job's body devastates him (**30:16-19**) and he feels that God has deserted him (**30:20-23**). This chapter ends with Job's expressing his hopelessness (**30:24-31**). Listen to the pain he is in as recorded in **verse 30**:

Ver. 1. through Ver. 14. - *Job makes a very large and sad complaint* of the great disgrace he had fallen into, from the height of honor and reputation, which was exceedingly grievous and cutting to such an ingenuous spirit as Job's was. He emphasizes two factors that significantly exacerbate his condition: --

The meanness of the people that affronted him. As it added much to his honor, in the day of his prosperity, that princes and nobles showed him respect and paid a deference to him by those that were not only his inferiors every way, but were the meanest and most contemptible of all mankind.

30:1 - People younger than me laugh at me. Their fathers were so despicable that such a man as Job would have disdained to take them into the lowest service about his house, as that of tending the sheep and attending the shepherds with the dogs of his flock.

30:2 - *The young were not fit for labor*, they were so lazy, and went about their work so awkwardly: Whereto might the strength of their hands profit me? The elderly were not to be advised on trivial matters, as their wisdom had faded, making them like children again.

30:3-8 - Job describes these worthless people. They wander about in search of food. They subsist on the most basic forms of nourishment, including leaves, **roots of broom trees**, saltwort, wild greens, and salt marsh herbs.

30:9 - AND NOW...they are all laughing at **ME!** I'm what they joke and sing about in their mocking.

30:10 - They shunned him as a loathsome spectacle, abhorred him, fled far from him, as an ugly monster or as one infected.

30:11 - God has allowed the tragedy to strike me, and people no longer have any respect for me. Job lost respect and everything else. A big deal considering what he described in **chapter 29**.

30:12 - They expressed the greatest scorn and indignation against him. They spat in his face, tripped him up, and kicked him either out of hatred or for their amusement.

30:13 - these people are in full support of my calamity. They don't need any help with you guys around.

30:14 - Job describes the people who harmed him as numerous, united, and forceful: They approached him like a flood when a dam bursts; or, "*They came as soldiers into a broad breach which they have made in the wall of a besieged city, pouring in upon me with the utmost fury;*"

Ver. 15. through Ver. 31. - In *this second part of Job's complaint*, which is very bitter, and has a great many sorrowful accents in it, we may observe a great deal that he complains of and some little that he comforts himself with.

30:15 - my honor is pursued as by the wind. There's no stopping everyone who wants to cut me down.

30:16 - my life is poured out because of my situation. Days of affliction take hold of me.

30:17 - He was full of piercing pain that went to all his bones. It was like a sword in his bones, which pierced him in the night, when he should have been refreshed with sleep.

30:18 - Even his garment had its color changed with the continual running of his boils, and the soft clothing he used to wear had now grown so stiff that all his garments were like his collar.

30:19 - His body resembled a pile of dirt.

30:20 - I am persecuted by man, afflicted with sore disease, and apparently forsaken of God.

30:21 - God did appear against him. That which he says of God is one of the worst words that ever Job spoke: "***But You have become cruel to me.***" - Far be it from the God of mercy and grace that he should be cruel to any, but especially that he should be so to his own children.

30:22 - You have taken everything from me, leaving me like chaff blown by the wind or straw carried and scattered by every breeze.

30:23 - it seems like the only logical end to all of this is Job's death. His friends kept saying to turn back to the Lord.

30:24 - what can I do but cry out for help?

30:25-26 - I comforted people who were suffering, but where is my comfort now?

30:27 - I have no rest. I only have days of trouble

30:29 - I can do nothing but lament myself, as if I were one of those mournful creatures, which makes such doleful noises in desert places.

30:30 - The boiling heat of my body has so parched me that my skin looks black; and the marrow in my bones, and all my vital moisture, is dried up.

30:31—there is no cheer left.

Job Is Righteous (31:1-40) - This chapter is Job's final appeal and declaration of innocence. He refutes the accusations his friends have put against him with examples of how he lived his life. It was Job's actions which speak for themselves, not any words he might use to try to convince anyone.

Job didn't just turn over a new leaf. He has continually lived a life of righteousness for as long as he can remember. He has made it a point to help those who aren't able to help themselves or don't have a voice or influence. He has protected and encouraged the weak. He is also ready to give an account of his life before God. This is an important consideration that should be kept in mind daily.

Job's final words are an expression of his own righteousness. He is morally pure (31:1-4), has lived in integrity (31:5-8), has been faithful in his marriage (31:9-12), and shown no partiality (31:13-15). He has been charitable (31:16-23), has remained humble (31:24-28), and shown hospitality (31:29-34). Verses 35-40 record his final cry to God. He calls for God to answer him by declaring what charges he has against him.

With this, the words of Job are ended (31:40). So, what are we to learn from all that Job says?

Ver. 1. thru Ver. 8. - The lusts of the flesh, and the love of the world, are the two fatal rocks on which multitudes split; against these Job protests he was always careful to stand upon his guard.

I. **Resisting bodily desires.** He not only kept himself clear from adultery, from defiling his neighbor's wives (Job 31:9), but from all lewdness with any women whatsoever. He kept no concubine, no mistress, but was very faithful to the marriage bed.

Job endured pain and sickness, finding comfort in a clear conscience and a pure body free from unclean desires. Now observe here, Job made a covenant with his eyes, that is, I watched against the occasions of the sin; why then should I think upon a woman?"

31:1 - Job's integrity is such that he won't even look lustfully at a woman.

31:2 - Job cares most about his standing with God and lives in such a way to please Him.

31:4 - doesn't God know I've lived pure and righteously? How can He bring the calamity of the unrighteous on me?

31:5-8 - If I have been in the wrong and turned aside and been impure in any way, then I'll work and let someone else reap the rewards.

Ver. 9. through Ver. 15. - Here are two additional instances that demonstrate Job's integrity:

I. That *he had a very great abhorrence of the sin of adultery*. As he did not wrong his own marriage bed by keeping a concubine (he did not so much as think upon a maid, Job 31:1, so he was careful not to offer any injury to his neighbor's marriage bed.

31:9-10 - He not only kept himself clear from adultery, from defiling his neighbor's wives, but from all lewdness with any women whatsoever. He kept no concubine, no mistress, but was inviolably faithful to the marriage bed.

He did not so much as covet his neighbor's wife; for even his heart was not deceived by a woman. Nor was he ever moved by the allurements of an adulterous woman, such as is described, Pro. 7:6-10.

Job never imagined any unchaste design. He never laid wait at his neighbor's door, to get an opportunity to take his wife in his absence, when the good man was not at home, **Pro. 7:19**

Job had a dread of this sin, and what frightful apprehensions he had concerning the malignity of it--that it was a heinous crime (**Job 31:11**), one of the greatest vilest sins a man can be guilty of that is highly provoking to God, and destructive to the prosperity of the soul.

31:12 - that kind of sin would consume all my riches and send me to destruction.

31:13-14 - Job knows he answers to God. He is not a liar. He doesn't have some excuse prepared should God call him to account for being "unjust".

31:15 - after all, God made all of us

Ver. 16. through Ver. 23. - Eliphaz had particularly charged Job with unmerciful Ness to the poor (**Job 22:6-9**).

One would think he could not have been so positive and express in his charge unless there had been some truth in it, and yet it appears, by Job's protestation, that it was utterly false and groundless; he was never guilty of any such thing.

31:16 - If a poor person begged a kindness of his, he was ready to gratify him; if he could but perceive by the widow's mournful craving look that she expected an alms from him, though she had not confidence enough to ask for it, he had compassion enough to give it, and never caused the eyes of the widow to fail.

31:17 - he took the fatherless children to eat with him at his own table: they should fare as he fared, and be familiar with him, and he was pleased with their company as if they had been his own.

31:18 - He provided support for those without parents, cared for orphans, raised them under his supervision, and offered them both sustenance and education. He was a guide to the widow, who had lost the guide of her youth; he advised her in her affairs and undertook the management of them.

31:19-20 - I gave clothes to people who needed it.

31:21 - Job acknowledges his ability to influence, which could be used by someone else for unjust purposes. He has not done this. Injustice and oppression are the two things his friends continually charge him with.

31:22-23 - Let my arm be broken if I was guilty of this stuff. I feared God so I remained pure.

Ver. 24. thru Ver. 32. - These verses contain *four more articles of Job's protestation*, which not only show what he did, but also guide us on what we should do. He protests that *he never set his heart upon the wealth of this world*, nor took the things out of it for his portions and happiness. He had gold; he had fine gold. His wealth was great.

31:24-25 - **He put no great confidence in wealth:** he did not make gold his hope. **He did not attribute his wealth to his personal excellence**, nor did he believe that it was acquired solely through his own strength or effort, referencing **Deut. 8:17**.

31:26-28 -He protests that he never gave the worship and glory to the creature which are due to God only; he was never guilty of idolatry. Idolatry is one of the old ways which wicked men have trodden, and the most ancient idolatry was the worshipping of the sun and moon, to which the temptation was most strong, as appears in **Deut. 4:19**

Moses speaks of the danger which the people were in of being driven to worship them.

31:29-30 - Though Job was a very good man, yet, it seems, there were those that hated him; but evil found them. He saw their destruction and was far from rejoicing in it. - **Prov. 24:17-18**.

Job was careful not to offend with his tongue (**Ps. 39:1**).

31:31 - Job fed everyone

31:32 - Hospitality is a Christian duty, **1Pet. 4:9**.

Job was known for his hospitality during prosperous times. He kept his door open to welcome passers-by, much like Abraham in **Gens. 18:1-3**.

Ver. 33. through Ver. 40. - *Job protests three more sins and appeals to God for a hearing*, concluding his discourse. However, he felt it necessary to address another specific sin. *He clears himself from the charge of dissimulation and hypocrisy.*

His acquaintances alleged that he maintained hidden places of wrongdoing while outwardly professing religious beliefs, and that he was no different from others but managed to hide his actions effectively. Zophar insinuated (**Job 20:12**) that he hid his iniquity under his tongue.

31:33-34 - *I never covered my transgression as Adam*. I never covered a sin with frivolous excuses, nor made fig-leaves the shelter of my shame, nor ever hid my iniquity in my bosom, as a fondling, a darling, that I could by no means part with, or as stolen goods which I dreaded the discovery of.

31:35 - I stand by my words completely.

31:36-37 - I am fully confident to deliver an account of my life to God. This is the confidence we strive to obtain and keep as we examine our lives, knowing at any moment we could give an account of it to God.

31:38-40 - The whole creation is said to groan under the sin of man; but that which is unjustly gained and held cries out against a man, and accuses him, condemns him, and demands justice against him for the injury.

His oppression will not go unpunished; even the ground and its furrows will witness against him. Two things he could say safely concerning his estate:

1. He paid for what he bought, like Abraham (**Gen. 23:15,16**) - Like David (**2 Sam. 24:24**)
He paid his laborers on time and compensated his tenants for the use of their produce.

2. ***Job never caused the owners thereof to lose their life***, never got an estate, as Ahab got Naboth's vineyard, by killing the heir and seizing the inheritance, never starved those that held lands of him nor killed them with hard bargains and hard usage. No tenant, no workman, no servant, he had, could complain of him.

When Life Explodes - Since this is the end of the speeches of Job and the three friends, it is important for us to consider what we have learned from these speeches. Particularly, in this final speech of Job, he states the many lessons that we have considered throughout our study so far. So here are nine facts as a foundation for us in our times of trial.

1. ***You can be righteous and suffer immensely.*** Job is righteous and is suffering intensely. Jesus is the ultimate example of righteousness being made to suffer.

2. ***We are to continue glorifying God during suffering (Job 26).*** The apostle Paul said the same: **Rom. 5:3–5**

3. ***The righteous hope in God to deal with those who wrong us and falsely malign us.*** Justice is not immediate, but we hope in God for future justice (**Job 27**). - **1 Pet. 2:19–23**

The wisdom needed for suffering and the wisdom needed for life continues to be in fear of the Lord (Job 28). Even when it appears that the outcomes for different individuals are similar, it is important to understand that wisdom remains a key factor. In suffering we need more of God, not less of Him. We need to draw closer to Him, not move further from Him. - **Jam. 1:2–5**

5. ***Suffering is not a loss of relationship with God (Job 29).*** Job has often felt that his suffering indicated he was distanced from God. But we are given wonderful promises from God that this is not the case. - **Heb. 13:5–6**

6. ***Enjoy what you have now because it can be gone tomorrow (Job 30).*** We must never assume that the way things are today are how they will be tomorrow. Job, a righteous man, woke up one day and it was all taken from him. **Ecclesiastes** emphasizes that life is fleeting, and circumstances constantly change.

7. ***Remain pure and holy in suffering (Job 31; 27:3-5).*** Nothing proves Satan's assessment more than turning to sin and forsaking God. Imagine if Job, after enduring his suffering, chose to sin and defy God's laws. Such a response would prove that he only served God for the good he received.

8. ***We will not have answers for why we are suffering.*** This is one of the big messages of the book. We do not know why we are suffering. When Jesus' disciples encountered the blind man in **John 9**, they thought there were only two options: his parents sinned, or he sinned. Jesus said that neither of those options are correct.

9. ***Faith can grow through the trial (Job 3-31).*** We have seen Job increase in his faith from his early cries in **Job 3**. We have seen him accurately defend God on many occasions and change his theology as we have moved through this book. But at the same time, inappropriate words can also be multiplied through the trial.

Lesson 18

Introducing Elihu (32:1-5) - We are introduced to another man named *Elihu*. While Job and his three friends are speaking to each other there is apparently an audience. But according to **verse 4** he has kept quiet because all four of these men were older than him.

So, he remained silent and listened while these discourses unfolded. At this point Elihu is angry at Job because Job is justifying himself rather than God. Further, Elihu is angry with the three friends because they are declaring Job to be in the wrong but do not have a suitable answer for Job.

Job is righteous, but his friends can only explain suffering through wickedness. When he realizes that Job's three friends have no answers, he feels anger towards the statements made by Job and his three friends.

The big question everyone has when they come to this part of the book is: *How should we read Elihu?* Is he offering godly counsel or should he be considered like the other three friends should his words be dismissed?

Therefore, we need to carefully examine the text and consider the evidence for and against accepting Elihu as godly testimony.

First, *some reject Elihu because he says a lot of things that sound like what the three friends say*. It would not make sense of the text if Elihu is simply going to parrot what the three friends said when he is angry at the three friends because they have not given Job an answer (**32:3,5**).

Some reject Elihu because he is angry at these three friends and at Job, but this is not a fair criticism either because God is angry at the three friends (**42:7**) and with Job (**40:8**) for the same reasons.

Let us look at the literature to help us decide about Elihu.

First, *Elihu is not condemned at the end of the book for his words*, unlike the three friends who are (**42:7**).

Second, *Elihu has the longest speeches*, giving four speeches which are longer than what the three friends give.

Third, and closely related to the second point, *Elihu is not rebutted*. Every time a friend of Job gives a speech, there is always a response for Job pointing out how those words were wrong. Elihu asks Job to rebuke him if he is wrong, but Job never does.

Elihu's speech introduces God. Remember that this is poetry and we must look at the structure of the literature. Elihu is considered a figure who introduces or anticipates God's arrival to address everyone in this book. It is for these reasons that this is the lens we will use in considering Elihu's words, as godly counsel that is to be accepted and learned from.

Ver. 1. thru Ver. 5. - Usually, young men are the disputants and old men the moderators; but here, when old men were the disputants, as a rebuke to them for their unbecoming heat, a young man is raised up to be the moderator. Many of Job's friends were present, they came to visit him and to receive instruction.

32:1 - even if we are correct on a point or in a discussion, we can render ourselves ineffective with the people we're talking to if we seem to be righteous in our own eyes.

32:2 - Job's big problem and ultimate dilemma are why Elihu is angry. Job justified **himself** rather than God. We can fall into the same trap.

32:3 - Job's 3 friends failed to answer the big question Job had for them in **6:24**. (*What have I done wrong?*)

32:4 - Elihu is respectful of people and customs

32:5 - Elihu waits for the 3 to come up with an answer and burns with anger when they fail to do so.

Preparing For Elihu's Instruction (32:6-22)

Ver. 6. through Ver. 14. - *Elihu here appears to have been, a man of great modesty and humility. Though a young man, and a man of abilities, yet not pert, and confident, and assuming: his face shone, and, like Moses, he did not know it.*

32:14. He has an extensive commentary (**32:15-22**) but will approach Job with impartiality (**32:21**), presenting the truth clearly and directly (**32:22**).

32:6-7 - Elihu must prepare these four people to listen before offering instruction. Elihu requests that readers give their full attention to his forthcoming statements, despite some individuals finding him tiresome. Because he was young and thought the older would teach wisdom, Elihu remained quiet.

32:8-9 - Elihu declares that he will use godly wisdom and that he is able to possess godly wisdom even though he is young. Elihu reveals where wisdom truly comes from. It comes from God, not age alone

32:10 - Elihu is continuing to be respectful. At first, he was silent to let his elders speak. Then he says he will speak because he has said that wisdom comes from God. He is meekly declaring he has something to say in wisdom.

32:11-12 - I listened and waited and here we are, still without an answer as to what Job has done. Not one person here could find the answer.

32:13 - Elihu challenges the three friends that they need to take responsibility for the counsel they gave.

32:14 - They should correct Job and not just wait for God to do it. Elihu clarifies that the arguments he will make will not be the same arguments that these three friends have made.

Ver. 15. through Ver. 22. - Elihu participated in the discussion for three reasons that had been previously mentioned by informed participants:

1. *That the stage was clear*, and he did not break in upon any of the managers on either side: They were amazed (**Job 32:15**); they stood still, and answered no more, **Job 32:16**.

Job 32:17), *"I also will answer my part*. I cannot pretend to give a definitive sentence; the judgment is the Lord's, and by Him it must be determined who is in the right and who is in the wrong; but, since each of you have shown your opinion, I also will show mine, and let it take its fate with the rest.

32:18-19 - If any disputant had hit what they believed was correct, they would have been silent. However, thinking all missed it, he eagerly tried to contribute. He pleads,

(1.) That he had a great deal to say.

(2.) That he was under a necessity of saying it:

Job 32:19 - See what a great grief it is to a good minister to be silenced and thrust into a corner; he is full of Christ, full of heaven, and would speak of these things for the good of others.

Job 32:20 - Expressing his thoughts would provide relief and satisfaction: speaking would ease the burden of suppressed thoughts and allow him to take pleasure in doing good according to his ability.

32:21 - Elihu sets the stage for an objective look at things. No flattery, no partiality. He will be just.

32:22 - Elihu is honest and doesn't know how to use flattery. He is above this and knows flattery has no place in the words of a man of God. Elihu knows he is accountable to God for the things he says.

Think of how Job's three friends have taken the liberty of asserting their opinions and declaring them to be on God's behalf. They didn't focus on how they are accountable to God for the words they used. Elihu plainly states that he (and everyone) is accountable to God for the words we use.

Correcting Job (33:1-33) - Elihu's discourse does not disappoint the expectations which his preface had raised. It is substantial, and lively, and very much to the purpose. He had, in the foregoing chapter, said what he had to say to Job's three friends; and now he comes up close to Job himself and directs his speech to him.

Ver. 1. through Ver. 7. - *Elihu presents several arguments to persuade Job to listen patiently* and to consider his intentions as well-meaning. He encourages Job to accept the instructions he is about to provide.

33:1-2 - up to this point Elihu has introduced the other men and will now speak the words he has prepared

33:3, 4 - Elihu declares that he has the Spirit of God and the words he gives are inspired.

33:5-7 - Elihu asserts that he is merely human and assures Job that his influence will not impose a significant burden.

Ver. 8. through Ver. 13. - In these verses, *Elihu charges Job with some indecent expressions* that had dropped from him, reflecting upon the justice and goodness of God in his dealings with him. Elihu does not speculate, like the three friends do, that Job must have sinned. Notice that Elihu says in **verse 8** that he is going to challenge Job on the words that Job said.

33:8 - **What Elihu speaks here, and in the three following verses, contains, in general, simple quotations from Job's own words, or the obvious sense of them.**

I do not accuse you, as your three friends have done, of crimes uncertain or unknown, but of what I myself, with mine own ears, have heard you utter.

33:9-11 Elihu quotes Job's words without alteration. Job has said these words (**Job 13:24,27; 16:9; 19:7,11**). Elihu's response will address the statements made by Job, differing from the approach taken by the three friends. You say that you are right, and that God has no answer for you. So, God has invented reasons to oppose you so that He treats you as His enemy.

33:12, 13 - Elihu says that Job was not right to say that. How can you say that God would have no answer for your words? Why are you contending against God with your words? Please consider that Elihu is right because God will say the same thing in **Job 40:2**. Who are we to say that God must answer us?

Ver. 14. thru Ver. 18. - Job had complained that God kept him wholly in the dark concerning the meaning of His dealings with him and therefore concluded he dealt with him as His enemy. Elihu says that God speaks to you, but you do not perceive Him; so that the fault is yours, not His.

33:14-18 - Elihu's message is that God communicates through suffering. During the patriarchal period, it is noted that God communicated directly with individuals. Additionally, during both the patriarchal and Mosaic eras, divine communication occurred through visions and dreams, as evidenced by figures such as Joseph, Nebuchadnezzar, and various prophets.

God communicates differently, and Job needs to pay attention to this. God does speak through suffering. The friends have stated that suffering is a consequence of sins. But Elihu says that God can also use suffering purposefully. Notice the purpose in **verses 17-18**.

God, through His words and through His actions, keeps humans from the worst possible fate. Elihu asserts that without experiencing suffering, we would be susceptible to significant downfall. God does not allow suffering because we are His enemies, like Job asserts. God uses suffering instructively.

Notice that Elihu pushes this point in **verses 23-30**. God is merciful and is delivering people from going into the pit, using messengers and mediators. - **Job 33:28-30**

God uses suffering to direct our steps so that we are not destroyed. C.S. Lewis said in his book *The Problem of Pain*, "***God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.***"

The scriptures tell us the same thing. - **Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:5-11**

Too often these passages are read as if God is beating you and punishing you for your sins. But that is not the point of these passages. Rather, God allows this discipline and instruction through suffering for our own good, to make us what God desires.

This is why so many writers say that we can rejoice in our sufferings because the instruction of God is found in them. - **Rom. 5:3-5; Jam. 1:2-4**

Think about God's picture like this so we can see how suffering is the expression of God's grace and mercy. All of us have grabbed something very hot so that it burns our hand. Is God punishing us for grabbing a hot pan? No, do you see that it is the grace of God that we feel that pain before we cause permanent damage?

This is what Elihu is saying. Suffering teaches us lessons that prevent lasting harm to our souls. We should view suffering as purposeful from God's perspective. God is not punishing through our suffering, but he is teaching us. God has allowed suffering in the world and in our lives so that we would treat it like a hot pan, teaching us to consider our ways and keep our eyes focused on God.

God has created a system that allows for suffering so that we are tested and refined, instructed and made wiser, so that we will not lose our souls, but will draw closer to the Lord. We must be willing to listen to what God is saying through our suffering so that it draws us closer to him.

Ver. 19. through Ver. 28. - God has spoken once to sinners by their own consciences, to keep them from the paths of the destroyer, but they perceive it not; they are not aware that the checks their own hearts give them in a sinful way are from God, but they are imputed to melancholy or the preciseness of their education; and therefore God speaks twice.

Job complained much of his diseases and judged by them that God was angry with him; his friends also did: but Elihu shows that they were all mistaken, for God often afflicts the body in love, and with gracious designs of good to the soul. This part of Elihu's discourse will be of great use to us for the due improvement of sickness, in and by which God speaks to men.

Ver. 29. thru Ver. 33. - We have here *the conclusion of this first part of Elihu's discourse*, in which,

1. He summarizes by stating that God's purpose through His actions is to save people from eternal misery and bring them to eternal happiness.
2. He deals with them by conscience, by providences, by ministers, by mercies, and by afflictions. He makes them sick and makes them well again. All these are His operations; He has set the one over the other, but it is He that performs all the things for us. - **Eccl. 7:14**
3. All providences are to be looked upon as God's workings with man. He employs various strategies to benefit individuals; if one hardship does not suffice, He will implement another. If neither proves effective, He will extend an act of kindness and dispatch a messenger to elucidate both.
4. He often works such things as these twice, thrice; so, it is in the original, referring to **Job 33:14**. He speaks once, if that prevails not, He works twice, yea, thrice.
5. Why does He take all these pains with man? It is to bring back his soul from the pit, **Job 33:30**. If God did not take more care of us than we do of ourselves, we should be miserable; we would destroy ourselves, but He would have us saved, and devises means, by His grace, to undo that by which we were undoing ourselves.
6. The former method, by dreams and vision, was to keep back the soul from the pit (**Job 33:18**), that is, to prevent sin, that we might not fall into it. This, by sickness and the word, is to bring back the soul, to recover those that have fallen into sin, that they may not lie still and perish in it.

With respect to all that by repentance are brought back from the pit, it is that they may be enlightened with the light of the living, that they may have present comfort and everlasting happiness.

7. Whom God saves from sin and hell, He will bring to heaven, the inheritance of the saints in light; and this He aims at in all His institutions and all His dispensations.
8. Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest thus visit him! This should engage us to comply with God's designs, to work with Him for our own good. This will render those that perish forever inexcusable. When so much was done to save them and yet they would not be healed.

Lesson 19

God Is Just (34:1-37) - In the first six verses of **Job 34** Elihu declares to Job that his contention with him is with what Job has said. Elihu does not accuse Job of sinning through his actions as the three friends have.

Ver. 1. through Ver. 9. - Elihu respectfully addresses his audience, aspiring to secure their goodwill and favorable attention, much like a skilled orator.

1. He calls them wise men, and men that had knowledge, **Job 34:2**. It is comfortable dealing with men that are wise and knowledgeable. **1Cor. 10:15**
2. Elihu appeals to their judgment, and therefore submits to their trial, **Job 34:3**. The wise discern the truth and falsehood in words, testing the speaker's integrity.
3. He takes them into partnership with him in the examination and discussion of this matter, **Job 34:4**. He does not pretend to be sole dictator, nor undertake to say what is just and good and what is not, but he is willing to join with them in searching it out, and desires a consultation:
4. Elihu will challenge Job because of what Job has said. He calls for the wise men to listen to what he is about to say, which would be directed mainly at these three friends who have claimed to have wisdom. Notice that Elihu quotes Job's words in **verses 5-6**.
5. Elihu again has accurately quoted Job's words. Job has said he is in the right and God has not been just toward him.

God must not be just, is Job's conclusion. Even more, Elihu quotes Job again in **verse 9** for saying, ***"It profits a man nothing that he should take delight in God."*** Job has said there is no purpose in serving God because you are going to suffer whether you are righteous or wicked.

Listen to what Elihu says about this in **verses 7-8**. Elihu is saying that you speak and act like the wicked when you say these things. Jump down to **verse 36** and you will see this is Elihu's point.

The words Elihu quotes Job saying are particularly important. *The initial challenge in the book of Job is between God and Satan.* Satan told God that humans like Job are righteous only because it profits them.

Job has said that there is no profit in serving God. So *Elihu's point is that Job is wrongly accusing God of not rewarding those who are obedient to Him.* These are the points that Elihu will now address.

Ver. 10. through Ver. 15. - **Elihu** demonstrated in the previous chapter that God's afflictions were intended for his spiritual benefit, not harm. In this chapter he shows that he did him no wrong in afflicting him, nor punished him more than he deserved. If the former could not prevail to satisfy him, yet this ought to silence him. In these verses he directs his discourse to all the company:

First, Elihu asserts that God is just. God cannot do wickedness and cannot do wrong (**34:10-12**). God is just without exception. He does not pervert justice and He does not do wrong. God is sovereign and answers to no one (**34:13-15**). God certainly does not answer to us. We are not in the position to tell God what is just and what is not just.

Ver. 16. through Ver. 30. - Elihu here addresses himself more directly to Job. He had spoken to the rest (**Job 34:10**) as men of understanding; now, speaking to Job; he puts an *if* upon his understanding: ***“If you have understanding, hear this; listen to the sound of my words.”- Job 34:16.***

Hear this, That God is not to be quarreled with for anything that He does. It is daring presumption to arraign and condemn God's proceedings, as Job had done by his discontents.

This is what Elihu continues to say in **34:16-19**. Can we condemn God who is righteous and mighty? Can we challenge God who shows no partiality since all peoples are the work of His hands? God sees all that is going on and knows what is happening (**34:21-25**).

Job has indicated that God must not know the injustice he has experienced and therefore needs to inform God so he will be vindicated. However, God is aware of the circumstances and observes the events unfolding in Job's life as well as in our lives. Therefore, Elihu asserts that God is just against the wicked and will eventually deal with them (**34:26-30**). God hears the cries of the suffering and will act on their behalf.

Ver. 31. through Ver. 37. - **In these verses**, Elihu instructs Job what he should say under his affliction, **Job 34:31-32**. Having reproved him for his peevish passionate words, Elihu puts better words into his mouth. When correcting mistakes, we should guide towards improvement so that our reproofs serve as lessons, **Prov. 6:23**

Elihu does not insist that Job uses these exact words but rather suggests them as appropriate and fitting to be expressed. *He would generally urge him to repent for his misconduct and inappropriate expressions during his affliction.*

Job's other friends would have had him own himself as a wicked man, and by overdoing they undid. Elihu will require him to acknowledge that he had spoken without careful consideration during the management of this controversy.

Elihu advises Job to humble himself before God for his transgressions and to accept the consequences thereof.

“I have borne chastisement. What I suffer comes justly upon me, and therefore I will bear it, and not only justify God in it, but acknowledge his goodness.”

Many are chastised that do not bear chastisement, they do not bear it well, and so, in effect, they do not bear it at all. Penitents, if sincere, will take all well that God does, and will bear chastisement as a medicinal operation intended for good.

Verse 33 is an important conclusion to this thought. Job should God reward on your terms because you object? This mistake is frequently made. Should God **answer us** on our terms? If you think so, then your view of God is too small. Should God **act for us** on our terms? If you think so, then your view of God is too small. Should God **judge on our terms**? If you think so, then your view of God is too small. Should God **reward on our terms**? If you think so, then your view of God is too small. We can slip into the same poor thinking and need to hear this correction by Elihu.

So Elihu says to Job that his trial needs to continue because you are speaking like wicked people speak (34:36-37). This fits Elihu's point in the last chapter. Trials are needed to teach us and refine us.

Why Do You Cry Out to God? (35:1-16) - Elihu's third point is found in **chapters 35-36**.

(the first point is found in chapter 33 and his second point is found in chapter 34)

Ver. 1. through Ver. 8. - We have here, the bad words which Elihu charges upon Job, **Job 35:2-3**. To evince the badness of them he appeals to Job himself, and his own sober thoughts, in the reflection: **"Do you think this is right?"** This intimates Elihu's confidence that the reproof he now gave was just, for he could refer the judgment of it even to Job himself.

It also intimates his good opinion of Job, that he thought better than he spoke, and that, though he had spoken amiss, yet, when he perceived his mistake, he would not stand to it.

Before he brings in this next point Elihu starts by asking Job to reflect and consider if Job's words were right to say (35:1-3). In fact, he uses this to turn the tables on Job. Job cries out that there is no profit in serving God. What advantage is it to Job for him to delight in God and serve God? (35:1-3). If you think this way, Job, what benefit does God gain from your service to Him? (35:4-8)?

If you are going to base your life on what advantage God gives you, then consider what advantage you give God. God does not owe you anything. Too often we think God owes us something because we have been righteous. If God will not reward us right now for our righteousness, then we will not serve Him.

Ver. 9. through Ver. 13. - Elihu here returns an answer to another word that Job had said, which, he thought, reflected much upon the justice and goodness of God, and therefore ought not to pass without a remark. Observe, What it was that Job complained of; it was this, That **God did not regard the cries of the oppressed against their oppressors (Job 35:9)**:

Elihu is asking us if we think we are doing God a favor by being righteous so that we now can put God in our debt to act on our terms. This is often our problem in the way we think. God should act on our terms. Listen to Elihu in **verses 9-13**.

Ver. 14. through Ver. 16. - Here is, another improper statement for which Elihu reproves Job (**Job 35:14**): **"Although you say you do not see Him, Yet justice is before Him, and you must wait for Him."** that is,

"Look, I go forward, but He is not there, And backward, but I cannot perceive Him; 9 When He works on the left hand, I cannot behold Him; When He turns to the right hand, I cannot see Him." Job 23:8-9.

Hezekiah felt like Job in his prime - **Isa 38:9-11**

The answer which Elihu gives to this despairing remark that Job had said, which is this, that, when he looked up to God, he had no just reason to speak thus despairingly: Judgment is before him, that is, **"He has the complete plan of providence and acts with infinite wisdom and justice, knowing what He will do, even if we do not understand his actions."**

Elihu points out the big problem. People want God to save them but have no interest in honoring Him or serving Him. We just want God to fix our situation. We just want God to make us comfortable again.

Everyone cries out to God in their time of trouble. But who is crying out to God for a relationship with God? Instead of crying out to God properly, Job has cried to God in an insulting, complaining manner declaring that God is not right. Elihu says that you cannot expect God's help when you are attacking God with your words! Job, you sound like the wicked who just want God when they are in need (**35:12-16**).

You sound like the wicked who just want something from God even though God gets nothing in return. If you turn to God only for rescue and to bring your life back to a comfortable stability, then your view of God is too small.

What Will You Do with Your Suffering? (36:1-23) - Elihu, having largely reproved Job for some of his unadvised speeches, which Job had nothing to say in the vindication of, here comes more generally to set him to rights in his notions of God's dealings with him.

His other friends had stood to it that, because he was a wicked man, therefore his afflictions were so great and so long. Elihu argued that Job's affliction was a trial and prolonged because Job had not yet fully humbled himself or adapted to it. He urges many reasons, taken from the wisdom and righteousness of God, His care of His people, and especially His greatness and almighty power, with which, in this and the following chapter, he persuades him to submit to the hand of God.

Ver. 1. through Ver. 4. - Once more, *Elihu asks the audience, especially Job, for patience* as he has more to say but won't take much time. Stand about me a little (so some read it), **Job 36:2**.

To gain this he pleads,

1. That he had a good cause, and a noble and very fruitful subject: I have yet to speak on God's behalf. Some pretend to speak on God's behalf who really speak for themselves; but those who sincerely appear in the cause of God, and speak on behalf of His honor, His truths, His ways, His people, shall be sure neither to want instructions nor to lose their cause.

2. Elihu pleads that he had something to offer that was uncommon. I will fetch my knowledge from afar (**Job 36:3**), that is, *"we will have recourse to our first principles and the highest notions we can make use of to serve any purpose."*

3. Elihu pleads that his design was undeniably honest; for all he aimed at was to ascribe righteousness to his Maker, to maintain and clear this truth, that God is righteous in all His ways. In speaking of God, and speaking for Him, it is good to remember that He is our Maker, and therefore to be ready to do Him and the interests of His kingdom the best service we can.

If He is our Maker, we should dedicate ourselves to Him and be diligent in upholding His honor. That His management should be very just and fair (**Job 36:4**):

Ver. 5. through Ver. 14. - Elihu, begins to speak on God's behalf, and particularly to ascribe righteousness to His Maker, here he shows that the disposals of divine Providence are all, not only according to the eternal counsels of His will, but according to the eternal rules of equity.

Elihu teaches Job to consider that *there are two options given to people when they are suffering: listen to God and serve Him or refuse to listen to God and perish (36:6-12)*. It is through suffering that we have our flaws identified. It is through suffering that we see where we are not thinking and acting as God desires.

Suffering reveals what we are made of. Suffering reveals our true character. Elihu says that suffering is supposed to open our ears to God (**35:15**) - **Ps. 119:71**

Ver. 15. through Ver. 23. - Elihu addresses Job directly, explaining that *God would have intervened earlier if Job had been properly humbled by his suffering.* - **Job 36:15**

He provides support to individuals who are humble and have a penitent heart and helps when they face difficulties. He enables them to perceive joy and gladness, and although He has not yet liberated them, He conveys encouraging and reassuring words to bolster their faith and patience and to mitigate their sorrows.

(Job 36:16) He would have done the same to you Job if you had submitted to His providence and conducted yourself well. He would have delivered and comforted you, and we should have had none of these complaints.

1. You would have been free from sickness and disgrace, moved to a wide place without restriction, and no longer cramped with broken measures.

It is important to recognize that reflecting on our actions during times of adversity can lead to improvement. If we had adequately addressed the purpose of our affliction, it would likely be lifted, and deliverance would occur as soon as we are prepared for it. God would have blessed us if we had behaved well. - **Ps. 81:13-14; Isa. 48:18**

The common reaction to suffering is to sin (**36:12-21**). People harden their hearts toward God when they suffer rather than inclining their ears to the Lord. This was the very warning from the writer of Hebrews. - **Heb. 3:7-9**

Wicked people react to suffering by being more rebellious and continuing in their sins. The people of God humble themselves before God when they suffer. Rather than rejecting God, they seek solace in Him. - **Job 36:21)**

Don't commit sins out of suffering. God is your teacher (**36:22**). Learn from God through your suffering.

Majestic God (36:24-37:24)

Ver. 24. thru Ver. 33. - Elihu is here endeavoring to possess Job with great and high thoughts of God, and *so to persuade him into a cheerful submission to his providence.*

He represents the work of God, in general, as illustrious and conspicuous, **Job 36:24**. God does nothing mean. We admire nature and see the Creator's wisdom, power, and goodness in it. Should we then question His decisions and will regarding our own lives?

We are called to consider the work of God, - **Eccl. 7:13**

Elihu ends his words by helping us see that our view of God is often too small by proclaiming the majesty of God. Look at the greatness and the glory of God. You can see it in the creation. Elihu describes God's majesty as being on display in the immense power of creation.

JOB CHAPTER 37 - Elihu goes on to extol the wonderful power of God in the meteors and all the changes of the weather: if, in those changes, we submit to the will of God, take the weather as it is and make the best of it, why should we not do so in other changes of our condition? Here he observes the hand of God,

I. In the thunder and lightning, **Job 37:1-5**.

II. In frost, snow, rain, and wind: **Job 37:6-13**.

III. He challenges Job to explain natural phenomena, so that by admitting his ignorance, Job may recognize himself as unfit to judge divine Providence (**Job 37:14-22**). And then,

IV. Elihu concludes with his principle, that God is great and greatly to be feared, **Job 37:23-24**.

Here are two pictures of God that I will share with you.

First, in **Job 36:32-37:5**.

Thunder can be very startling, especially when lightning strikes close to where we are. The sudden boom can make your heart stop. Elihu says that the thunder is simply the voice of God.

Second, in **Job 37:21**

Ver. 1. thru Ver. 5. - Thunder and lightning, which usually go together, are indications of the glory and majesty, the power and terror, of Almighty God.

In these God does not leave Himself without witness of His greatness, as, in the rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, He leaves not himself without witness of His goodness, even to the most stupid and unthinking. - **Ac 14:17**

It is possible that while Elihu was speaking, there was thunder and lightning, as he mentions these phenomena occurring. As God prepares to speak (**Job 38:1**), these natural events draw attention and command respect, akin to those at Mount Sinai.

Ver. 6. through Ver. 13. - *The changes and extremities of the weather*, wet or dry, hot or cold, are the subject of a great deal of our common talk and observation; but how seldom do we think and speak of these things, as Elihu does here, with an awful regard to God the director of them!

We must take notice of the glory of God, not only in the thunder and lightning, but in the more common revolutions of the weather, which are not so terrible and which make less noise. As, in the snow and rain, **Job 37:6**.

Thunder and lightning happen usually in the summer, but here he takes notice of the winter-weather. Then he directs the snow to fall on the earth; He determines its placement and duration.

When He issues a command, it materializes. Snow is instructed to descend upon the earth in ordinary circumstances. When He commands, light rain drizzles and heavy rain falls according to His will. The distinction in the Hebrew between the small rain and the great rain is this, that the former is called a shower of rain, the latter of rains, many showers in one; but all are the showers of His strength: the power of God is to be observed as much in the small rain that soaks into the earth as in the great rain that batters on the house-top and washes away all before it.

It is illogical to argue with how Providence has decided our fates. The effect of the extremity of the winter-weather is that it obliges both men and beasts to retire, making it uncomfortable and unsafe for them to go abroad.

Ver. 14. through Ver. 20. - *Elihu addresses himself closely to Job*, desiring him to apply what he had said to himself. He begs Job to hearken to this discourse (**Job 37:14**), that he would pause awhile: Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.

Elihu addresses Job with the intent to humble him, indicating that Job lacks understanding of natural phenomena. He says Job cannot understand their origins or foresee their outcomes (**Job 37:15-17**)

In these verses we are taught, the perfection of God's knowledge. It is one of the most glorious perfections of God that He is perfect in knowledge; He is *omniscient*.

His knowledge is intuitive; He perceives directly, not from hearsay. It is intimate and entire: He knows things truly, and not by their colors--thoroughly, and not by piece meal.

He knows everything is near, present, and visible. The imperfection of our knowledge. The greatest philosophers are much in the dark concerning the powers and works of nature. The gravitation of bodies, and the cohesion of the parts of matter, are most certain, and yet unaccountable.

We know not what orders God has given concerning the clouds, nor what orders He will give, **Job 37:15**. All of this is done with determination and planning, but the specific details, timing, and intentions are unknown.

God often causes the light of His cloud to shine, in the rainbow, in the lightning; but did we foresee, or could we foretell, when He would do it?

We know not how the clouds are poised in the air, the balancing of them, which is one of the wondrous works of God. They are so balanced and spread that we can still benefit from the sun even on cloudy days.

We do not understand the precise nature of the comfortable transition that occurs when winter has ended, as referenced in **Job 37:17**. *How the weather becomes warm after it has been cold*. We feel warm in our clothes because of the warm air we breathe in. Without divine blessing, efforts such as dressing warmly will be futile.

How it becomes calm after it has been stormy: He quiets the earth by the south wind, when the spring comes. As He has a blustering freezing north wind, so He has a thawing, composing, south wind; the Spirit is compared to both, because He both convinces and comforts.

Were you His co-worker or assistant in spreading out the sky like a tent or canopy over the earth? (**Job 37:18**): The formation of the visible heavens (**Gen. 1:6-8**), which we observe today, is an example of significant power, considering,

That, though it is fluid, yet it is firm. It is robust and derives its name from its stability.

That, though it is large, it is bright and most curiously fine: It is a molten looking-glass, smooth and polished, and without the least flaw or crack.

In this reflection, we see God's glory and wisdom in his creation, **Ps 19:1**

When we look at the sky, we can consider it as a mirror that reflects the purity and brightness of higher realms and their inhabitants. That neither Job nor his three friends were able to speak of the glory of God in any proportion to the merit of the subject, **Job 37:19-20**.

When we speak of God we speak confusedly and with great uncertainty, and are soon at a loss and run aground, not for want of matter, but for want of words.

Elihu himself had, for his part, spoken well on God's behalf, and yet is so far from thinking that God was beholden to him for it, or that he was fit to be standing counsel for Him.

Elihu is even ashamed of what he has said, not of the cause, but of his own management of it: **Job 37:20**

Ver. 21. through Ver. 24. - Elihu concludes his discourse with some short but great sayings concerning the glory of God. He speaks concisely, and in haste, because, it should seem, he perceived that God was about to take the work into His own hands.

He quickly concludes as God is about to speak, summarizing his previous points briefly.

Conclusion

We should seek God, not just His deliverance. God defines such people that seek their own interests as wicked because they seek their own interests from God rather than seeking God as their interest.

Click - Let suffering teach you and not be a reason to rebel. Suffering challenges each of us to answer the question if we serve God for nothing. We can only know the answer through suffering and trials.

As we go through suffering we must not forget to look to the majesty of God. See Jesus as our shelter, our rock, and our hope. Run to Him in prayer. Run to Him in worship. Run to Him in meditation. Run to Him in song. Run to Him in the scriptures. Run to our God.

Lesson 20

Slide 85 - Chapter 38 - In most disputes the strife is who shall have the last word. Job's friends had, in this controversy, yielded it to Job, and then Job to Elihu. After the arguments of the counsel, God has the final decision. Every person's judgment comes from the definitive sentence of the judge, determining whether they succeed or fail in their case.

Job frequently appealed to God and spoke confidently about presenting his case before Him. However, when God took the throne, Job remained silent and did not defend himself. Contesting with the Almighty is not as simple as some believe. Job's friends had sometimes appealed to God too: **"O that God would speak!" Job 11:7.**

That which God designs in this discourse is to humble Job, and bring him to repent of, and to recant, his passionate indecent expressions concerning God's providential dealings with him. This he does by calling upon Job to compare God's eternity with his own time, God's *omniscience* with his own ignorance, and God's *omnipotence* with his own impotency.

Get Ready! (38:1-3) - The paragraph opens with the Lord answering Job out of the whirlwind. God's presence is frequently pictured as a storm. Recall what happens when God comes to Mount Sinai in the exodus. - **Ex. 19:16-19**

Notice how God comes to Elijah in 1 Kings 19:11-12

When Ezekiel saw the Lord in a vision for his prophecy, notice what Ezekiel saw. - **Ezek. 1:4**

Consider the first words God says to Job. - **Job 38:2-3**

Using different translations, God asks: **"Who is this who questions my purposes, my counsel, my plans, my wisdom, and my design? Make yourself ready to answer the Lord!"** Brace yourself! This is a picture of getting ready for work or for battle.

Job wanted this contest. Consider this statement: **"I will question you, and you make it known to me."** Job, it is time for you to answer me. Job thought he would ask such penetrating questions and would compel God to answer (cf. **Job 23:2; 31:35**).

Job, you think you know, but you are completely in the dark, lacking counsel and knowledge. You are speaking and you do not know what you are talking about.

The Creator (38:4-15) - God describes the creation in 38:4-15. You will notice that the question begins with **"Where were you"** (38:4) and shifts to **"who determined"** (38:5). Job lacks knowledge to God's great power. **"Tell me, if you have understanding"** (38:4). **"Surely you know!"** (38:5).

God's point as He begins to show that everything is purposefully ordered, which is good (cf. **Genesis 1**) and is rejoiced over by the creation and by the sons of God (38:7).

Not only was the creation good but the design of how creation runs was also good. The order God made brought cosmic joy.

Verses 8-15 focus on God's power. God has the power to shut in the sea and giving it limits (8-11). God has the power to make the day begin and the night end (12-15). But there is an important metaphor that God is using here. God is not only speaking about His power over the inanimate creation but also over evil.

It is important to note that these discussions have been articulated as poetry. In the scriptures the sea and the darkness frequently represent evil and wickedness (cf. **Rev. 12:17-13:1**).

We can see that this is what God is doing because of **verse 15**, ***“From the wicked their light is withheld, and their upraised arm is broken.”*** God did not randomly add a sentence about the fate of the wicked.

This paragraph about the sea and the darkness are pictures of God's control over the wicked.

Evil has limits (**38:11**) and nothing is beyond God's authority (**38:15**). The wicked love the darkness but God does shake out the wicked (**38:13**). There will come a time when integrity and justice prevail, dispelling wrongdoing.

Job has noted that the wicked appear to prosper and continue without facing justice. Notice that God declares that there will be a time when God shakes out the wicked. Notice the hard message God gives in this paragraph. There is a specific place in the created order for evil (**38:8**).

Even evil has a purpose in God's order. God limits the evil (**38:11**) and nothing goes beyond God's authority (**38:15**). This is a significant concept that is often overlooked or not considered. God could have judged Satan and his angels before the creation of humanity. But God did not. God could have judged the world and addressed evil after Adam and Eve's fall in **Genesis 3**. But God did not.

God could have judged the world and ended it with the murder of Abel and dealt with Satan then. But God did not. But God does use evil for His purposes. All creation has a purpose and follows God's order.

Evil does not operate outside of God's design. We saw this in the first two chapters of Job. Nothing that happened to Job operated outside of God's knowledge or outside of God's approval.

God is sovereign over all things. If God did not want evil to run right now, then it would not run right now. Wickedness is not excluded from God's power.

Ruler Over Inanimate Nature (38:16-38) - Now God asks Job challenging questions regarding nature. Can you explore the depths of the sea? Then how can you explore the depths of God's mind and purposes? (**38:16-18**).

The light and the darkness are controlled by God (**38:19-21**). God's power is seen in the storehouses of snow and hail (**38:22-24**).

God can use the creation to bring trouble! We have seen God do this with the ten plagues in **Exodus 9** and use hail against Canaanite kings in **Josh. 10:11**.

Job, can you put the rainwater where you want and where no one is located (**38:25-27**)? Job, do you know where all this water comes from (**38:28-30**)? How did all the ice get to where it is? Tell me, if you know, Job. Who can control the stars (**38:31-33**)? Did you put those constellations there so that they do not move?

Can you control the rain and the lightning (38:34-38)? Can you call for it to fall with your voice? Job is to consider his complete insignificance before God. Who are you to question the purposes and designs of God?

Ruler Over Animals (38:39-39:30) - God continues with the same questioning but now shifts to the living creation. Can you provide food for all the animals (38:39-41)?

Do you have control or knowledge of the inaccessible animals who hide in inaccessible caves to give birth (39:1-4)?

Do you have the power to give freedom and provisions to the animals in the wild (39:5-8)? Did you make the wild ox, which is so powerful and unusable for man to tame (39:9-12)?

Consider the ostrich. God made the ostrich foolish and yet it still survives (39:13-18)?

Job, did you make the ostrich like this and yet it still lives? Did you give the horse its strength (39:19-25). The horse is mighty and fearless in battle. Job, did you do that?

Did you give the hawk and the eagle their amazing vision as birds of prey (38:26-30)?

God mentions the eagle's eyesight. Trading eyes with an eagle would enable us to see an ant on the ground from a 10-story building. Eagles have a 340-degree visual field. They have more colorful perceptions and objects in their line of sight appear magnified. Their vision is 5x better than a human with perfect vision.

Now, why does God do all this besides to give all humans who read this a dose of humility? God's point is in **Job 40:1-2**.

Will You Contend with The Almighty? (40:1-5) - *The Lord answered Job* (HCSB, NET, NKJV). This is God's answer. Job finds fault with the way God runs the world. Let's see your wisdom and power.

It is easy to criticize what you are not doing yourself and are unable to do. Job, are you really going to reprove God? The word "**contend**" is often used to speak of confronting another in court over a breach of contract obligations. Are you going to say that God has failed in His obligations? Are you going to say that God is not holding up His end of the deal?

This is an important message. We are in no position to tell another person how to do something about which we have no knowledge whatsoever. This would be like me coming to your work and challenging you on how you do your job when I have never done your job and lacking knowledge and wisdom in such matters.

It would be like you to tell me how I ought to do my job when you do not have the knowledge or understanding about teaching or preaching. Yet we do this with God, telling Him how He ought to run the world when we do not have the knowledge or wisdom in the slightest.

We need to keep quiet and let God do His mighty works. Job speaks from ignorance and often so do we. Job says that he has spoken too much (40:3-5). I am unable to provide a response. God has a purposeful creation.

There is a purpose for the universe. The world runs the way it does because God made it that way. He permits suffering and evil as part of the world's design and our actions.

Who are we to challenge the creation order when God saw the creation order as good and the spiritual beings rejoiced over it? Do not contend with the Almighty that He is failing His obligations toward you or toward this world!

Everything is going along according to God's plan. Be humble and have faith in God's works, God's purposes, and God's designs. We do not need to know God's purposes but to simply trust in His wisdom.

Do You Have the Power to Judge (40:6-14) - Job was humbled by God's words but not enough. Thus, God continued reasoning with him as before, **Job 40:6**.

Those who heed and benefit from God's word will receive more guidance from Him. God said those who are truly convinced of sin, and penitent for it, yet have need to be more thoroughly convinced and to be made more deeply penitent.

When our hearts begin to melt and relent within us, let those considerations be dwelt upon and pursued which will help to make a thorough effectual thaw of it.

God begins with a challenge (**Job 40:7**), as before (**Job 38:3**):

Every proud heart will eventually be humbled, either through repentance or ruin; every high place must come down.

We must acknowledge, that we cannot compete with God for justice, that the Lord is righteous and holy in His dealings with us, but that we are unrighteous and unholy in our conduct towards Him; we have a great deal to blame ourselves for, but nothing to blame Him for (**Job 40:8**):

Many of Job's complaints had too much of a tendency this way: I cry out of wrong, says he, but I am not heard; but such language as this is by no means to be suffered.

"Would you," says God, ***"condemn me, that you may be righteous? Should my honor be compromised to uphold your reputation? Must I be charged as dealing unjustly with you because you cannot otherwise clear yourself from the censures you lie under?"***

Our duty is to condemn ourselves, that God may be righteous. David is therefore ready to own the evil he has done in God's sight, that God may be justified when he speaks and clear when he judges, **Ps 51:4**.

But those who are very proud, and very ignorant both of God and themselves, to clear themselves, will condemn God; and the day is coming when, if the mistake is not rectified in time by repentance, the eternal judgment will be both the confutation of the plea and the confusion of the prisoner.

God begins by challenging Job since Job has questioned God's righteousness. Can you, Job, judge the world (**40:9**)? Elihu observed that the thunder is the voice of God. God agrees with this picture. Job, can your voice thunder like God's voice does in a storm?

Do you have the power to judge the wicked and establish righteousness and justice? Then let's see you do it! Exalt yourself and do it. Unleash your judgment (**40:11-13**)?

Let's see your superiority and might. Then I, the Lord, will admit that your power can save you (40:14).

Behold, Behemoth (40:15-24) - God then turns Job's attention to the Behemoth. Behemoth is just an English transliteration of the Hebrew word. The word seems to mean "*super beast*." The descriptions given to the Behemoth indicate that it is the greatest of all the beasts of the earth.

He has power in his abdomen (40:16) and legs (40:17-18). His tail is stiff like a cedar tree (40:17), which should end the notion that this is referring to a hippopotamus, along with many of the other descriptions.

The Behemoth is the foremost land beast (40:19). He is so mighty that humans dare not approach him even with a sword (40:19). Only God can approach this beast! The mountains provide food for this beast and yet he also can lie in the reeds and in the marsh (40:20-22).

Behemoth remains unaffected by the powerful current of rushing, turbulent rivers (40:23). It is impossible to apprehend him through his eyes or nose (40:24).

Why is God causing Job to consider the Behemoth? Go back to **verse 15**: God says that I made the Behemoth. How powerful is God if He made a beast that no human can approach but fears?

Job, what power do you have to run the world and bring righteousness when you cannot even deal with one of God's creations?

Lesson 21

Leviathan (41:1-34) - The Lord then turns Job's attention to another animal in God's creation: *Leviathan*. This word "*Leviathan*" is again just a transliteration of the Hebrew word into English.

Ver. 1. through Ver. 11. - Listen to *the mighty and majestic descriptions of the leviathan*. Can you draw him out with a fishhook or cord (41:1)? Can you put a rope around his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook (41:2)? No! Will he plead with you or speak softly to you (41:3)? No! Can you tame him so he will be your servant (41:4)? No! Can you make him a pet or play with him (41:5)? No! Can he be traded, purchased and sold to others (41:6)? No! Can you get him with harpoons and fishing spears (41:7)? No! If you try to lay a hand on him, you are going to lose your hand (41:8)!

Any hope of capturing him is a false hope (41:9). You fall to the ground even at the sight of him! He is so fierce that no one tries to stir him up (41:10).

In describing Leviathan, God makes a significant point (41:10-11). If no one can stand before the Leviathan, then who could possibly stand before God? Further, God asks, "*Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him?*" This is the point that Elihu made. What does God owe you? What have you given God that you have put God in your debt? "*Everything under heaven is Mine.*"

Job believed that he would be rewarded for his righteousness. No person can give anything to God because everything already belongs to God.

The apostle Paul quotes this verse in **Rom. 11:34-35**

The context of proving that God has imprisoned all to disobedience so that He may be merciful to all (**Rom. 11:32**)

Ver. 11. through Ver. 34. - God, having in the foregoing verses shown Job how unable he was to deal with the leviathan, here *sets forth his own power in that massy mighty creature*. Then God returns to His description of Leviathan's might. Look at his strength and might (42:12)! Who can open his mouth or strip off his hide (41:13-14)? His back is made of rows of shield, tightly joined together (41:15-17). He emits light with his sneeze, and fire emerges from his mouth. Smoke comes from his nostrils and his breath kindles coals (41:18-21). His skin is so strong that swords, spears, darts, and javelins are useless (41:21-26).

When he raises up, the mighty are afraid (41:25). He faces all obstacles without retreating, and arrows do not cause him to flee (41:27-28). Its underbelly is like sharp, broken pottery pieces (41:30). When he goes into the water, it causes all the depths of the sea to churn (41:31) leaving a massive wake when it moves (41:32). Leviathan (41:33) is described as powerful and well-protected. He stands tall and looks down on all humans (41:34).

I do not think this animal exists for us today. Some think that God is describing something mythological.

The problem is that this would not make God's point at all if the creature is mythological. Everything God has said to Job has been real. God's point is for Job to consider these real animals to grasp the majestic power of God.

Understanding God's Argument - This ends the speech of God to Job. We need to stop and consider what God is saying because these are His answers to Job's questions. Job wanted to stand before God and have an opportunity to set matters straight. God has now given His answers.

Consider that God does not defend His justice. This has been Job's primary concern. He thinks that God has not been just toward him. But God does not defend His justice. Rather, God defends His wisdom and power. God urges us to look at the world, not on the principles of justice, but on the principles of God's wisdom.

The creation does not reflect God's justice. But the creation does reflect God's wisdom and power. Please remember that the apostle Paul made the same point when looking at the creation. - **Rom. 1:20, 21**

In the creation we are to behold the eternal power of God and the divine nature (God's wisdom and intelligence). This is what God wants Job to see.

Job Understands (42:1-6) - Notice that God has moved Job to the right response to Him in **42:1-6**. Now Job defers to God's knowledge and power. This is what we are supposed to do in suffering! Defer to God's knowledge, wisdom, and power! God accomplishes His designs, plans, and purposes. Acknowledge God's sovereignty and do not question His plans.

Job confesses in **verse 3** that he spoke in a way that showed his ignorance. God asked, "*Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?*" Job admits that this is exactly what he did. But now Job gets it. He had heard of God (**42:5**) but now he truly sees and understands God.

Now I see how glorious you are! Now I see your power, wisdom, knowledge, and providential care. Life's goal and suffering's purpose.

When we see God the way we are supposed to see God, then we will respond like Job and despise ourself (**42:6**). We will stop elevating ourselves (our knowledge and understanding) and we will defer to God's knowledge and understanding.

What should we do when experiencing suffering? God is telling us to trust Him. We all can relate to Job because like Job he does not get answers for his personal suffering.

We must trust God rather than attempting to figure out answers to our "why" questions. God says that we do not have to know any answers. Trust God. Do not trust in needing answers.

God's wisdom is greater than mine. God's power is greater than mine. God's knowledge is greater than mine. I need to trust God. This is why God displays His power in the creation.

Three Friends Need to Repent (42:7-9) - First, the Lord turns His attention to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. The anger of the Lord burns against them because they have not spoken what is right about God.

This is important for us to note and consider. The friends said that if you are suffering it is because God is punishing you for your sins. The Lord declares that this is not right. If you are suffering, you are not to draw the conclusion that God is punishing you. God is not using suffering to repay you for your sins.

Elihu taught that God uses suffering as a corrective tool to turn our souls away from the pit. Suffering is to cause us to turn our attention beyond ourselves and toward God who rules over all things.

Not only do the friends need to repent for what they have said, but they are to go to Job who will act as an intercessor for them. Job functions as a priest here who receives the offering and then prayers on behalf of these three. Consider that these friends had said that Job was a deep sinner who had received less than he deserved. But listen to what the Lord calls Job four times: “**my servant**” (42:7-8).

In this there seems to be a bit of vindication for Job before these three friends. The four of them are now offering sacrifices for their sins.

42:8 - Go to *my servant Job*; maybe Job’s friends had scattered and hid when God spoke to Job. (Adam did the same in the garden and it was from hearing God Walk in the garden).

Job will pray for his friends who repeatedly insulted him and accused him of being wrong. God mentions that Job’s friends haven’t spoken of him what is right as his servant Job has.

42:9 - where did Job’s friends get the animals? Maybe from Job or around his land, which Job was probably happy to give. I think Job would have prayed for his friends without dragging it out. He was an upright man.

Job acts as a priest on behalf of these three friends who have been wrong about God and about Job. In this we see a type of Christ. Christ was counted among the transgressors and treated as if the wrath of God was upon Him. He remained faithful to the Lord, and we must seek Him for forgiveness of our sins.

We must also consider the beauty of forgiveness. When Job repents of what he has said about God, God restores the relationship and calls Job his servant. When the three friends repent and offer their sacrifices, God accepted Job’s prayer (42:9).

42:10—God blesses Job; he doubled what he started with.

The Comfort of Job (42:10-17) - When Job prays for his friends, we then see the Lord bringing comfort to Job. The Lord restored the fortunes of Job, giving him twice as much as he had before. Additionally, he has 10 children.

Even Job’s age is double that of the average age of life, 70 years - **Ps. 90:10**

We are not to read this as if Job is fully restored after the trial. The point is not that God will give you back everything you lost when you endure a trial. Job did not get back what he had lost.

Those first 10 children are still dead. Having ten more children does not mean that this would erase the pain from losing your other children.

Further, the message cannot be that if you remain faithful, God will bless you in this life. God does not have to restore Job after this trial. God is under no obligation to give anything to Job once this trial has concluded.

What we are learning is that *God is a God of comfort*. What God is doing for Job flows from His love and grace.

In times of suffering, remember: Good can follow trouble. God can console us after our trial and after our disaster. The point is not that God will fix our life. Rather, the suffering we have endured is not the end of our life. The message of the book of Job is NOT that God will make everything better after our trial. The message is that God cares for His people and can bless us despite our pain and loss.

Message About Suffering and How God Runs the World - Divine blessings and generosity are rooted in the inherent character and prerogative of God, rather than our own actions or desires. We do not control God. Our faith does not dictate suffering or prosperity.

Satan said that God cannot bless His people because He is causing them to serve for their own selfish purposes. ***God blesses His people based on His character and will.***

God does bless the righteous because that is the desire of God. For example, I do not have to bless my kids for doing good. But I want to bless my kids when they do well. They are not to look at me and say that they are owed something for good grades.

They are to see my love and generosity because I do good for them. We provide service without expectation and blessings are given freely based on discretion.

Further, please pay careful attention to **verse 11**. We saw this point made repeatedly at the beginning of this study and the book wants to emphasize this point again. Who is ultimately responsible for suffering and trials? God is.

Yes, Satan does evil, but it is God who allows Satan to do it. Satan is not operating outside of God's knowledge, power, or control. We must accept this truth so that the encouragement of the scriptures can be meaningful to us. - **1 Cor. 10:13**

Therefore, we are called to trust in the wisdom, power, and knowledge of God. This is true faith. This is God's answer to the book of Job. God is in control, and we are to trust Him with our lives. - **Jam. 5:7-11**

We are called to be patient until the Lord returns. Look at the examples of suffering and patience from the prophets. Then James says to consider the endurance and steadfastness of Job. You see in Job the purpose and outcome of the Lord.

The Lord is compassionate and merciful. God blesses and God allows suffering. These things show the compassion and mercy of the Lord.

Parents provide both blessings and discipline, reflecting their compassion and mercy. Parents do this for their children and God does this toward us. God has a greater purpose as He allows evil and suffering in this world.