

# A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JOB

With Practical Applications



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## OUTLINE FOR A STUDY OF JOB (By Clayton Winters)

### PART ONE: INTRODUCTORY AND PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

#### INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Job is an extraordinary book: extraordinary in its insight into the problems of human suffering; extraordinary in the difficulty its language presents to even the most highly trained translators; and extraordinary in its depths of content, enough so to seriously challenge the greatest and most devout thinkers of our time.

Nor is it a book that one just dives into on any given page to glean great gems of truth. Although this might be possible in some instances, one is more likely to garner tidbits of truth with generous sprinklings of error; maybe even outright contradictions. By no means is this intended as a reflection on the inspiration of the book. Quite to the contrary: it is likely that no other book of the Bible lends itself more clearly to the concept of a God-guided narrative. But it is to say that the very nature of the book mandates a knowledge of the totality of its contents, of the actors on the stage at any given time, and of the intent of their individual and sometimes caustic messages. Job could easily be, and perhaps is, more often quoted and applied out of context than any other book of the Bible.

#### PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

##### I. THE TIME PERIOD OF JOB

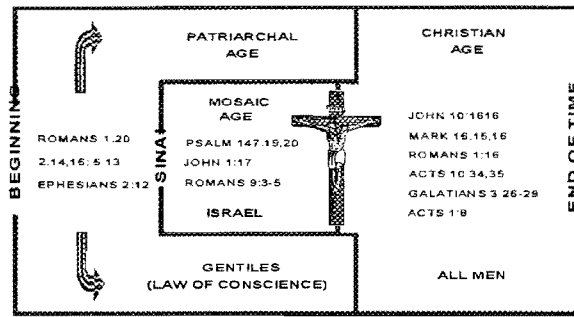
- A. It is generally believed, and on very good evidence we might add, that Job lived under the patriarchy. This term is a combination of two Greek words meaning father-rule, and designates the ancient period of time when God had not revealed a codified system of law. The patriarchs had no written revelation such as God's people turned to under the Old Testament, nor the expanded revelation we now enjoy under the New. Paul speaks of this period of father-rule in the following manner:

**Rom 2:12-15** "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another)"

**Rom. 5:12-13** "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law"

**Acts 17:30** "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:"

1. Thus, it should add immensely to our study and understanding of Job and the perplexity of his problems if we turn at this point and examine more closely the three dispensations of time aided by the chart below.



2. We normally classify the dispensations as: Patriarchy, creation to Sinai (2500 years); Mosaic, Sinai to Christ (1500 years), and Christian, Christ until the end (now about 2000 years). This is all right for general Bible study, but it leaves so many problems in true Bible exegesis.
  - (a) We fail to understand the special significance of the Holy nation, and their place in the developing scheme of redemption (Rom. 9:1-3-5).
  - (b) We have trouble understanding God's relationship to the Gentiles during the Jewish economy, and what their eternal destiny might be (Eph. 2:12-17).
  - (c) It gives us extreme difficulty in interpreting Paul's statements in Romans 2 about Gentiles being under a law of conscience as opposed to the Jews having written revelation.
  - (d) Finally It leaves us open to many perplexities about the prayer of Cornelius, and the miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit on his household (Acts 10).

3. The chart above shows the patriarchy ending for the seed of Abraham at Sinai, but continuing for the rest of the world until the time of Cornelius, representing the acceptance of the Gentiles into the gospel system of salvation. Note:

- (a) At this point the Gentiles were granted repentance unto life (Acts 10:34,35).
- (b) It marks the "beginning" for Gentiles as Pentecost had for the Jews.

**Acts 11:15-18** "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

**Acts 15:14** "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."

4. However, during this father-rule period which Paul designates as having no law (meaning no codified system, no written law), God had not left Himself without witness. Generally speaking, he communicated Himself to man in three ways.

- (a) Natural Revelation. This consisted of knowledge gained of God by observing the created universe. For example, I prepared this document with the aid of a computer, one of the scientific marvels of our century. I have absolutely no first-hand knowledge of the person who invented the system. Nonetheless, I can still logically deduce certainly indisputable facts about its inventor from the instrument itself. 1) The person responsible for it does (or at least did) exist: it did not create itself. 2) With every response to the commands I issue, the system portrays an originator who was logical and intelligent, capable of programming it with many amazing features. 3) I can readily conclude that the person had a high degree of knowledge in the complex fields of mathematics and electronics. All this I can learn, and much more, from

the thing which is made. In like manner the patriarchs could learn about God from the book of nature aside from specific revelation.

**Psa. 19:1-3** "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard"

**Rom. 1:19-20** "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse"

**Acts 14:15-17** "And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness"

**Acts 17:28-30** "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent"

- (b) A law of conscience. The apostle Paul calls this a law written in their hearts. He could conclude that the Gentile world, far removed from any specific revelation, was held amenable to that law, and that it would serve as their criteria for judgment in the final day (Rom. 2:12-15). I like to think of man's conscience as a genetic code imprinted in his mind by virtue of the fact that he is the offspring of God. Being created in God's image (Gen. 1:26,27), he is a moral being, and as such is set apart from every other creation of God.
  - (c) Occasional specific revelation. Some examples of this would be: 1) The book of Job itself; 2) Noah; 3) Abraham; 4) Nineveh; 5) Babylon.
- B. The Hebrew of Job has led scholars to believe it is a language that antedates Moses; several words used still elude their specific definition and understanding. A comparison of translations will also highlight for the reader the problems experienced in this respect (we will point out some of these as we go along).
  - C. We find Job offering sacrifices more in harmony with the time of patriarchy than that of the Mosaic system (Job 1:4,5).
  - D. His understanding of suffering, *Sheol*, or life beyond the grave seems at best to lack specific revelation from God. Also, in his struggle for faith, Job at times appears contradictory (examples of this, too, will be pointed out as we proceed). All These are more readily harmonized against a backdrop of natural (limited) revelation.

## II. THE ARCH-RIVAL OF JOB: SATAN

- A. Many questions (some of which elude definite answers for this scribe) come to the forefront here.
  - 1. Where did this adversary come from?
  - 2. What is he doing in the heavenly conference—in the veritable presence of God?
  - 3. What kind of power does he possess, and what is the source of his power?

4. Why does God allow him to abuse so terribly one of His most dedicated servants?
  5. Is there some sort of a heavenly Court of Appeal before which we may defend ourselves against his slanders?
- B. First, we need to deal with the question of Satan's origin. Many contend that he was an angel who fell from his exalted state because of a rebellion against God. Several Scriptures are cited in defense of this.

**Isa 14:4,12-15** "Thou shalt take up this proverb against the **king of Babylon**, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!...How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." *However, the context shows that this was a proverb spoken against Babylon.*

**Ezek 28:12-15** "Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the **king of Tyrus**, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." *Again, this was expressly called a lamentation against the king of Tyrus.*

**Luke 10:18** "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." *This passage has reference to the miraculous ministry of the apostles in casting out demons.*

**Rev 12:7-11** "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." *This clearly has reference to the struggle between Satan and the Lord's church: a lethal conflict.*

**Jude 1:6** "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." *This speaks of angels who left their first estate, but says nothing of Satan. This may or may not refer to his fall.*

**1 Tim 3:6** "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." *This may be more specific than any other passage in helping us learn the origin of Satan who exalted himself against God and became His arch enemy.*

- B. What is Satan doing in this heavenly conference—in the veritable presence of God?
1. God asked, "Where have you come from?" This implies that Satan was an intruder, not an invited participant. He had left his normal sphere of devilish work: "...From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job 1:7, cf. also 1 Pet. 5:8).
  2. As an accuser or adversary (as his name implies), he was there to bring charges against the servants of God, and probably already had done so, leading God to direct his attention to the perfect servant Job (see Rev. 12:10). Or in essence God seems to have said, "you picked out the weakest to

accuse; why don't you turn your attention to the best."

3. What kind of power does he possess, and what is the source of this power? It was awesome. He had the power to control and use evil men for his own devilish deeds (Sabeans, Chaldeans, vv. 15,17) He used bolts of lightning for his destructive purpose; he could call the winds to accomplish his objectives; he could even destroy life. Since he was not Deity, his power ultimately had to come from God, and was limited by God: "*only upon himself put not forth thine hand*"; "*Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life*" (1:12; 2:6).
4. Why does God allow him the power to so terribly accuse and abuse one of His most dedicated servants? This has been a choice ground of attack against God from unbelievers, and while we do not know all the answers, certain things we can be sure of.
  - (a) While we cannot know the mind of God, we can and do know that all things work together for good for those who love God (Rom. 8:28). The book of Job exemplifies this, and the New Testament reaffirms it. "*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*" (1 Pet. 1:7).
  - (b) Satan had to learn his limitations; God had more power to keep than the evil one had to take:  
**2 Tim 1:12** "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"  
**2 Cor 12:9** "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."
  - (c) Multiplied millions have learned patience and forbearance from Job's suffering.
5. Is there some sort of a heavenly Court of Appeal before which we may defend ourselves against the slanderer? *Job kept pleading for such a court, along with an arbitrator to represent him* (9:11-35). *We now know we have such an Advocate* (1 John 2:1,2).

C. Next, let us learn about this devilish creature from the descriptive attributes applied to him.

1. He is the serpent: crafty, conniving; more subtle than all the beasts of the field  
**Gen 3:1** "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"  
**2 Cor 11:3** "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
2. He is Satan: the adversary.  
**Zech. 3:1-2** "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"  
**Luke 22:31** "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:"
3. He is the Devil: "Gr *diabolos* , slanderous (in LXX, Satan; in N.T., devil) *diaballein* , to slander, lit., throw across *dia-* , across + *ballein* , to throw...the chief evil spirit, a supernatural being subordinate to, and the foe of, God and the tempter of human beings."

- (a) We see this slanderous work against Job *"Doth Job fear God for nought?...But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face"* (1:9,11). *"Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life"* (2:4).
  - (b) He not only is a liar, but the father of it: *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"* (John 8:44).
4. He is the accuser of our brethren: *"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night"* (Rev 12:10).
  5. He is the great red dragon (Rev. 12). As such he makes war against God's people both in heaven and on earth, probably figuratively of his resistance against the power and authority of God universally.
  6. He is the God of this world (2 Cor. 4:3,4). This is usurped power, but he has been able to bring the greater portion of the world under his domain. We are all either citizens of the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of darkness (Col. 1:13). Satan, however, is destined to lose this power and position.
 

**Rev 11:15** *"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."*
  7. He is the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). Beyond question, there is a realm occupied by spirit-beings, both good and evil. Being spirit, they were probably thought of as dwelling in the air (atmosphere), and Satan is the prince over them.
 

**Col 1:16** *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:"*

**Heb 1:14** *"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"*
  8. He is Beelzebub (Baalzebul), the fly-god, the prince of demons (Matt. 12:24). Perhaps designed to show the nature of Satan, as a being who loves that which is putrid, vile, corrupt, evil. How opposite the God of love, goodness, and purity.
- D. Satan is real; he is devious, deceptive, deadly; his agents are equally so. We must ever be on our guard.
- Rev 12:9** *"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*
- 2 Cor 11:13-15** *"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."*
- 1 Pet 5:8** *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"*



## PART TWO: JOB'S TRIALS AND DESPAIR (1-3)

### INTRODUCTION

- A. To keep the perspective of this book and its contents, we must keep in mind what we have previously noted about it.
  - 1. Job is considered by most authorities to antedate Moses (probably living closer to the time of Abraham). This means that he lived under the system of patriarchy, and that his knowledge of God and His ways would of necessity have been very limited. Keeping this in mind will be very helpful as we proceed.
  - 2. We also have looked at Satan, the arch rival of God and all that is good, and the promoter of everything that is evil and impure. As his name denotes, he is the adversary who accuses the saints before God day and night.
- B. These two topics will come up often as we study the trials of Job, but for now we turn our attention to the text of what is perhaps the most intriguing story of the Old Testament.

### I. JOB: HIS CHARACTER, FAMILY, AND PROSPERITY (1:1-5)

- A. Job was perfect (blameless, NIV) and upright, a man who feared God and eschewed (shunned, NIV, set his face against, NEB) evil (1:1). This appraisal of him will often be contested by his counselors, and really forms the crux of the book—do the righteous really suffer, or was Job being punished for his wickedness?
- B. Job was a man of exceptional wealth: 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 donkeys, 7 sons and 3 daughters, along with a very great household.
- C. He showed extraordinary concern for the spiritual welfare of his family, offering sacrifices regularly to atone for sins they might have committed.
  - 1. Although in the twilight age of revelation, Job had knowledge of a sacrifice for sin. This practice we can certainly trace back to the borders of Eden.

**Gen 4:3-7** "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin [or a sin offering] lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."
  - 2. However, we also note a conspicuous absence of priest or temple. This is another evidence of the antiquity of Job, for the sacrifices bear a striking similarity to those of Abraham and the other patriarchs (Gen. 8:20; 12:7; 26:25).

### II. THE STAGE SET FOR THE CONTEST BETWEEN JOB AND SATAN TO BEGIN (1:6-12)

- A. The sons of God presented themselves before God, "And Satan came also among them."
  - 1. The sons of God ("angels," NIV, "members of the court of heaven," NEB). Later the book of Job mentions sons of God who shouted for joy at the creation. These were certainly celestial beings (Job 38:9), a previous creation of God (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16,17).

2. "Whence comest thou?"
    - (a) This question seems to imply that Satan was an uninvited personage, an intruder in the meeting. This shows at the outset his evil and intrusive nature; and as he was then, so he still is. Thus we may rest assured that he will intrude into every family, every church gathering— every place and in any way where he may find occasion to do his deadly work.
    - (b) The answer to the question was, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." This was and is Satan's modus operandi, and his sphere of operation. He is the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2).
    - (c) Of him Peter warns, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*" (1 Pet 5:8).
  3. "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" Considering his abrupt appearance at this meeting, and in view of the meaning of his name (adversary, accuser), we may assume that he had brought numerous charges against the saints of God. Reasoning from the specific to the general, he no doubt concluded that a few are bad, therefore all are bad. So God in essence says, "Satan, why do you slander the weak? Consider Job, an opponent worthy of your steel." We see this same illogical approach by his henchmen today.
    - (a) An elder abuses his authority. We conclude: "All elders are bad."
    - (b) A member of the church acts hypocritically. We charge: "The church is full of hypocrites."
    - (c) A preacher takes financial advantage of a church. We reply: "Preachers are just out for the money."
    - (d) Parents are bad and we expect the same of their children: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46).
  4. Satan now does what he does best. He throws down the gauntlet by accusing God of paying Job to serve Him. "Doth Job fear God for nought?" "Touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face" (1:9,11).
- B. With the ground rules set, the contest to destroy Job's faith and integrity begins

### III. THE ASSAULT ON THE RIGHTEOUS JOB

- C. The first wave attack was on Job's possessions and family (1:13-22). One assault after another is executed against Job's wealth and family. In a short time he has gone from everything to nothing, leading him to tear his mantle and shave his head (1:20). But his fortress of faith and patience held firm.
  1. We talk about "fair weather friends." It's true, we don't know how many of these we have until we win the sweepstakes. It is often said, "We don't really know a person until we have settled an inheritance with him." This was Satan's assumption: "Take Job's wealth and I'll take his soul."
  2. Quite to the dismay of Satan, Job was not a fair weather friend to God. His misfortune had left him shaken but not shattered.
 

**Job 1:20,21** "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshiped. And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:21-22).
- B. Satan leveled his second wave attack against Job's physical being.
 

**Job 2:4-5** "And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face."

**Job 2:7-10** "So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the

sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

- C. Job cursed the day of his birth. The depths of his anguish and the torture of his soul is so graphically depicted that one can almost feel his pain and remorse. At times, I am sure all of us have felt this way.

"Let the day perish wherein I was born" (3:3).

"Let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months (3:6).

"Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?" (3:11).

"Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light" (3:16).

"Why did the knees prevent me? ["Why was I ever laid on my mother's knees?" NEB] or why the breasts that I should suck?" (3:12).

"Why should the sufferer be born to see the light? Why is life given to men who find it so bitter?" (3:20, NEB).

- D. Job then gave his insight into death; and how different it was from those of us who have had life and immortality brought to light through the gospel.

**Job 3:13-19** "For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light. There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master."

**Rom 16:25-26** "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:"

**1 Cor 2:6-10** "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

**1 Pet 1:9-12** "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

**Eph 3:9-11** "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"

**2 Tim 1:9-10** "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is

now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

## LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS SECTION

### F. Lessons learned from this section.

1. Financial prosperity may be a gift from God, and as such is not wrong within itself.
  - (a) Examples of this would be Abraham and Solomon as well as Job.
  - (b) Every good and perfect gift is from above (James 1:17).
2. Nothing comes without a price: greater blessings may pave the way to greater temptations.

- (a) The wealthy often fall into a snare.

**Mat 19:24** "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

**Luke 8:14** "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."

**1 Tim 6:6-10** "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

- (b) A beautiful woman is more likely to be pressured for sexual favors by deviate characters.

**Gen 6:2** "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."

**Gen 12:11-13** "And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee."

**2 Sam 11:2** "And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon."

3. God is not the author of human suffering, but may allow it for men's testing and benefit (death is a natural result of sin, but not always our own individual sins)..

**Rom 5:14** "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."

**John 9:1-3** "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

**2 Cor 12:7-9** "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations,

there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

4. Man doesn't always understand the reason for suffering (this was the basic error of Job's advisors; they thought they had all the answers, much like the preacher in this Illustration: *"A philosopher and a preacher are alike in that they are both looking for a black cat in a dark room that isn't there—except that the preacher will always find it.*)

**Job 13:4-5** "But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value. O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom."

**John 9:1-3** "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

**John 5:14** "Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

## PART THREE: JOB'S ADVISORS SPEAK, AND JOB RESPONDS (4-31)

### I. THE FIRST ROUND OF SPEECHES (4-14)

- A. Job's three advisors had come to him, but for seven days they didn't utter a word (2:11-13). During this time it is likely that they were recovering from the shock of seeing him, and were working out in their own minds what it was that had brought him to this terrible condition.
- B. Unable to hold his tongue any longer, Eliphaz the Temanite spoke first, and Job responded (4-7).
1. He centered his speech on Job's curse against the day of his birth.
    - (a) Job had comforted others, but had lost patience when he became the object of suffering (Shakespeare said he had no trouble bearing another man's toothache). *"Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have uphelden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled"* (Job 4:3-5).
    - (b) If Job is innocent, he should have no reason for fear (Eliphaz appears to be laying the foundation for the charge that Job is suffering because of his sins). *"Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed"* (Job 4:8-9).
    - (c) Eliphaz attributes his knowledge of this to a spirit that came to him in a night vision. *"In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it"* (Job 4:13-20).
    - (d) Job, he asserted, needed to learn that man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward, so he should just make his petition and lay His cause before God (5:7,8). He should not despise this chastisement from God (5:17) because, *"He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword"* (5:19,20).
    - (e) Should Job exercise the good sense to quit complaining and heed this advise, he would come to his grave *"In full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season"* (5:26)
  2. Job's response to Eliphaz: (6,7).
    - (a) He had adequate grounds for his complaints and resentments: *"O that the grounds for my resentment might be weighed, and my misfortunes set with them on the scales! For they would outweigh the sands of the sea: what wonder if my words are wild?"* (6:1,2).

He had felt the poison arrows of the Almighty (6:4).  
The wild ass doesn't bray when he has grass, nor does the ox lo over his fodder (6:5)  
He saw no reason for hope or for his life to be prolonged (6:8-13).
    - (b) His friends had observed his calamities and forsook him. *"Devotion is due from his friends to one who despairs and loses faith in the Almighty; but my brothers have been treacherous as a mountain stream, like the channels of streams that run dry... So treacherously have you now been to me: you felt dismay and were afraid. Did I ever say, 'Give me this or that; open your purses to save my life; rescue me from my enemy; ransom me out of the hands of*

*ruthless men'?"* (Job 6:14,15, NEB)

- (c) He challenges his accusers to point out his errors: *"Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; and cause me to understand wherein I have erred"* (6:24). *"Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my taste discern perverse things?"* (6:30).
- (d) Job's affliction stretched over many months, and was consistently growing worse, causing him to desire death above life. (Also, note at this point his concept of death, a going into the grave to come up no more.)

**Job 7:4-7** "When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good."

**Job 7:13-15** "When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life."

**Job 7:8-10** "The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him anymore."

**Job 7:21** "And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be."

C. Bildad the Shuhite took his turn at advising Job, and Job responded (8-10).

1. Bildad's charges became more focused and emphatic that Job was being punished as a sinner.

- (a) Job's defense was nothing more than the long-winded ramblings of an old man (8:2, NEB).
- (b) God hadn't perverted justice; Job's sons were punished for their sins: *"Does God pervert judgement? Does the Almighty pervert justice? Your sons sinned against him, so he left them to be victims of their own iniquity"* (8:3,4, NEB).
- (c) If Job would acknowledge his sin, God would restore and prosper him. *"But if you will look to God and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your rightful place. Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be"* (Job 8:5-7, NIV).

Job urged to inquire and learn from the fathers: the rush can't grow without the mire, nor the flag without water; so it is of those who forget God (8:10-13).

The hypocrite's trust is a spider's web; he leans on a house that cannot stand (8:13-15).

God will not cast away a perfect man, therefore, job must be a sinner

2. Job responds to Bildad (9-10).

- (a) Job extols the greatness and majesty of God and his utter helplessness to defend himself against Him (he could not answer Him one word in a thousand).

He can move mountains, shake the earth, command the sun, and tread the waves of the sea (9:1-3).

He commands the sun and it does not rise (9:7).

He does great things and wonders without number (10).

Job felt that if he tried to justify himself, his own mouth would condemn him (9:20).

- (b) How could Job defend himself against one he could not see (9:11). Even if he were righteous,

he would not answer such Majesty; and even if God answered him, Job would not believe that He had heard his voice (9:15,16).

- (c) If Job spoke of His innocence, God could even take his own mouth and prove Him wrong (9:20). If he washed with snow water, He would throw him in the muddy ditch (9:30,31)
- (d) Job had become weary of life. God had made him from dust and was evidently determined to send him back to it (10:1-13).
- (e) Wicked or righteous, he felt that he was a marked man, and God was hunting him as a fierce lion stalking its prey (10:14-16).
- (f) He was in extreme depression, still lamenting the day of his birth. *"Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave. Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness"* (Job 10:18-22).

D. Zophar the Naamathite took his turn at the tirade against Job, and Job replied (11-14).

- 1. He harangued Job by charging him with lying about his purity (*"For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes"*), then urged repentance to effect reconciliation with God and restoration and prosperity (11).

**Job 11:4-6** "For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; And that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth. Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?"

**Job 11:13-16** "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear: Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away."

- 2. Job's response to Zophar (12-14).

- (a) He chides his advisors for their purported wisdom: *"No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you"* (12:2). He challenges them to go to the animals for information (remember, Job lived in an age when most revelation came by natural means, Rom. 1:20), and to respect the learning that comes by age and experience (12:7).
- (b) Job is no idiot; he is not unaware of the greatness of God. He tears down, shuts up, withholds the waters, and sends the floods: *"He makes counselors walk barefoot, and makes fools of judges."* (12:13-25, ASRV).
- (c) He was not inferior to his counselors; all this he had observed with his eyes. He would certainly be willing to confer with the Almighty, but as for his advisors, they *"are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value. O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom"* Their greatest wisdom would be manifested by silence (Job 13:4-5).
- (d) Job felt strongly that he was capable of presenting his own case before God: *"But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God"* (13:3, NIV), and was willing to suffering the consequences for so doing: *"Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will. Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand? Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him"* (Job 13:13-15).
- (e) If it brought the death sentence, then so be it; but he was willing to take his chances in God's



majestic court. After all, he had very little to lose.

**Job 13:19-28** "Can anyone bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die. Only grant me these two things, O God, and then I will not hide from you: Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply. How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin. Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy? Will you torment a windblown leaf? Will you chase after dry chaff? For you write down bitter things against me and make me inherit the sins of my youth. You fasten my feet in shackles; you keep close watch on all my paths by putting marks on the soles of my feet. So man wastes away like something rotten, like a garment eaten by moths."

- (f) Job again laments the troubles and brevity of life as being few days and full of trouble (Job 14:1-5). He presents a dismal picture of life and death, but seems to hold out a faint hope of something better. However, contrast the way the NEB handles this passage.

**Job 14:7-15** "For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands."

**Job 14:7-21, NEB** "If a tree is cut down, there is hope that it will sprout again and fresh shoots will not fail. Though its roots grow old in the earth, and its stump is dying in the ground, if it scents water it may break into bud and make new growth like a young plant. But a man dies, and he disappears; man comes to his end, and where is he? As the waters of a lake dwindle, or as a river shrinks and runs dry, so mortal man lies down, never to rise until the very sky splits open. He shall never be roused from his sleep. If only thou wouldst hide me in Sheol and conceal me till thy anger turns aside, Then I would not lose hope, however long my service, waiting for my relief to come. Thou wouldst summon me, and I would answer thee; thou wouldst long to see the creature thou has made. But now thou dost count ever step I take, watching all my course. Every offence of mine is stored in thy bag; thou dost keep my iniquity under seal. Yet as a falling mountain-side is swept away, and a rock is dislodged from its place as water wears away stone, and a rain-storm scours the soil from the land, so thou has wiped out the hope of frail man; and dost overpower him finally, and he is gone; his face is changed and he is banished from thy sight. His flesh upon him becomes black, and his life-blood dries up within him. His sons rise to honour, and he sees nothing of it; they sink into obscurity, and he knows it not."

## LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS SECTION

1. The well-meaning counsel of our advisors may add to our misery rather than comfort.
  - (a) "My sister had the same surgery and hasn't had a well day since."
  - (b) "God gave you three other children."
  - (c) "I told you so." "You didn't need that thing anyway."
2. Friends may often forsake us when we have the greatest need for them.

- (a) Confined to the home or a nursing home. "Silence is Golden Lonely."
  - (b) Long stays in the hospital.
  - (c) "When I had money, I had friends; when I lost my money, I lost my friends" (consider the Prodigal son).
3. As counselors we may often assume an arrogant or know-it-all attitude, thus implying the ignorance of the one we are trying to help (see Gal. 6:1).
  4. Even the best of us get discouraged at times and want to blame God.
  5. Truth is often mixed with falsehood: "*Like fools, you are smearing truth with your falsehoods*" (Job 13:4, NEB).
  6. The kind of God Job saw through natural revelation (remember, he lived under the patriarchy: searching for God through natural revelation with very sparse direct divine communication).
    - (a) God is all-powerful.
      - Man cannot answer Him one in a thousand (9:3).
      - No one has defied Him without harm (9:4).
      - He commands the sun, the stars, and the sea (9:7,8).
      - He does wondrous works without number (9:10).
    - (b) He is unreachable.
      - He passes by without being seen or perceived (9:11).
      - Even if righteous, God would not answer Him (9:15).
      - Even if He answered, Job would not believe He did (9:16).
      - No daysman (KJV), umpire (NASV), someone to arbitrate (NIV) (9:33).
      - Job terrified to try and reach Him: "*Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me: Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me*" (Job 9:34-35).
    - (c) He is unbending, unrelenting.
      - Multiplied wounds without cause (9:17).
      - Wouldn't relent long enough for Job to catch his breath ("O, if I could only get one good night's sleep!" we often say) (9:18).
      - "*If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse*" (Job 9:20).
      - He destroys the perfect and the wicked (9:22).
      - If the scourge slay suddenly, He will laugh (9:23).
      - "*The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he?*" (Job 9:24).
      - If Job washes with snow water, God will again plunge him in the muddy ditch (9:30,31).
    - (d) Jesus came that we might see God more perfectly.
      - The Old Testament gave additional revelation showing Him to be a God of mercy "*Showing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments*" (Exo 20:6).
      - But it took God with us to show us the real Father (Matt. 1:23; John 1:1,18; 1 Tim. 3:16).
      - God is love (1 John 4:8,16).
      - God is forgiving (John 8:1-11).
      - God is compassionate (Matt. 14:14; 15:32).
      - Forgiveness seventy times seven (Matt. 18:22).
      - Not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9).
      - The cross, the ultimate response of love (Rom. 5:8).

## II. THE SECOND ROUND OF SPEECHES (14-21)

### A. Eliphaz denounces Job a second time (15).

1. The charges again laid out against Job with increased intensity.
  - (a) Job's speeches were just a belly full of east wind (15:2). Did he think he was the first man born? Was he made before the hills? Had he heard the secrets of God, thus limiting wisdom to himself? Did he know more than the grayheaded and very aged men who were on their side? (15:7-9).
  - (b) To claim that he was innocent was absurd! God put no trust in his saints (holy ones, NIV, NEB, perhaps angels?), and even the heavens were not clean in His sight (15:14,15).

"What is any frail man that he should be innocent, or any child of woman that he should be justified? If God puts no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not innocent in his sight, how much less so is man, who is loathsome and rotten and laps up evil like water" NEB.
  - (c) It is the wicked man that suffers pain all his days (15:20). *"He cannot hope to escape from dark death; he is marked down for the sword"* (15:22, NEB). Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid because he stretches out his hand against God (15:24,25). The congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery (15:34).

### 2. Job responds to Eliphaz (16,17).

- (a) He accuses his counselors of being miserable comforters, protesting that he could speak as they if he were in their places (16:1-4). Shakespeare said it was easy for him to bear another's toothache.
- (b) His enemies were taken vengeance against him: *"My enemies look daggers at me, they bare their teeth to rend me, they slash my cheeks with knives; they are all in league against me"* (16:10, NEB).
- (c) Job even felt that God had taken him by the neck to shake him to pieces (16:12). His archers compassed him round about, pouring out his gall on the ground (16:13). Still he proclaimed his innocence: *"Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure"* (16:17).
- (d) Once more Job wishes for one who would plead his cause: *"O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour! When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return"* (Job 16:21-22)
- (e) With so many health problems, Job again describes his dark plight (see the NASV).

The grave was ready for him (17:1).

Limbs wasted to a shadow, one at whom men spat (17:6, NIV).

His eyes were dim, and his whole frame was but a shadow (17:7).

His days were past, his plans were torn apart (17:11).

Day was turned into night (17:12).

In his deep depression, he had despaired of all hope: *"If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it? They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust"* (Job 17:13-16).

### B. Bildad responds with another rebuttal of Job (18).

1. His charges against the righteous Job became more intense.
  - (a) He asserted that Job's continued claim to innocence demonstrated that he regarded his counselors as nothing more than cattle, and believed that the whole system of things should be changed just to accommodate his theory: *"How long will it be ere ye make an end of words?"*

*mark, and afterwards we will speak. Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight? He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?" (Job 18:2-4).*

- (b) The fate of the wicked is very evident to Bildad.

The light in his tent shall be darkened (18:5,6).

His own schemes will bring him down (18:7).

A snare seizes him by the heel, and a trap snaps shut on him (18:9, NASV).

He is marched off to the king of terrors (18:14).

His roots are dried below, and his branch cut off above (18:16).

His remembrance shall be cut off from the earth (18:17).

Such are the dwellings of the wicked, the one who knows not God (18:21).

2. Job answers Bildad (19)

- (a) Job charged Bildad with vexing his soul, and breaking him in pieces with words. Ten times he had reproached the righteous Job, yet showed no shame over such false accusations (19:1,2).

- (b) Job listed his complaints against God.

God had overthrown him, and compassed him with a net (19:6).

His anguished cry of wrongdoing against him had not been heard (19:7).

God had destroyed him on every side, removed him like a tree (19:10).

He counted Job as an enemy (19:11).

- (c) His physical condition was repugnant to all around him.

His family and servants had turned against him (19:13-16).

His wife found his breath offensive; children and close friends abhorred him (19:17-19).

He was nothing but skin and bone (19:20).

- (d) Was there any hope left for Job? (19:25-27). A different rendering of this passage shows the difficulty translators have experienced with the book of Job, matters of which I am not competent to judge.

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27, KJV).

"But in my heart I know that my vindicator lives and that he will rise last to speak in court; and I shall discern my witness standing at my side and see my defending counsel, even God himself, whom I shall see with my own eyes, I myself and no other" (NEB).

C. Zophar takes his second turn at accusing Job, and Job responds. (20, 21)

1. Much reasoning has not swayed Zophar from his original stance against Job; he still contends that his affliction is a result of vile sin.

- (a) The thrust of this speech is aimed at Job's previous prosperity. This, he declares, is no sign of righteousness; even the wicked prosper for a short time. God, however, will eventually take back what he gave, and the wicked will feel the arrow of God in their gall bladders.

He will perish forever like his own dung (20:7).

He will fly away as a dream and not be found (20:8).

The meat in his bowels is turned into the gall of asps (20:14).

He will vomit the riches he has swallowed (20:15)

- (b) Zophar then concludes that Job is suffering as all evil men eventually do: *"This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God"* (20:29).
2. Job responds to Zophar.
- (a) This very thought about God prospering the wicked terrified Job: *"When I think about this, I am terrified; trembling seizes my body. Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power"* (21:6,7, NIV).
- Their seed is established in their sight (21:8).  
 Their houses are safe from fear (21:9).  
 They rejoice at the sound of the organ (21:12).  
 They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down into their graves (21:13).  
 They tell God to depart because they want no knowledge of his ways (21:14).  
 He sees no difference in the righteous and wicked *"They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them"* (21:26).
- (b) David almost lost his faith in God because of such a perceived inequity.
- Psa 73:1-13** "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.<sup>4</sup> For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency."
- (c) If it is so that both the righteous and wicked suffer, then where is the force of the counselor's argument? *"So how can you console me with your nonsense? Nothing is left of your answers but falsehood!"* (21:34).

### III. THE THIRD ROUND OF SPEECHES (22-24)

- A. Eliphaz hurled another barrage of charges at Job with increased intensity, and Job replied.
1. Job was not being assaulted for his piety or reverence; such meant nothing to God. Rather it was because of his great wickedness and infinite iniquities. Repentance and submission to God would again bring Job peace.
- Job 22:4-11** "Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?" Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry. But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it. Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken. Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee; Or darkness, that thou canst not see; and abundance of waters cover thee."
- Job 22:21-26** "Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you. Accept instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart. If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored: If you remove wickedness far from your tent and assign your nuggets to the

dust, your gold of Ophir to the rocks in the ravines, then the Almighty will be your gold, the choicest silver for you. Surely then you will find delight in the Almighty and will lift up your face to God" (NIV).

1. Job's reply to Eliphaz (23-24).

- (a) Job wants to meet with God and present his case, but laments because He is not there (23).

**Job 23:3-9** "Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me. There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge. Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him:"

- (b) Job then wonders why God does not set a time to call the wicked to judgment for their cruelty and injustice (24). He sees them:

Remove landmarks and take flocks by violence (24:2).

Take the widow's ox for pledge (24:3).

Cause the naked to lodge without clothing (24:7).

Take the sheaf from the hungry (24:10).

They plunder and murder (24:14-16).

Despite all this, God seemingly lays no folly to them (24:12).

If this is not so, Job wants to know who will prove him a liar (24:25).

C. Bildad makes his third and final speech, and Job responds.

1. Bildad concludes that Job's contentions are false because no man could be pure before God: "*How can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman? If even the moon has no brightness And the stars are not pure in His sight, How much less man, that maggot, and the son of man, that worm*" (25:4-6, NASV).

2. Job's response to Bildad (26-31).

- (a) Job facetiously chides Bildad for his counsel and wisdom to a sick and ignorant old man.

**Job 26:1-5** "Then Job replied: "How you have helped the powerless! How you have saved the arm that is feeble! What advice you have offered to one without wisdom! And what great insight you have displayed! Who has helped you utter these words? And whose spirit spoke from your mouth? The dead are in deep anguish, those beneath the waters and all that live in them" (NIV).

- (b) Who could possibly fathom the awesome and limitless power of God.

Hell is naked before him (26:6).

He hangs the earth on nothing (26:7).

He has compassed the water with bounds (26:10).

The pillars of heaven tremble at his reproof (26:11).

Who can understand the thunder of his power? (26:14).

- (c) Although Job felt that he had been denied justice, he declared that he would not give up his integrity, nor would he ever admit that his advisors were right. It is evident that Satan had lost his battle to corrupt this good man.

**Job 27:2-6** "As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul; All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; My

**Job 27:2-6** "As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul; All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live."

- (d) Chapter 28 contrasts the puny accomplishments of man with the wisdom of God. It contains such a beautiful dissertation that comments on my part would but do it injustice.
- (e) Job recalls his former days of glory and honor:

The Almighty was with him (29:1-6).  
Young and old showed him respect in the gate of the city: *"When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth"* (Job 29:7-10, NIV).  
Men waited in silence for his counsel (29:21).  
He dwelt as king among his troops (29:25).
- (f) He then contemplates the reversal of his fortunes.

Young men deride him whose fathers he would not have put with his sheep dogs (30:1).  
They were misfits in society, yet their sons mock him (30:3-9).  
God had unstrung him like a bow (30:11, NIV).  
Terrors overwhelmed him, and his life was ebbing away (30:18,19, NIV).  
God threw him in the mud and reduced him to dust and ashes (30:19).  
His physical condition was horrible: *"My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me. I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation. I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat"* (30:27-30).
- (g) Job calls curses down on himself if he is not an innocent man.

If his were defiled, let others reap what he had sown and his crops uprooted (31:6-8).  
If he had defiled a woman, may his wife serve and sleep with another man (31:9,10).  
If he had not shown mercy and compassion, may his arm fall from his shoulder (31:13-22).
- (h) Job again challenges God to answer: *"Oh, that I had someone to hear me! I sign now my defense--let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing. Surely I would wear it on my shoulder, I would put it on like a crown"* (Job 31:35-36, NIV).

## LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SECTION

- A. Man observing God simply through natural disasters may reach vastly wrong conclusion about His nature and character.
- B. God may often be blamed for what Satan is doing
- C. Depression over one's physical condition, even to the point of questioning God, does not necessarily indicate a loss of faith.
- D. Death may sometimes be a blessed relief from human suffering and misery.

## PART FOUR: ELIHU SPEAKS TO JOB AND HIS ADVISORS (32-37)

### I. ELIHU THE BUZITE TAKES UP THE DIATRIBE

- A. Job's counselors had concluded that Job was a self-righteous man and gave up their efforts to convince him of sin (32:1).
- B. Elihu, a younger man, reprovved both Job and his friends: Job for not justifying God, and his friends for a failure to convince Job of his sins.
- C. His youthfulness had restrained him from entering into the fray to this point; but now his words were fermenting in him like wine in wineskins. He had to vent them to obtain relief:

**Job 32:19-22** "inside I am like bottled-up wine, like new wineskins ready to burst. I must speak and find relief; I must open my lips and reply. I will show partiality to no one, nor will I flatter any man; for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker would soon take me away" (NIV).

### II. ELIHU DENOUNCES JOB IN DEFENSE OF GOD

- A. He states the premise for his attack against Job: "*But you have said in my hearing—I heard the very words—I am pure and without sin; I am clean and free from guilt. Yet God has found fault with me; he considers me his enemy. He fastens my feet in shackles; he keeps close watch on all my paths*" (33:8-11).
- B. Why had Job complained that God had not answered; that could have been done in various ways:
  - Now one way, now another (33:12-14).
  - In a dream, in a vision in the night (33:15-18).
  - Chastened on a bed of pain, wasting away to nothing (33:19-22).
- C. Still yet, though in a near-death condition a proper messenger (angel, NIV) on his side as an interpreter (mediator, NIV) could move a gracious God to deliver him (33:23-33).
- D. Elihu defends God before the wise men, and offers further indictments against Job (34-37).
  - 1. He admonishes them to hear him and consider Job's false claims of innocence: "*Job says I am innocent, but God denies me justice. Although I am right, I am considered a liar; although I am guiltless, his arrow inflicts an incurable wound*" (34:5,6, NIV).
    - He drank up scorn like water (34:7).
    - He kept company with evildoers (34:8).
    - He said it profited nothing to serve God (34:9).
  - 2. God did not need to examine men to know them, probably referring back to Job's appeal for a defense hearing (34:21-30). What Job really need was greater intensified suffering to break his stubborn will. "*Oh, that Job be tested to the utmost for answering like a wicked man! To his sin he adds rebellion; scornfully he claps his hands among us and multiplies his words against God*" (34:36,37, NIV).
  - 3. Job was so arrogant that he claimed righteousness greater than God's, and could gain nothing by ceasing from sin (35:1-3).
  - 4. Job wanted to know what he might gain by ceasing to sin, seemingly implying that righteousness had left him in this terrible state. Elihu replied that righteousness and iniquity affected only man, not God.



Man's oppression came only because he did not acknowledge God as his Maker (35:5-15). Therefore, Job's contention that he should not be punished because of his innocence was just so much empty talk, words multiplied without knowledge. (35:16).

5. Although God was not affected one way or the other by men's sins or righteousness; still, He does not withdraw from the righteous, but establishes them (36:1-7).
6. If God bound by fetters and cords, it was to teach men their work and transgressions. If such produced repentance, God would restore; if not, they would die. In this manner He would have corrected and delivered Job, but Job would not respond (36:8-23).
3. Job is thus urged to remember and magnify the works of God (36:24).

His number of years cannot be searched (36:26).

He controls the drops of water, the clouds, and the light (36:27-33).

He does great things which we cannot comprehend (37:1-5).

He orders the snow and the rain (37:6-13).

*"Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict. Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart" (37:23,24).*

#### **LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS SECTION**

- A. Man seeking to know the mind of God aside from specific revelation usually draws a lot of wrong conclusions (Isa. 55:8,9; 1 Cor. 1:18-31).
- B. Man needs a mediator to present his cause before God (1 Tim. 2:5): *"My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One"* (1 John 2:1, NIV).
- C. Humility is better shown by one's actions rather than his words: *"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips"* (Prov 27:2).
- D. Zeal without knowledge can get us into a lot of trouble (see Rom. 10:1-3).

## PART FIVE: GOD ANSWERED JOB OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND (38-41)

### I. JOB FINALLY OBTAINS AN ENCOUNTER WITH HIS MAKER

- A. Job had darkened counsel by words without knowledge (38:1,2). Although he was a man of stalwart character, he evidently had gotten carried away in the defense of himself and overstated his merits (don't we all!)
- B. God challenged Job to gird his loins for a verbal battle (38:3), then tested his knowledge by a barrage of questions.
- Where was Job when the foundation of the earth was laid?  
Who marked off and measured its dimensions? (38:5)  
On what were its footings fastened? (38:6)  
Who laid its cornerstone? (38:6)  
Who shut up the sea with doors? (38:8)  
Could Job command the morning? (38:12)  
Had he entered into the springs of the sea? (38:16)  
Had the gates of death been opened for him? (38:17)  
Where is the way where light dwells? (38:19)  
Out of whose womb did the ice come? (38:29)  
Could Job possibly account for the wisdom of wild animals? (38:39-39:30)
- C. Since Job could not answer, he admitted to being vile, and put his hand over his mouth (40:1-5). He had in essence disannulled God's judgment to justify himself. *"Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself"* (40:8).
- E. Job is further challenged to contrast his strength with God's.
1. Does he have an arm like God's? Could HE unleash great fury and wrath against the wicked (40:9-14).
  2. What about the behemoth (hippopotamus? elephant?); could Job trap him and pierce his nose? (40:24, NIV).
- F. Could he draw out the leviathan (crocodile?) with a fishhook, or make a pet of him? (41:1,5): *"If you lay a hand on him, you will remember the struggle and never do it again!"* (41:8, NIV).

### II. JOB'S REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION TO PROSPERITY

- A. Job Conceded That God Was The Victor; he had spoken of things which he simply did not understand (41:1-3).
- B. Getting it all in perspective, he abhorred himself and repented in dust and ashes (42:6). Still Job was more nearly right than his friends, so God required them to offer a sacrifice for themselves, and to get Job to pray for them (42:7-9).
- C. Job's Restoration To Health And Prosperity
1. His friends were reunited with him (42:11).
  2. His possessions were restored double (42:10).
  3. God blessed him with another family the same size as the one he lost (42:12-15).
  4. After his restoration to health, he lived another 140 years (42:12-15).

## LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS SECTION

- A. The wisdom of man is foolishness when compared to God's (see 1 Cor. 1:18-31).
- A. Man cannot stand before God on his own merit (see Isa. 64:6; Eph. 2:8,9).
- B. No matter how good we are, we still have moral flaws in our character (see Rom. 3:10-18).
- C. Should we become overly excited about our own wisdom, we need to take the test God gave Job (40-41).
- D. All things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. 8:28)





