

Redemption Through the Bible

Bible Study

A study of the Book of Job

By
Franklin Camp

Brother Camp was born in Munford, Alabama, in 1915. He began to



Franklin Camp
(1915-1991)

preach in 1935. His father and grandfather were both preachers of the ancient faith before him. Both would be deeply pleased to see the great work that their son and grandson has done and continues to do by word of mouth and by the prolific pen he wields so mightily and magnificently. Brother camp attended David Lipscomb College and while there formed a lifelong friendship with brother Willard Collins. They were roommates in Lipscomb. He labored locally with the Munford, Alabama Church, his home congregation, for twelve years; Park Avenue in LaGrange, Georgia, for two years; the church in East Gadsden, Alabama, thirteen

years; began in 1962 at Shades Mountain congregation in Birmingham for some ten years; came to Adamsville Church in 1974 where he worked for some twelve years; went back to East Gadsden for two years and left in 1988; and returned to the Adamsville congregation until his death in 1991. Long ministries have steadfastly characterized his local ministries. His work of faith and labor of love among these churches have been fruitful and faithful. Since 1972 he has devoted his time to writing, lecturing, giving special lessons to Bible teachers, and holding gospel meetings throughout the country. "How to Study the Bible," "Evolution," "The Work of the Holy Spirit," and "Inspiration of the Bible" have been a few of the special themes on which he has lectured through the years. Much of Brother Camp's material has been made available through the years in book form or on cassette tapes and now on CD.

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***THE FAITH OF THE REDEEMED
TESTED IN SUFFERING***

A study of the book of Job

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*“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:
but I will maintain mine own ways before
him” (Job 13:15).*

Any money realized above expenses in the sale of this book will be placed in the Franklin Camp Preacher Scholarship Fund to be used in furthering the education of men to preach the gospel.

FOREWORD

I wish I could have been one of the fortunate to spend some time under the feet of Franklin Camp, whether in his Preacher's Classes, or in this case, in the audience when teaching this series of auditorium classes. I have heard him on a few limited occasions early in my life and late in his. However, to be able to hear the audio recordings of his lessons is just as profitable as if I were there. The work that I have spent in transcribing and editing has resulted immeasurably in my personal growth, and I pray that this book will help others in the same way.

While I have tried my absolute best to retain every word and phrase in the original stance in which Franklin Camp spoke, I used editorial means to make the material more compatible in this format. Rest assured that the result is the exact material that he presented. Even many of the discussion questions are exact questions he would use in his teaching. The only portion of this work that is mine exclusively is the topical headings, provided for ease in teaching for this format (to which I tried to use my best judgment in determining the outline and order he used).

I am deeply thankful for the elders of the Adamsville congregation. I consider it an extreme privilege to have worked closely with them and one with whom Franklin Camp also greatly influenced, Bobby Duncan, for several years. My family and I look back on our time spent with them with nothing but complete fondness. I am thankful for their part in the decision to make these lessons available in this format, and I appreciate their trust of me in my part. I am also thankful for the current eldership under which I serve—the elders of the Munford congregation—who give me the flexibility to allow me to work in such fashion. I wish to thank my wife, Melissa, and our three children, Christopher, Courtney and Cameron, who all have sacrificed at times in allowing me to work on this project. My association with my coworker, Jason Mullenix, especially in assisting me in the editing of this work, is invaluable, and one that I treasure.

The same is true of Franklin Camp as the Hebrew writer wrote of Abel: "...*he being dead yet speaketh*" (Hebrews 11:4). May God richly bless this work, and may he receive all the glory.

Sam Willcut
Munford, TN

Lesson 1

An Introduction to the Book of Job

Lesson Text: Job 1-42

Introduction

The book of Job is a wonderful book. It is the first book of poetry among the books of the Bible. There are three wisdom books: Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Psalms and Song of Solomon are not wisdom books, as they have a different emphasis than these three books.

Many are acquainted with the book of Job. Most people usually know Job for his patience, because of James 5:11, but not as many have really ever read and studied the book of Job. Yet, there is far more to the book of Job than just the patience of Job. In fact, if we will read the rest of what James says concerning Job, we will see that the emphasis, even in the book of James, is not on the patience of Job, but rather the goodness of God, because the rest of James 5:11 suggests that fact: *“that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”* Therefore, the thing that is set forth in the book of Job is the importance of never losing sight of the goodness of God. We cannot understand our problems or properly deal with our problems if we ever lose sight of God’s goodness—it only multiplies and increases our difficulties.

Without spending too much time in it, I hope I can give some suggestive thoughts and insights to the book of Job that will help us then study it on our own. This introduction will help us see what it is all about and how we need to approach our study of the book of Job.

Time of the Book of Job

The time in which the events took place belongs some time to the Patriarchal period. There are two possibilities. One would be between Genesis 10-12. One other possibility would be the time between the call of Abraham and the beginning of the nation of Israel with the book of Exodus. In some ways, it can fit into either one of these periods. Some of the characters suggest the fact that they may be descendants of Esau and some from Abraham and Keturah. The names of Job’s friends would suggest this possibility.

Nevertheless, we are sure of some things about it, such as it belonging to the Patriarchal period, because there is not anything said about the law of Moses, nothing to indicate the nation of Israel had been formed or developed and the priesthood of Job fits in with the Patriarchal period rather than the priesthood of Aaron that belonged to the Levitical period. All of these things certainly show that the book of Job belongs to this period.

I believe sometime in the period of Genesis 10-12 would be a good time for the book of Job. As in this instance, we would have a man who was a believer in the true and living God while these events were taking place. Here is a man who

was righteous before God and one who believed in God, as Job 1:1 describes: a man that “*was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*”

Author of the Book of Job

Another thing I believe is significant may be one of the reasons we have the book of Job. We do not know who wrote the book of Job, but certainly, the indication is that it belongs to a Gentile period. Job was not an Israelite—we are sure of that. It may well be one of the reasons we have the book of Job, whether Job wrote it or perhaps Moses. At any rate, here is one book of the Bible about a Gentile that I believe God intended to help call attention to the fact that beginning in Genesis 12 with the promise that he made to Abraham, people out in the Gentile world are still capable of righteousness. Job is an example of that, whether it belongs in Genesis 10-12 or along about the time of Abraham, prior to the beginning of the nation of Israel.

As we study the Old Testament and see the problem that the Jews had in thinking they were superior to everybody else and deserved, earned and merited the rights of God, the book of Job would be a denial of that. Israelites wrote all of the other books of the Bible, if Job wrote this book of the Bible. Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and it may well be that Moses could be the author of the book of Job, since Moses by inspiration gives the account of the things that we find in the book of Genesis. In the same way, he could have written the book of Job while he was in the land of Midian, although we do not know who wrote it.

Yet, I believe that there is certainly an emphasis in it that indicates the universal concern of God for all men, and we should keep that in mind as we study the book of Job.

Authenticity of the Book of Job

Now, I do not think that we can question whether he was a real character, because Ezekiel mentions him along with Noah and Daniel in Ezekiel 14:14, 20. Then, in James 5:11, James mentions him.

Therefore, there is no question that he was a real person.

Purpose of the Book of Job

I believe we need to keep in mind some things as we begin the study of the book of Job, or else we will not understand some of the things in the book of Job. I have mentioned the time, and we should keep that in mind.

Now, there are a number of problems in the book of Job. For example, when we read the book of Job, we can see that there is the problem of pain and suffering. Surely, this one problem is quite clear in the book of Job. We certainly find that along with other problems in the book of Job, but I do not believe that is the real purpose of the book of Job. I believe the book of Job, as it is classified (and this is one reason it is with the poetical books and along with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes) is a book of wisdom. Therefore, the book of Job has

to do with the right philosophy of life. When we look at the problems that Job faced, we can understand how the questions would come up, “What in the world is the meaning of life? Why am I going through all of this? If righteousness relates to life, why am I suffering all of these things?” Job’s friends try to explain that. Then, along comes Elihu, who tells them that they have totally failed in explaining what the whole problem was, and in Job 32-37, he takes his hand at dealing with what the problem was and giving an explanation. Beginning in Job 38, God deals with the problem. Therefore, we must keep all of these things in mind if we are going to understand what is in the book of Job.

The book of Job teaches the limits of man’s wisdom in being able to understand the real purpose and meaning of life, which the failure of Job’s friends in explaining his problem demonstrates. Only Elihu throws some light to some degree. He makes a step above where the others were, but he still does not get to the significant part. Then God comes on the scene in Job 38 and helps to understand and throws light upon the fact that it is only through divine revelation that we can properly understand the knowledge of God and, in fact, the character of God.

One of the problems in the book of Job is they are struggling with the character of God. Job’s friends say, “God is just, and your suffering proves that you are a sinner.” Job knew that was not true—Job did not claim sinless perfection, but he did claim to be an upright man, as the first verse of the book shows. Even God acknowledged Job as being an upright man in his description of him (cf. 1:8). Therefore, they were insisting there was something wrong—he was a sinner or he would not be suffering as he is. Elihu moves up a step and points out some things of which the others did not have knowledge. He seeks to reconcile the goodness of God with the suffering of Job, and mentions the fact that God is not unjust in the suffering taking place and that there may be a relationship between God’s grace and permitting this suffering he is enduring, which is a step up from where the others stood as progress. If we will notice as we read the book of Job, God rebukes Job’s three friends but not Elihu, because he said some things that were a step above what the others said based upon some things that were right.

Then again, as we read the attempts of Job’s friends to explain what Job’s problem was, keep in mind that they said some things that were right as far as they went, which is a part of the purpose of the book of Job—to show that man can have knowledge of some things, but it is limited. Some things they said were correct, but that did not get to the root of the problem. That left Job hanging with some of the difficulties with which he confronts, which they were unable to answer.

Therefore, the book of Job teaches that there is a limit to man’s wisdom. Here was a problem where Job was suffering. There was a spiritual experience as well as a physical experience through which he was going, and they were seeking solutions to it and turning wherever they could. Man, in his own wisdom, could see some things that were correct as far as they went, but the conclusions that they drew were wrong, because their knowledge was limited.

Therefore, the book of Job shows that man needs wisdom beyond that which he has to understand and to solve the problem. This wisdom comes from God, as Job 38:1 and 40:1 will show. Now, as I mentioned, the book of Job deals with many things, but one of the prime purposes is to show the inability of human wisdom to deal with and to explain the experience of the soul through which Job was going.

Now, as we read the book of Job, we need to keep this in mind—there were physical laws and physical suffering, but in the midst of that, there was mental and emotional stress with which Job confronts. If one has ever lived with physical pain, he can surely know that it is not just pain itself—it brings about mental stress and emotional problems. Job was a man living through all of this, and in the process of going through what he was, there was mental and emotional stress, which will account for some of the things Job said in the midst of this. Job is not the only one that has ever experienced anything as that—Job is not the only one who has ever longed to die. Now, if we will read the book of Job, and as we study the complaints of Job and the struggle through which he is going, we should remember this. In spite of all the pain and stress through which Job was going, one thing we will notice was completely absent—he never did say anything about taking his own life. He wished to die because of the pain through which he was going, but the fact that he did not say anything about taking his own life, I believe, gives some insight to something we should keep in mind as we study the book of Job. So let us not be too hard on Job now as we read the book of Job and see some of the experiences through which he went and some of the things he said.

Conclusion

Remember, here are things to keep in mind about Job, or else we will be unfair in our criticism of him. Job did not have the first two chapters of the book that we have. Job was in the dark about what took place in Job 1-2, which is on purpose—to help show that being in the dark about what is in Job 1-2, without that kind of information and knowledge, they were struggling with the problems they did not know how to answer. They could only see a part of it. Now, we have Job 1-2, which gives us information that Job and his friends did not have. Revelation has given us some information that enables us to see some things that they could not see. Now, if they had knowledge of the events in Job 1-2, we would not have needed the rest of the book of Job. There would have been no need of the rest of the book if Job and his friends had the knowledge that is in Job 1-2. Therefore, we see that Job 1-2 gives an account of an invisible world. With the knowledge that they had based upon experience and history, their knowledge of that invisible world was blank. We can look at experience and history and learn some things, but that knowledge is limited, and so we do not have the answer to all of the problems. We need revelation for that. Therefore, Job 1-2 will help us see that.

Questions

1. What is the book of Job all about?
2. Why do we have the book of Job, and what is the problem with which he deals?
3. Is the real purpose of the book of Job simply to deal with the problem of pain and to give some understanding in reference to the problem of pain?
4. How can one come to develop the right philosophy of life? How can one come to have an understanding about life, its purpose and its meaning?
5. If God is good, then why in the world is Job, a righteous man, suffering as he is?
6. Have we ever been in the room where someone was suffering? Have we ever known people suffering tremendous pain that thought there was no way out of it except death, and they longed for death?
7. What is taking place in that invisible world?

Lesson 2

A Survey of the Book of Job

Lesson Text: Job 1-42

Introduction

I want to make a survey of the book of Job and show that wisdom is the real thrust of this book, where wisdom comes from and the kind of wisdom that man needs. Man's wisdom is limited, and as we will just look and glance through some of the verses, we will be able to see that this is the case.

Survey of the Book of Job

In the very first speech of Job, he asks, "*Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?*" (3:23). Here is an acknowledgement on the part of Job of the darkness in which he is. He is having a problem in dealing with it.

"*Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?*" (5:1). Eliphaz says now to turn to the most upright man he can find and see what kind of information that he is going to be able to get.

Talking about God, Eliphaz says, "*Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number*" (5:9). Look at the word "*unsearchable*." If God does things that are "*unsearchable*," then Job's friends acknowledge that they cannot know by their own limited knowledge, and that man can only know such information as God reveals it to him. Therefore, Eliphaz makes this point.

"*Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good*" (5:27). Therefore, Eliphaz is saying that they have searched this thing out and they have the answer to his problem, but again, this is human wisdom.

Job answers now, "*What is my strength, that I should hope? And what is mine end, that I should prolong my life? Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh of brass? Is not my help in me? And is wisdom driven quite from me?*" (6:11-13). So Job's friends are telling Job that he does not know about what he is talking. Job is insisting that he knows some things. Now, not only did Job's friends not know what is in Job 1-2, Job did not know what is in Job 1-2 either. Let us not be surprised by the fact that if Job's friends make the mistake in trying to deal with it when they try to tell Job that he is a sinner (and he knows that is not so), then Job says some things that indicate his limited wisdom also. We should keep this in mind as we are studying the book of Job.

"*Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forcible are right words! But what doth your arguing reprove? Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?*" (6:24-26). Job says that he has listened to

everything they have said and all of their arguments, and they have not dealt with or solved the problem at all.

Then, Bildad says that history ought to be able to tell Job: *“For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow) Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?”* (8:8-10). Bildad says that if Job would look at history, he would find the answer to what is ongoing. Well, Job will answer that and show that it will not work either. Of course, we cannot find the answer to the deeper problems of life and a correct philosophy of life based on history. If we look at the history of the world, close our Bibles and see how much we can learn about what would be the correct philosophy of life, we can learn that some things do not pay. However, as Job will point out, not only do the righteous suffer and that sometimes sinners are prosperous, but also sinners suffer. Therefore, we cannot base the argument upon that.

Then, Zophar tries his attempt at helping solve it: *“Should not the multitude of words be answered? And should a man full of talk be justified? But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; And that he would shew 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? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him? For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it? For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt”* (11:2, 5-12). He refers to all the things now that Job has said. There is recognition of their limited knowledge. Now, he said that he wishes God would speak up and tell Job that he was a sinner, which would take care of it. Therefore, Zophar realizes his limitation of knowledge. Yet, he is still trying to answer the problem of Job. How foolish for him based on limited knowledge to try to deal with that, which he admits that only God can supply the answer. So again, he emphasizes the wisdom of man.

“And Job answered and said, No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you” (12:1-2). Job says that they claim they are wise and that they know everything, and when they die, it will be the end of wisdom. In other words, he says that they are smart alecks and trying to tell him what his problem is as though they knew and understood everything, and he knew that they did not know and understand everything.

Again, going back to the matter of history, he says, *“With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding. With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding. Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also, he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth. With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the*

deceiver are his. He leadeth counselors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools" (12:12-17). Therefore, Job is realizing the limitations of man's wisdom.

"What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you. 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. Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips. Will ye speak wickedly for God? And talk deceitfully for him? Will ye accept his person? Will ye contend for God? Is it good that he should search you out? Or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him? He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons" (13:2, 4-10). Job says that they base their knowledge upon the wisdom of men, and he knows as much as they do, which is true. What one man can know of himself, another man can know. This is not where the problem was. Now, we ought to mark Job 13:4. Here is the limitation of man's wisdom in dealing with the deeper, fundamental issues of life. Job's friends are all *"physicians of no value."* The physicians of value must get their information somewhere else. It has to come from somewhere besides the mind of man. There is the wise part for man to recognize—just to stay quiet (cf. 13:5). Job says that they were trying to explain something about which they do not know anything, and whenever man tries to explain some of the deeper, spiritual, inward experiences of life apart from divine revelation, he is always talking about something that he does not understand. We are always to explain such upon the basis of the Bible, which is the only source that can help us understand things that are spiritual and the deeper, more fundamental things of life. Therefore, we cannot explain the difference between men purely by outward circumstances. Job lost everything that he had. They concluded there was something wrong with Job, which was not true, as Job 1:1 points out.

Eliphaz is talking about Job now when he says, *"Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind? Should he reason with unprofitable talk? Or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?"* (15:2-3). However, if he took some of that himself, it would have helped him a little bit.

"Hast thou heard the secret of God? And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou, that we know not? What understandest thou, which is not in us? With us are both the gray headed and very aged men, much elder than thy father. Are the consolations of God small with thee? Is there any secret thing with thee?" (15:8-11). Eliphaz says that out of experience now, he and his friends have lived and are old, and they want to tell Job some things that grow out of experience. Well, a man can learn some things out of experience. We are wasting our breath just telling children that fire is hot and burns if touched. Something is fascinating about fire and hot things, but whenever one burns the finger, experience then will teach something that we could not teach to save our lives. Experience is a good teacher about some things, but we cannot explain all things out of our experiences. Job was experiencing tremendous pain, suffering and the loss of all things, but out of his experience, he was not able to explain what was taking place. Again, we can see how that part of what Job's friends were saying was correct, but that is not what the problem is. The problem was

the limit of experience and its explanation. There is a limitation by how far it can go. Therefore, that is the thought that is contained in these verses.

Job says, *“But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you”* (17:10), which is true. Well, they were wise as far as they went, but when it came to dealing with what the real problem was, there was not one wise man among them, and that is still true. If we lay the Bible down, there are things about life that the wisest man on earth will never be able to explain.

Now, in Job 22-23, we have a real illustration of what I am discussing. Eliphaz gives good advice when he says, *“Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart”* (22:21-22). Then Job responds, *“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 forever 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”* (23:3-9). Look at the word *“understand”* as Job uses it in Job 23:5, and how he answers what Eliphaz said in Job 22:21: *“Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.”* Well, Eliphaz gave good advice, but Job asks Eliphaz to tell him where he can find him now. He would be glad to take his advice and *“be at peace”* if he could find him. Eliphaz showed Job what the situation was, but he did not give him the solution to the problem. That was what Job was trying to do. Therefore, here is a man that has offered a solution, but Job says that he has not helped him or told him where he can find God. Now, if Eliphaz would tell him where to find him, then his answer would be all right. Yet, his solution will not do, because Job goes to the right hand and God is not there, he goes to the left hand and God is not there, he goes forward and God is not there, and he goes backward and God is not there. Therefore, Job is right where he was. Again, I believe this shows that man’s wisdom is limited in its explanation. When we look at Job 22:21 and then at Job’s reply in Job 23, we have the real illustration of the crux of what this whole thing is about—how that solutions are being offered that are insufficient and the reason for that is because of man’s inability because of his limited knowledge.

Job answers again: *“How hast thou helped him that is without power? How savest thou the arm that hath no strength? How hast thou counseled him that hath no wisdom? And how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?”* (26:2-3). Job said that not all that they now said has done him any good. He is suffering and struggling here, but what they are saying has not helped him. Job has listened to everything that they said, but they have not corrected his problem or helped him to see what his problem is to be able to understand it. He is still in the dark. Again, he makes the same point.

“Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? But the thunder of his power who can understand?” (26:14). Again, here is the acknowledgement of their inability to understand.

In the first part of Job 28, Job gives an illustration of things that man can do by his will. For example, he can find the gold and silver, take the iron out of the earth, and search out things and such like (28:1-11). Then, when we come down to Job 28:12, look at the question: *“But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?”* Job is making some progress now. He is saying that he does not have it and they did not have it either (28:13-21). Man lacks the wisdom that he needs to answer some things.

“And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (28:28). Now, we have made progress.

Then, Elihu is going to begin his discussion in Job 32. In the first verses of this chapter, he mentions the fact that they had found no answer and condemned Job (cf. 32:3). He had listened to everything they have said, and they have not helped at all or accomplished anything. Then, he begins his opinion: *“I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom”* (32:6-7). He said that should do it, but notice the next verse: *“But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding”* (32:8). Now, Elihu is going to move up a step away from where they were and make an argument, although it will not completely solve the problem, but it is moving in the right direction, because he understands where men must get his knowledge. Indeed, they could not answer him (32:9-12). Then he said that he would not take what they said because they failed (32:13-14). He cannot answer what Job’s problem is in trying to deal with what they were saying.

“Behold, I am according to thy wish in God’s stead: I also am formed out of the clay” (33:6). Now, look down at Job 33:14-16 and we will see how Elihu makes the step upward: *“For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.”* Therefore, he is moving up to saying that we need revelation to solve the problem. Now, in the Patriarchal Age, here is the way God revealed (33:15-16). Therefore, we can see how Elihu has made some improvement. He is saying that what they needed to understand Job’s problem is divine revelation. We need something that comes from the mind of God to help us understand it.

“Furthermore Elihu answered and said, Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge” (34:1-2). Again, there is the emphasis.

Elihu said, *“Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me. Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom”* (34:34-35), which is true, and we must understand that in some of the things that Job says, and that will help us to keep from being too hard on Job.

“Elihu also proceeded, and said, Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God’s behalf. I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and

will ascribe righteousness to my Maker” (36:1-3). That is, he is not going to rely upon that kind of human wisdom.

“*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). Therefore, Elihu has made some progress.

Now, look at what is going to happen. God intervenes now and comes on the scene in Job 38. In the problem with Job’s friends, they had failed, resting upon human wisdom. Elihu in Job 32-37 makes the transition and opens the door for God to speak in Job 38, and that is what happens: “*Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*” (38:1-2). This is what has been ongoing all the time, until Elihu gave some insight to what they needed!

Conclusion

This is what we need to see in order to know about what the book of Job is. This is really the key to the book of Job.

Questions

1. What do we learn from surveying the book of Job?
2. Have we ever tried to tell a child that fire burns? While we can learn some things by human experience, can we learn the answers to the deeper, fundamental issues of life? If not, from where do we learn such?
3. According to the book of Job, how does “*the fear of the Lord*” come? From where does it come? Where does one obtain understanding?
4. What is different with Elihu from the other friends of Job? What evidence does he give to support such in the book of Job?

Lesson 3

An Introduction to the Life of Job

Lesson Text: Job 1:1-2:10

Introduction

We have noticed through our introduction and survey the problem that Job and his friends faced in trying to understand what was taking place as far as the loss of his property, family and health. As I mentioned earlier, they did not know what we know about what took place in the challenge that God gave to Satan concerning Job.

The Faith of Job (1:1)

This tells us the kind of man that he was: “*perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*” Therefore, he was a man that was a believer in God, feared God and had reverence for God. He was a man that was righteous—the word “*perfect*” does not mean sinless, but it has to do with his righteousness, as indicated in the sacrifices that he offered and the fact that he acted as a priest for his family (1:5). All of this has to do with the matter of him being one that was righteous.

I would not be surprised if the language “*feared God*” might not be an indication, along with other things, that he was a Gentile and not an Israelite. The Bible uses this language in First Kings 8:41-43 by Solomon talking about Gentiles that cast off idolatry and accepted God, so that is likely the reason that the book of Job uses the language here. Luke also uses it in reference to Cornelius in Acts 10:2.

In addition, he was a man who hated evil. The word “*eschewed*” really means “to turn off” or literally “to turn away from,” and Job was a man then that not only stood for what was right, but he turned away from (withdrew) and would not have anything to do with evil.

Therefore, the book of Job describes him as a man of faith.

The Family and Finances of Job (1:2-5)

He was a man that enjoyed prosperity—a man of substance. He was a man that had a fine family, and he was interested in his family. Job expressed his life of faith daily in the way that he lived, which was in relationship to his family; it was also in relationship to his finances.

His service unto God was not spasmodic. He was faithful—“*Thus did Job continually*” (1:5).

Therefore, Job was interested in his family. When his sons entered into some kind of festivity (1:4), Job was concerned about the fact that during the process of that, in their hearts, they may not have remained as reverent and as

thoughtful as they should have been. He showed his concern in reference to the fact that he “*offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all*” (1:5).

The Accusation Concerning Job (1:6-12)

Then, we have the controversy that God and Satan enters (1:6-8). Now, look at the activity of Satan that this passage suggests. Satan is continually on the go. Among other things, I believe this is a suggestion of the restlessness of Satan, and the restlessness that always follows a life of people who are involved in sin. Yet, we note also that he is in dead earnest about trying to deceive people about God. In Genesis 3:1-5, he said to Eve that God was mistaken and that he was not good in that he withheld from them the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and that is what Satan is trying to do as far as Job was concerned.

It is in connection with the faith, family and finances of Job that Satan makes his attack. He insists that Job does not believe in God, except that God will reward him for it and because God has put a hedge around him (1:10). Therefore, Job is serving him for such reasons. Satan says to remove that hedge from around him and God will see that Job will turn against him, which is about what the struggle all is. When we begin in Job 3, the rest of the book is the development of this situation.

Satan charges God with saying that he has protected Job, which is the reason that Job serves him. Therefore, the real crux of this book is the question, “Why are we to serve God?” That is what the book of Job is all about, and in order to understand why we are to serve God, it is necessary for us to have the right concept of God. Unless we have the right concept of God and his character, then we will allow things to interfere with our service to him, which is what Satan is saying.

Now, it is not my purpose to enter into discussion of the things concerning the controversy that Satan and God enters, because that would be apart from our purpose in our study. Yet, in order for us to understand the book, we need to understand this—when we read what Satan said and what God has said about Job, we can see that these two are interested in us. God is interested in us and Satan is interested in us, and the struggle that is going on is one that is of life and death.

Therefore, God then gives him the opportunity and says that he can take away all that he has, but just to protect his life.

The Struggle of Job (1:13-19)

Now, look at what takes place. I believe it will do all of us good to read these verses. Hardly had the first disaster passed along, which was enough when we lose that much of our property, then the next disaster approached. Think about how we would react. Yet, no sooner did that take place, then here comes another messenger. A great fire had destroyed the sheep. Then comes somebody else and the camels are lost—there has been an invasion, and they have carried them off. Then, while all of that is taking place, there comes still another one.

Now, just look at it. Satan said that Job served God because of his possessions and because of the things that he had.

The power that Satan has is limited—God tells Satan that he can do certain things but only within certain limitations. Therefore, Satan, with all the power that he had, is not all-powerful. He is not omnipotent. He does not have the power that God has, and this is a good explanation of what First Corinthians 10:12-13 says where Paul said in writing to the church at Corinth: *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* The reason is that evil is limited in what it can do to us, because Satan is limited in what he can do to try to destroy us.

Now, of course, in order really to test Job, it was important that Job did not know what was ongoing, because that would have destroyed the value of the test that was taking place.

The Contentment of Job (1:20-22)

Job 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”* (1:21). We ought to mark Job 1:21, which underscores that Job did not build his life upon things, because the material things that he had were gone. Until I studied this, I do not believe I really appreciated what Paul said in First Timothy 6:7 when he is talking about the dangers of riches and the importance of contentment, which is the very point that Job is making right here. The danger is that we will allow things to consume our life, and there may be the idea that we will serve God because he will bless us materially. If that is the case, then we do not have the proper concept and love for God. Job did not base his life upon things, and when he lost all of these, he still served God—he fell down and worshipped God. What an unusual man—no wonder God said to Satan, *“Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth”* (1:8). Satan asked if he served God for nought and claimed he is expecting something, serving for selfish ends and does not have the concept that God thinks he does. Satan claims that Job is not serving God because of whom he is and because of righteous principles. That is not what it is all about; there is self that is involved.

Now, all of that is gone, and Job passed the test. I wonder how many of us could stand the test. Job still served God.

The Next Accusation Concerning Job (2:1-6)

Satan comes back again then in Job 2 and says, “Well, there is still another problem.” Notice God’s comment now in Job 2:3 about Job: *“Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth*

fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.”

Satan did not have any reason or justification for doing what he did. Now, we ought to remember that as we read of the problem that Job had and the charges that his friends make. Keep in mind that God had already said that Job is a righteous man, and that is vital to remember as we begin to look at what Job's friends had to say about trying to get him straightened out, to understand what his problem was and what he needed to do in view of his problem.

Therefore, here is a man that was suffering—God was not the source of his suffering, except as God allowed it and permitted it, but Job did not know that, neither did his friends. Therefore, Satan moves again (2:4-6).

The Pain of Job (2:7-8)

I believe that it is truly difficult for us really to appreciate the problem of the physical pain that Job had. Note how the passage describes it: “...*sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown*” (2:7). Then, it describes him as being in such condition that he goes out and sits in ashes, takes something to scrape the sores of his body, because of the itching of them, and we see the serious nature of them.

The Wife of Job (2:9-10)

Now remember, he lost his property, children and health, but he still had his wife. Now, his wife comes to him then, in view of this, and said, “*Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die*” (2:9).

Satan used first the property of Job to try to lead him away from God and to keep him from serving God. Then, he tried to use his children as a means of keeping Job from being faithful and loyal to God. Now, he uses his wife, and as we see Job now, here he is without his property, his children and his wife. He is standing alone—no one to stand by him.

Now, just think for a few minutes about what we would do in a situation as that. Suppose we have lost all that we have. We have lost all of our children—not just one! We think it is bad to lose one child. Sometimes people have lost just one child, then blame God for it and cease to serve the Lord. Job lost all of his. Now then, he no longer has his wife to stand by him, encourage him and give him help. Talk about loneliness—what it must have been like to be in the physical pain that he was! As he looks for some encouragement, sympathy and help, his own wife comes to him and encourages him to give it up by stating that it is not worthwhile to serve God, but Job still refused to throw in the towel when he said, “*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?*” (2:10). That showed what was in his heart. Now, there is an increase in his problem when his wife comes to him. There is a difference in his comment in what he said here and what he said in Job 1:21. We can tell that the pressure has increased. He is saying that not only does God send good things, but he also

sends evil. Well now, that is not necessarily so. God allowed Satan to do what he did, but God did not send it.

So, Job has this concept, which is beginning to show in the midst of the pressure that he is now facing, but let us keep clearly in mind the physical pain in which he is, and some of the verses will describe it—how that even when he went to sleep at night, he would dream scary dreams (7:13-14). Well, now, just think about if we go to sleep dreaming. We think sometimes if we are sick and in pain, if we can just get to sleep and get some rest, it will help, but Job even had difficulty in the midst of that.

Questions

1. According to the first chapter and Satan's accusation against Job, what is the real crux of this book?
2. Have we ever felt as if we really had it hard in life and that we had a hard time in serving God? Have we ever felt as Job? Does it look as if there was not any way or that anybody had the same problems and the same difficulties that we did in serving God?
3. Would we think that one could face up to all Job faced and still serve God?
4. If we lost all of our possessions and all of our material things, how many of us would give up and quit?
5. Have we ever had a nightmare? How has that affected us physically, emotionally or even spiritually?

Lesson 4

Why? Why? Why?

Lesson Text: Job 2:11-3:26

Introduction to Job's Friends (2:11-3:1)

Now, Job's friends come to see him. There are some interesting things in connection with his friends coming to see him, and I believe we need to stop and think about these just a little bit. Here are three friends—evidently, they have known of Job and his prosperity. They have learned about it; they get together and come to see him.

Friendship is a wonderful thing—it is valuable. First, these were not just fair-weather friends. These friends were interested in him. They were bound to be for them to come—I do not know how far they had to come. However, they agreed among themselves that they were going to lay aside whatever they were doing and come to see him, and the fact that they left their homes to come to see him and stayed with him shows that they were concerned about him. It says that they came and they were shocked at what they saw (2:12). They mourned and wept. They were sympathetic, when they came to see him. They felt for him. As they saw him, they were silent. I used to read that and think, "Well, what kind of friends do I have to come when I am in a situation as Job was and just sit silently for seven days." Well, the more I studied that, the more I can understand the fact that they were good friends. They did not know what to say in the first place. They were suffering with him. Their silence and their actions indicated their sympathy for him. Well, let us learn from the book of Job that we can go see people sometimes and we do not have to say anything. It may be that you do not know what to say—they did not know what to say. They just went and stayed quietly, but their presence there evidently meant something to Job—I am sure it did. In view of the fact that he lost his property and children, his wife has refused to stand by his side, the fact that here are some people whom he considered friends—that was bound to be some encouragement and help to him.

Now, when they came, Job speaks (3:1), and here is a wonderful lesson. Up until this time, Job had been silent except when the messengers came and told him about losing his children, his property and everything else. He simply bowed down and worshiped God 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*" (1:21). When his wife said to give up his integrity and curse God and die, Job answered her, but that is all the conversation that we have had from Job throughout all this period. As we study some of the things that Job has said, let us keep in mind that there is a relationship between our physical well-being and our emotional thinking and our emotions. We will have to place ourselves in Job's position and feel the inward emotions and the struggle that is taking place to appreciate some of the things that Job said. Yet, the thing that I want to call attention to is that with his friends

here, and after they have stayed there this long and have not said anything, then Job has somebody to listen to the outpouring of his grief. I think that is what the book suggests, that as far as his friends were concerned, they were people that would listen. He has somebody now where he can bring out the inward turmoil and the grief and the struggle that is on the inside, and that is something that we need to learn. We need to learn from Job, not only the problem that he faced, but we should learn that in the midst of suffering, that creates within us internal stress, one of the things that we need to do is to try to get that out and not bottle it up on the inside and just keep it there. That is a mistake to do that. Sometimes I talk to people who are in a stressful situation because of some problem and sometimes they are emotional and they want to apologize for being emotional, and I always tell them, "Do not apologize. There is not any need for it." We need to allow that as a means of expressing and getting on the outside the internal stress and the grief or whatever it may be. God made us that way, and it is a mistake for us to try to bottle up on the inside the stress, which is the reason that it is good to have friends that listen to what we have to say. Sometimes, the best thing that we can do for people is to just to let them pour out their hearts. In fact, the greater part of the work of a counselor is to allow somebody to pour out his heart and then to help him see what the pouring out of his heart means, help them to understand what is the source and the root of this and in so doing, he is able to help him. Therefore, the friends of Job then were valuable to him in the midst of the situation in which he was. It was good that he had somebody to pour out his heart to.

I might suggest also that prayer affords us with one of these opportunities. If we do not have a human ear that we can pour out our heart to, open up and express our problems and our difficulties, the ear of God is always open, and one of the things that we can do is to pour out our grief unto God, and that will help to relieve it. Sometime when we have an opportunity, read John 11 and we will have a privilege of seeing how Jesus dealt with people that were facing grief—Mary and Martha. We will see how that he explained some things to them and offered some help that others were not able to give in that chapter.

Therefore, in Job 3, Job is struggling with why all of this is taking place, which is about what Job 3 is. In Job 3, we have Job's lamentation of his suffering. Job 3 is the question in Job's mind—"Why?" It is important for us to understand that in the midst of all of this, when he is raising this question, he is now, through his friends, able to get this out into the open and express some things about it.

I am not going to take the time to go into detail into discussion of what Job and his friends say in trying to analyze his problem. However, I simply want to try to help us see what they are saying, why they are saying it, how they are mistaken and then look at Job's reaction to what they had had to say. This is what characterizes the book of Job.

Why Was I Ever Born? (3:2-10)

First, in view of what is taking place, he wonders why he was ever born. He has lost his property and his children; even his wife turned against him. Now, we must keep in mind some things as we study the book of Job, or we will miss some things. As we go through the book of Job, remember the challenge that God has made to Satan concerning Job. He said that there is not a man like him anywhere. Satan says that he is serving God for what he can get out of it—take that away from him, and he will no longer serve God. Now, as we read the speeches of Job, just remember that not knowing the situation to his problem and not knowing what is behind it all, sometimes, he gets on the very verge of going over the cliff. Nevertheless, he comes back, until finally, he comes to the place where his faith, though he does not understand, reaches out and takes hold of God and he wins the battle against Satan, in spite of all that he has done. We will find that when we come to Job 19. This is the reason I say that we need to see this as a whole. Sometimes, I believe that we can take out of context some of the things that we read in the book of Job because we do not keep in mind exactly the progress made, the problem with which they are dealing and some of the things that they say. Job then first wonders why in the world that he was ever born—it would have been better never to be born.

Why Did I Not Die As A Child? Why Must I Live On In The Condition In Which I Am? (3:11-26)

Yet, since he has been born, he wonders why he did not die as a child (3:11-19).

Some wonderful verses are in this chapter. I have read them at funerals as a comfort to families. In speaking sometimes to families, maybe whose father, mother, or child has suffered intensely, not as Job did, but they have known the suffering of pain. Some of the sweetest words we can find anywhere are in Job 3:17-19: *“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”* (3:17-19). Think of the pain, the suffering and the loss, and he sees no way of any improvement. From the standpoint of regaining his physical health, he just does not see any. Yet, when Satan said that he would curse God to his face, then this is the expression of Job. Therefore, what Job is saying is in view of all that he is going through, why did he not just die, and in so doing, he would have passed to a place where *“the wicked cease from troubling”* and where *“the weary be at rest”* (3:17). I have known of families that as much as the ties of earth bind together, have known a sense of release, because one that they loved had suffered and suffered and suffered, and it was a hopeless situation. There was no chance of getting any better, and feeling as Job—faithful and loyal in spite of all their suffering—God had carried them to that place of release. There is faith, loyalty and devotion. When we think about the turmoil, the unrest, the uncertainty of so many things, the trials and the heartaches, who of us knows but

what we may suffer as this. We ought to remember the words of Job, that in the midst of it, may God in his mercy relieve us so that we may come to that place where “*the wicked cease from troubling*” and where “*the weary be at rest*” (3:17). That is a blessed thought to the faithful Christian that serves God—in the midst of the suffering that he may have to endure here upon earth, there is a place where the weary are able to lay down at rest.

Since he did not die as a child, he wonders why then he must live on in the condition in which he is (3:20-26). We have then the expression of Job.

Questions

1. What good things can we glean from Job’s friends?
2. Have we ever failed to go see somebody that we thought we ought to go see and say, “Well, I just do not know what to say to them?”
3. Do you ever ask “Why?” Do you ever struggle with why things are taking place?
4. Can we not appreciate the fact that Job questions his birth when we look at all that has taken place? After losing all that he did, what does he have left? Who under such circumstances would not be tempted to say, “Why in the world was I ever born?”
5. Can we not appreciate what Job says in Job 3:17-19?

Lesson 5

Eliphaz Speaks About Sin & Suffering

Lesson Text: Job 4-5

Introduction (4:1-4)

His friends did not say a word up until this time. Now, let me say another thing about Job's friends. In spite of all the fact that they were mistaken about why Job was suffering, and their information was maybe right as far as it went, but it was incomplete, they did not talk about Job to somebody else—they talked to Job. They did not sit down among themselves and enter into a discussion about Job, which is commendable. Although they said some things that upset Job and they were wrong about some things that they said, and sometimes, they were very hard on him, I admire the fact that instead of talking to somebody else about him, they talked to Job. I like the kind of friend that will talk to me rather than to somebody else about me.

Remember that Job's friends did not know what God said, neither did they have the proper estimate that God had of the character of Job, and we must keep that in mind as they are trying to deal with the suffering of Job and find a solution to the problem. Not only that, Job knew within his own heart and life that he was not a willful sinner. He knew that he had sought to live and serve God. Now, when he denies that he is a sinner, it is in that sense that we are to remember it. It is not that he claims perfection, but that he recognizes that he is loyal to God and that his relationship is as a righteous servant of God. Therefore, let us keep these things in mind as we look at the study of Job's problem and his friends and Job's reply to them.

Because of the lamentation of Job in Job 3, his friends then, beginning with Eliphaz, feel that it is necessary to answer what Job said. He concludes that there was something wrong with Job in his lamentation. He does not understand why he is suffering, but he is going to help him out. He is going to explain why and where his problem is, and through this, to try to get Job to change his concept of God, or to have the proper concept of God as Eliphaz sees it, and in so doing, make some changes and corrections in his life. Now, Eliphaz's philosophy of life is that there is a relationship between sin and suffering. Now, here is something to remember—what he says is partly correct. There is a relationship between sin and suffering. His mistake is to conclude that wherever there is suffering, there must be sin, and that is not true, which is what led him astray in trying to deal with the problem of Job.

Therefore, because of the insufficient knowledge that Job's friends had, they became a tool in the hand of Satan, and we should keep this in mind. Their information was insufficient. Because they did not have sufficient information with all good intentions in trying to help Job, they really became an instrument in the hand of Satan and made the suffering of Job even worse.

Here is something that we would do well to remember. Friends may have good intentions, but it is important that we have the facts. If we try to help others and we do not have sufficient information, and our facts are not what they should be, then we may do as Job's friends did. We may add to the suffering and create difficulties beyond what their original problem may be. The suffering of Job wounded him, but the words of his friends wounded him even worse. They added to his wounds and suffering, and here is something else that we need to remember. We need to learn to weigh carefully what we say, even when we are talking to others as friends about a problem in trying to help them with their problems. Unless we have sufficient information and the facts, plus a proper knowledge of the word of God, we will not know how to deal with it, and not knowing how to deal with it, we can only add to their difficulties. Therefore, here is a further lesson that we need to learn from the book of Job.

Furthermore, as they began to insist upon their being right when Job would reply, they became harsh in what they were saying. They really got rough with Job! Some of the things that they say are rough, and again, that is something we should keep in mind.

Then again, they seek to justify God without knowing what they were doing. What they were trying to do was to defend God and the character of God to Job, but they were mistaken in their concept of the character of God, and instead of really helping in the matter, they only added to the difficulty.

Then again, they were unfair with Job, which added an additional burden to his faith, and they strengthened his temptation to turn away and reject God. Their concept of the justice of God was not in keeping with what Job knew of his own heart and life. Job knew that he was not a willful sinner. Knowing that, there was no way Job could reconcile what they were saying about the justice of God with what he knew about his own life and integrity.

Therefore, what they were doing was to give Job a distorted picture of the character of God, and again, we cannot help people unless we have the proper concept of God. If we have a mistaken idea about God when we are talking to people about their problems and so on, instead of helping them, we are going to add to their difficulty. Their concept of God was a God of justice without any kind of pity. They could not see God as being a God of pity and mercy, and this, of course, made it more difficult for Job. In fact, their picture of God without any pity made Job's problems worse than it could have ever been—that is the greatest problem that he had. Of course, this accounts for some of the things that Job had to say. Now, as we look at the speeches of Job, among other things, we can see on the inside of Job's heart—the inward turmoil, the struggle, stress and strain that is there, and, of course, even that which is added by what his friends have to say.

Now, Eliphaz then begins his discussion. I could mention some other things, but I want to pass on now and look at the speech of Eliphaz in Job 4-5. We have here the beginning of his answer to Job. I am going just to hit the high spots in some of the things that he is going to say, to which Job will reply. Eliphaz lays down the premise upon which he is going to answer what Job said.

Now, he thinks that Job has been out of place—that Job has complained too much, and so he is going to help Job find out what his problem is or what is wrong and what he needs to do.

The Philosophy of Eliphaz (4:5-11)

After describing the kind of man that Job was (4:1-4), we can appreciate the next verse: *“But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled”* (4:5). In other words, when we got into that same kind of problem, we really had difficulty doing as well as others did. Ah, I have had to bite my tongue. Therefore, he is pretty well on the road. He said that Job has helped others and has gone to others that is going through all of these problems and strengthened their hands. Now then, Eliphaz says that it has come home to him, but he cannot take it; the advice that he gave to others—he cannot take it. I remember a preacher friend of mine—one of the best friends that I have had. If I called his name, most of you would know him, but he had a problem. He was depressed, discouraged and downhearted. I went to see him, and among other things, in talking to him, I mentioned the fact to think about the advice that he had given to others and try to take that advice and use it for himself. Yet, that is not easy to do.

He states his philosophy in Job 4:7: *“Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the righteous cut off?”* Therefore, there is what he says. He asks Job whether he ever heard of an innocent man perishing or the righteous being cut off. Now, based on that, he concludes that in view of Job’s suffering, there has to be sin in the life of Job. Well now, look at the problem into which he has run. There was a sinless suffering by the Son of God on the cross, but according to Eliphaz’s philosophy of life, there is no such thing as a suffering saint—they do not go together. Wherever we have suffering, we have sinners. We do not have suffering saints, which is not true. The righteous have suffered throughout the history of the world, beginning with Abel, and in Matthew 23:34-35, Jesus points out that the righteous have suffered all the way down through until the time he was living, and then in Matthew 5:10-12, he points out that the righteous suffer. Therefore, he is mistaken in what he is trying to say.

Then he sets about to try to prove what he is saying. He begins by reminding Job in Job 4:3-4 that in the past, he has helped others that were in trouble. Now that it has come to him, he is fainting, and therefore, there has to be something wrong. He is going to explain his philosophy stated in Job 4:8, *“Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.”* Well, that is right, but there is a limitation to that also, and we must keep that in mind. If all suffering comes because of sowing, then we have problems. It is true that the general rule is that we reap as we sow, but that is not the only case. There are people that are suffering that have not sown sin. For example, in John 9:2-3, the disciples asked Christ, *“Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”* Jesus said, *“Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents....”* They were operating on the same philosophy that Eliphaz was.

Let us then not conclude that while there is a general rule of sowing and reaping, that it follows that all reaping comes from the result of sin. There are exceptions and cases where that is not true, and we will be mistaken to say that every burden, heartache, and pain that people have is a result of their own sin. Therefore, Eliphaz is mistaken.

The Experience of Eliphaz (4:12-21)

Then, he goes ahead and describes what is taking place, but lest Job does not want to receive what he is going to say and since Job is going through an experience, Eliphaz now describes an experience that he had. Therefore, he gives an experience that he had, and it is interesting to read his description of his experience, beginning in verse 12: *“Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.”*

Now he said to Job that here was something that not everybody knows about. Here is a little secret that came to him, and he learned a little bit from it. Then, look how he describes it: *“In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men”* (4:13). Therefore, he is saying that he had a vision, and here are some things that he learned from it: *“Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake”* (4:14). Then he goes ahead to say that it even made the hair of his flesh stand up! Now, he says to Job that he needs to give attention to what he is telling him because of an experience that he has had. Well, one of the things that we can learn from Job’s friends is that it is not always wise to give our experiences when we are trying to help somebody.

Therefore, Job’s friends are not helping him any, because of the experience that he has had. Then, he says that he does not know some things about it (4:16). Now, here is the information that he gave—here is what that voice told him, and Job needs to listen now to what he has to say (4:17-21).

Then, Eliphaz is trying to enforce his argument to Job. Again, let me pause here long enough to call attention to something. As we read the book of Job, although Job’s friends are wrong, they know how to make an argument. Now, if you do not believe that, then just read and listen to what they have to say. They know how to argue, which is in other words what Job will later allude: “You are arguing about this thing, but your information is insufficient” (cf. 6:25). This is the reason that we must take some of the things that these men have said in the context in which they said them, or else, we will have some things that are not true. They are not basing some of the things that they are saying upon facts; because of that, then they are not so, just as Job 4:7—that is not a fact. That is partly true, but that is not the whole truth, and therefore, this is important to keep in mind.

The Reinforcement of Eliphaz’s Argument (5:1-27)

Therefore, Eliphaz gives his experience and says that this shows then that man is a sinful being; this is his problem. Coming down then to Job 5, he calls

upon Job to see if he can find anybody that will disagree with what he is saying (5:1).

Then, he goes ahead further and describes the matter of things happening. Look at Job 5:2, "*For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.*" Well, generally, that is correct. "*I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation*" (5:3). Therefore, it is true that the wicked sometimes temporarily are prosperous, but it does not last. Now, we see that Job had been prosperous, but he had lost all that he had. Look at the next verse, "*His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them*" (5:4). Remember that the house fell down on Job's children and killed them. When Eliphaz makes this statement, he is saying to Job, "Do you not know that your children are involved in sin? That is what happened to them. That is what took place."

Then, in verse 7, he said, "*Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*" Well, it is true that as we live in the world, there are problems and heartaches, but we must understand this statement in the light of what Eliphaz is arguing. What he is saying is that whenever there are some sparks, there has to be fire. In other words, he is saying, "Do we not have the statement that where there is smoke, there is fire? Job, there is smoke because you are suffering. Therefore, there is fire, and you have been guilty of sin." Now, that is what he is saying, and we should keep that in mind.

Then, he gives encouragement to Job to change his way. Look at the next verses, "*I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number*" (5:8-9). Therefore, he says to Job that what he needs to do is to commit his case to God, admit that he has been guilty of sin, correct the wrong, and then when he does that, he will be surprised at what God will do for him, but again, that is not the correct idea.

Then, he continues his discussion in Job 5:17 and in the rest of the chapter. Therefore, he is saying that what is taking place is that God is chastening him—"happy" or blessed "*is the man whom God correcteth....*" Now the Bible clearly teaches that there is a discipline on the part of God, but that this was the problem with Job, it is not true in the sense in which his friend is trying to tell him that it is.

Then he goes ahead and describes further that if only he would admit his sin, then there would be blessings that would come to him (5:23-27). Therefore, he is telling Job to straighten up his life and then instead of dying as he has been praying, wanting and longing to do, he will live to be an old man. Well, it does not always follow that every person that lives a righteous life lives to be gray headed. There is a general sense in which that may be the case, but that is not a philosophy that we can teach our child that if he will live a righteous life, it will guarantee him to live to be seventy-five or eighty years old, and that is what he is saying here, but his philosophy is only partly right. There is partial truth in the idea that righteousness tends to add to length of life, but there are exceptions to that.

Questions

1. How could Job then get away from a God that was arbitrary in his justice and in dealing with man (as Eliphaz stressed) and get away from the suffering that he was enduring?
2. Can we not just feel that when Eliphaz said what he did in Job 4:5? Have we ever tried to help others, and never had that same trouble ourselves?
3. If the philosophy of Eliphaz were right about the connection between sin and suffering, how would one ever account for the sinless Son of God dying on the cross?
4. How many sermons have we heard preached that we reap as we sow (cf. Job 4:8)? In what connection does this make?
5. Have we ever been sick and had somebody to come to see us and she says, "I went through the experience of my husband having this, and he is dead?" Do we like those kinds of experiences?
6. Can we not see in what Eliphaz is saying in Job 5:1-4 that he is speaking directly to Job, and Job knows about what he is talking? Now, what happened to the children of Job? Can we not see that when Eliphaz makes this statement, he is saying to Job, "Do you not know that your children are involved in sin?"
7. How often have others used Job 5:7 to point out that life is full of its troubles?

Lesson 6

Job Responds To Eliphaz

Lesson Text: Job 6-7

Job's Right of Complaint (6:1-7)

Job has heard what Eliphaz had to say. Listen to Job's reply now and some things in what he is saying, "*But Job answered and said, Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!*" (6:1-2). Job said that he did not understand through which he was going. Eliphaz has not been through this, which is true. We may tend to sympathize with people in their problems, but we never can really know the full burden and weight of things until we have been through it, and Job says that Eliphaz has not been through with what he has been through, and therefore, Eliphaz cannot appreciate it.

"For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me" (6:3-4). Now, keep in mind that as they continue to argue their case that Job is sinful, it increases Job's reply and his arguments back to them, and we should remember this as we read some further things that Job said. Some of his complaints grow out of an argument they are making that Job knows is not so, though he does not really know what the answer might be.

Job's Development of Despair (6:8-13)

Now, look at verse 8, "*Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!*" Now, there is a suggestion that Job had prayed for relief, but he had not gotten it. One of the lessons in the book of Job is that it teaches us that in our sufferings to understand and learn that prayer does not always bring relief from suffering. Job found that out, and, among other things, that is what he has stated here.

Then again, notice verse 11, "*What is my strength that I should hope? And what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?*" Now we see, despair is developing, and as we read the book of Job, we will see that this takes place until we get over to Job 19, and then later on in the book, and we can understand. Suppose that we were in the situation in which Job was, and we had friends come to us. We are struggling to understand what it is all about and why we are suffering as we are. Friends come to us and say, "Now, that is because we are sinners." We know that is not so, but they insist on that. Now, we add to the pain of suffering a misrepresentation on the part of our friends. Again, that is what a part of the lesson of the book of Job is—that in spite of all of this, though he came to the very brink of despair, he was almost ready to fall over the cliff. Yet, somehow and somehow, Job managed to find his way enough to get back and keep from losing his faith and loyalty to God, in spite of everything. Had he

not done that, then Satan would have had him. Therefore, as we read this chapter in Job's reply to what Eliphaz has said, just remember that with the darkness that he sees light, Satan is pulling him more and more toward the end of throwing up his faith in God.

"Is not my help in me? And is wisdom driven quite from me?" (6:13). Therefore, he says to his friends, "Do you think you are the only one that is wise?"

Job's Accusation of Unreliability (6:14-21)

"To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty" (6:14). Surely, that is enough really to work on the faith of Job.

"My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away" (6:15). Now, look at it—what a wonderful figure. Job, in the midst of all that he is suffering and his friends come to him, and then he describes it as being out and just starving to death for water, and he comes to where there is a brook and lo and behold, when he gets there, the thing is dried up. Now, he says to his friends that their help to him as just been as a fellow that is starving to death for water and comes to a brook that is dried up. They only add to his misery. Job said they have made him feel that way. We ought to learn some principles as we go through this in trying to deal with and help one another. Let us not as friends lack understanding, information and knowledge, which causes us to leave people that are starving to death with thirst as though we have been a brook that has been dried up, and have been no benefit to them at all, but only added to the intensity of their suffering. I am afraid sometimes that this is what we can do.

"For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid" (6:21). In other words, Job said, "What in the world are you doing? You came to see me and it scared you to death. Instead of helping me, when you saw the condition that I was in, it shook you up." We should learn to have composure enough to be able to try to help people and not get shook up when we are trying to help them.

Job's Challenge of Innocence (6:22-30)

Job said that he did not send for them (6:22). They volunteered to come to see him, and then, they are going to turn around and talk to him this way. Well, we can understand why Job would be replying that way.

"Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? Or, redeem me from the hand of the mighty?" (6:23). Now, he said that if they want to help him, here is the way to do it: *"Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred"* (6:24). In other words, Job says, "Teach me something. Be specific with wherein I have sinned." Eliphaz had been talking about generalities. Job said to get down to real issues. He says that Job is suffering because of his sins—"Tell me what my sin is! Do not just talk around in generalities. Be specific, so I can know where I stand."

Job said that right words would be fine (6:25), but he has just argued and has not done anything. His arguing has not helped at all.

Job said that he is in a desperate situation, and his words have been just like the wind blowing—no value in any way whatsoever (6:26).

“Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend. Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie” (6:27-28). Job said to take what he is saying—if Eliphaz thinks he is lying, where is the proof? He denies that he is a willful sinner. He knows that he is suffering, but he does not know why it is, but he knows that Eliphaz does not know either, because Job knows that he is not lying about it.

Job says that he just knows now that what he is saying is not so (6:29-30).

Job’s Description of Life (7:1-10)

Then, Job continues his discussion in Job 7: *“Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling? As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work”* (7:1-2). Imagine working in a real hot day out in a field with the temperature about 100°, and you look for the shadow of a tree to sit down in to cool off. Job said that there was nothing strange about that.

Next, look how he describes it, *“So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me”* (7:3). He said that he could not even rest at night. Well, with what Job is going through, he said that he has not just missed one night without sleep, because he knows what several of them are.

Not only can he not sleep, but also because of the suffering and pain, there is the tossing day and night (7:4). There is continued restlessness—there is no rest at all.

There is despair (7:5-6). Now, he did not say that about life in general. Job said that in the despair of through what he was going. We do not spend our days without hope.

They have added now to his despair, which is growing within the heart of Job (7:7). He is struggling and having difficulty holding onto his faith.

He is giving up hope (7:10). Now, because of that, he said that now, he is going to explain to him why he is talking as he is.

Job’s Feelings of Hopelessness (7:11-21)

There is the inward stress and strain (7:11). Job admits that he is complaining. He is justified in complaining, because he is living in the midst of despair.

He lies down and looks for some reason to get out from under all the pain and the complaining that he is doing, but he said that it is not there (7:13).

Then, he said that when he tried to sleep, *“Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions”* (7:14). I wonder if that is not a reference to what Eliphaz had said previously when he talked about his experience. Before I studied this book, I used to think Job made this statement in

reference to his own visions and dreams that he had, and it may be, but I suspect in replying to what Eliphaz has said, it is a reference to that.

Now, based on that, he said that he chose death rather than life (7:15).

“I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity” (7:16). He is struggling when his friends came; now that he has listened to Eliphaz and his explanation of what his problem is, he has created within Job a spirit of despair.

“What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? And that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment? How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?” (7:17-19). In other words, he is asking God, “When are you going to leave me alone and just let me die?” Despair is now growing continually.

Now, in Job 7:20, he is not denying that he is a righteous man, but as all righteous people recognize their shortcomings, he is acknowledging that. In addition, he is blaming God for all of his suffering, but that is because he does not know what took place back in Job 1.

This whole chapter, especially in verses 11-21, is descriptive of the hopelessness that Job sees for himself, and that is how suffering can affect us. That is how, without the proper knowledge of wisdom that comes through divine revelation, in the midst of things, we can reach that state, but now, we have some things that Job did not have. We ought not to allow ourselves to be in the state of mind and reach despair and hopelessness as Job did.

Questions

1. Do we ever pray, and we think that God does not answer our prayers? Did Job ever think this?
2. How long would our faith hold out if we went through what Job did?
3. Can we not feel the appeal of Job (6:14), suffering as he is, jarred by what his friend said and concluding that there is not one ounce of pity within the heart of his friend?
4. Can we imagine ourselves starving to death for water and coming to a creek or a spring, and finding the thing is as dry as a bone (cf. 6:15)? How would we feel?
5. Have we ever worked in a real hot day out in a field (cf. 7:1-2)? Why should Eliphaz not understand then what is taking place?
6. Have we ever gone nights—not just one night, but several nights without sleep (cf. 7:3)? How does that affect us?
7. How often have people quoted Job 7:5-6 to say that our life is as a weaver’s shuttle?
8. Can we not see the despair that is growing in his life after reading Job 7:16?

Lesson 7

Bildad & Zophar Chime In

Lesson Text: Job 8-11

Introduction

Having listened now and discussed with Eliphaz, another one of Job's friends, Bildad, will take up his discussion of it in Job 8, and he will try to add to what Eliphaz has already said. Then, in Job 9-10, Job will reply to them. In Job 11, Zophar will try his hand at it. Then, beginning with Job 12-14, Job will answer what he has to say. Next, Eliphaz will come back and try his argument again. So on will be the discussions through the book, and their arguments will continue to grow more heated, as they will insist all the way through that they know they are right—that Job is guilty of sin and he needs to acknowledge that, commit his way unto the Lord and then that will help him. Then, we will come to the study of Elihu's speech. Now Elihu's speech is different from that of his other three friends. In fact, Elihu's speech makes the transition from what they have said over to what God will say in Job 38 through the rest of the book of Job. Elihu has some information and insight that they do not have, based, no doubt, upon inspiration and revelation that God had made to him. While Job was suffering, there is also something in suffering that does have grace in connection with it, and Elihu will help him to understand that, and we will notice, when Elihu gets through speaking, Job does reply to what he has to say. There is no reply made to Elihu, and when God condemns Job's three friends, he does not condemn Elihu.

I want to just look at some of the substance of the discussion that takes place between Job and his friends, but try to get the main thrust of the discussion that goes on between them. I believe it is important as we read the speeches of Job and of his friends to remember some things. Remember that God had said that Job was "*a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil*" (1:8). Satan had challenged God and said, "Yes, but you have a fence around him. He is serving you because of what you have given him, not because of who you are, and this becomes the struggle. Of course, Job and his friends have no knowledge of this background that has taken place. Therefore, the thrust of the book is, "Will a man serve God, regardless of the temporal and the physical blessings that may be taken away from him, or the lack of the enjoyment of these? Will a man hold onto God in spite of all the trials and afflictions of life?" That is all about what the book of Job is, and we should keep this in mind. Of course, Job's friends have the philosophy of life that God blesses those who serve him and that if a man is suffering, it is an indication that they no longer are serving God, but that there is something wrong in his life, and they try to present their arguments. Of course, Job knows in his own heart and mind that through he is not perfect, that he is a righteous man, and we must keep this in mind—Job knows that he has been faithful to God. Therefore, there is

something wrong with the arguments they are making. We will see that these develop as we look at some of the things that they say.

Therefore, I just want to notice some selected verses from the speeches to help show what is taking place and the arguments that they are making.

Bildad Is Insistent (Job 8)

For example, Bildad answers in Job 8, and, of course, Job has been complaining about the suffering through which he is going. He is unable to understand it, because he knows that he is a righteous man. Therefore, Bildad insists that Job has been talking and saying things that he ought not to say.

He insists on the justice of God (8:3). Therefore, his argument is that God is just. Now, let us keep in mind that neither Job nor his friends realize that his suffering is not coming from God, except by permission. God had allowed Satan to cause Job to lose his property and bring the suffering upon him that he is enduring, but neither Job nor his friends have the knowledge of this. Therefore, he is insisting that God is just.

“If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression” (8:4). Of course, he does not call Job’s name, but it is as though to say, “There is something wrong, because of what has happened to your children.”

Then, he appeals to history (8:8-10). Therefore, he is saying, “Just look at the experience of people in life, and look out and see if that is not the case.” Now, let us keep in mind that it is generally true that wickedness brings problems and suffering, but as Job is going to answer this, he will show that we cannot insist on that all the time.

Bildad insists that there is something wrong and that Job is acting as a hypocrite (8:13). Well, what he says is true, but that is not going to apply in the case of Job. Something is out of order. Therefore, this is the real thrust of his argument made in Job 8:20-22, and he makes an appeal to him. The argument that Bildad is making is that God is not going to cause a man who is suffering as Job is to suffer, and since God will not cause one to suffer who is innocent, because Job is suffering, then Job is a sinner. He encourages then based on this to make his confession to God and straighten out his life.

Job Is Responding (Job 9-10)

Now, in Job 9-10, Job deals with this. In Job 9, Job replies to Bildad. In Job 10, he makes his appeal to God. Let us look at some of the selected verses in these two chapters. Place yourself in Job’s position, knowing that you are faithful in serving God, suffering as he is suffering, and trying to figure out about what it all is. Then, somebody comes and insists that your problem is because of sin, that you are a willful sinner, which has brought on all your suffering and heartache. Well now, let us notice how Job begins.

He admits the general principle that Bildad has given (9:2). Now, he knows that generally, God blesses the righteous and punishes sinners, but the question

is, "How can he prove to God that he is not that kind of sinner?" That is what is in Job's mind. He is not asking how a man can be a righteous man before God, but how he is going to be able to prove that as far as God is concerned.

Now, look at this—he realized the distance between himself and God (9:3). Therefore, Job says, "I do not stand a chance in trying to contend with God about the situation, because if I ask him one question, then he can ask me a thousand." Then, Job gives a description of the wisdom, power and might of God, showing how that in this contest, thinking that God is the cause of his suffering, that he is at a disadvantage. God has the advantage over him, and he says that in the verses that follow. He describes in Job 9:4, "*He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?*" What Job is saying to his friend is, "I do not stand a chance. You have turned against me and left me alone with God. Yet, I know that there is no way that I can enter into an argument with God and ever win the argument." Then, he describes some of the things that show the wisdom and might of God.

"...*Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number. Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not. Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou?*" (9:10-12). Now, Job said all this language in view of the argument that is taking place, and how that Job can present his case before God and insist that he is a righteous man and that he is not a sinner, as his friends have insisted.

Therefore, Job is saying that he is at a loss (9:13-14)—he does not have the ability then to argue with God, but now, watch what he is going to do. Having said all of that, he is now going to lay out his case before God, and he begins in Job 9:15: "*Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge. If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice. For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause*" (9:15-17). Therefore, he thinks that God is the cause of all of his suffering, but now look at what he says about in answering Bildad, who has said that the wicked always suffer, and Job is suffering, and therefore, Job is guilty of sin.

Therefore, Job said that not only do the wicked suffer, but also the righteous suffer (9:22). Bildad has said that suffering shows one guilty of sin. Job says, "How are you going to deal with it when the righteous suffer?" Then, he argues his case.

Therefore, Job said for Bildad to explain this to him now (9:23-24). If it were true that only the wicked suffer and that the righteous prosper, that would be fine. He has argued based on history and experience, but now, Job can point out to him cases that show that this is not true, and we know such is the case. I am sure that perhaps we have had the same thoughts that Job had and others have had in trying to live the Christian life and say, "Why does this fall on my lot? Why me?" We look around and see people who have no regard for God and they seem like life is easy come, easy go, and they are blessed materially, and they do not have the troubles and trials that others do. I am sure that all of us

have had thoughts like that to come into our minds. Well, the answer must come, not in the sense in which Job's friends have been arguing—that righteousness always brings prosperity and health. That does not always follow. Job knows that, and in knowing that, he is insisting that there has to be something wrong with the argument that his friends are making.

The force of his argument is in Job 9:32—there is not any way that he can expect to enter into controversy with God and ever win. He knows the argument that his friend is making is not correct. They want him to prove his case before God. He does not know how to do that—that is beyond him.

Then, he makes an appeal. Here is the difficulty: "*Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both*" (9:33). Therefore, Job is conscious of the problem with which they confront him. There needs to be someone between him and God that can stand between. Now, of course, we know that we have this "*daysman*" between us—Christ. Job did not have it. Therefore, here was the problem he was facing.

With the suffering that he is going through in thinking that God has brought this upon him, he is concerned about what to say, and he said for God to remove this, and he would be glad to talk with him about it (9:34-35).

Then, beginning in Job 10, he turns from answering Bildad and then begins to make his appeal unto God.

Knowing that he is righteous, he will say in Job 10:1-2, "*My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.*" There is his problem. He knows that he is suffering, but he does not understand why, and his appeal to God is to help him understand what the problem is and why he is bringing this suffering upon him through which he is going.

Thus, his appeal to God is that he knows that Job is not wicked (10:6-7). They have accused him of all of this, and they may think that is the case, but God knows that is not true. Therefore, based on knowing that he is not the kind of man that his friends accused him of being, he appeals to God then to deliver him from it.

"*If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction*" (10:15). So out of Job's cry, he is saying to God, "I am confused about what is taking place. I know that what my friends have accused me of is not so. I do not have the explanation, and in the midst of this confusion, what is going to happen." Now, let us not lose sight of the fact that Satan has said, "Turn him over to me, and I will show you that he will not remain faithful," which is about what this entire struggle is. As we read this, let us not forget Satan is after this—to take the things that we face in life and use these as a means of turning us away from God. That is the way he tries to use them, which is what he is trying to do to Job, and when I face trials and difficulties, I should remember that while God permitted that, God is not the author of it. Satan is behind it, and that what he is

trying to do is to get me to turn away from God, to give up God and to renounce him.

Now, notice what he says in Job 10:16, "*For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion: and again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me.*" Therefore, he realizes that on the one side, there are the blessings that he has enjoyed, and on the other side, he has said that God is just like a lion that is after him. Now, we can understand how in a state such as that, one would be confused, as Job said that he was.

Therefore, he said that his days are just so short (10:20); why not just remove this from him for a little while? Take away the suffering and let him alone so that he may have just a little bit of comfort before he dies.

Now, we can see in Job 10:21-22 that Job's faith is beginning to get on shaky ground. He can see the end; he can see death coming, but at this point in the despair and suffering through which he is going, he just cannot see any light.

Zophar Is Upset (Job 11)

Then, Zophar sets about to answer what Job said. Now, he gets upset because Job still insists that he is a righteous man, and so he is going to have his say.

Therefore, Zophar said that Job is talking too much and needs to be quiet a little while (11:2). He is just full of words without any basis in what he is saying at all.

He accused Job of being a liar (11:3). Zophar said that he could not be quiet, because what Job said was to charge God, and he ought to be ashamed of that. Zophar is going to rebuke Job for what he has said.

Thus, he sees that Job has argued and insisted that he is righteous before God (11:4). Then, he will point out the wisdom of God in describing it in the verses that follow. Then, he encouraged Job to acknowledge his sin and straighten out his life.

Therefore, his solution is insisting still that Job is guilty of sin (11:13-15), and the only way to get it corrected and get out from under his suffering, to enjoy his prosperity again will be for him to acknowledge that.

Thus, he is insisting to Job that he is fighting a useless battle. There is no way that he can refuse to acknowledge his sin and ever win against God.

Questions

1. With what we have been studying so far, what is the thrust of the book of Job?
2. How would we deal with friends insisting that our problem is because of sin, that we are willful sinners, which has brought on all our suffering and heartache?
3. How is Bildad going to explain what Job said in Job 9:22?

4. How often has it been true that there have been wicked people that have been prosperous? How often has it been that there have been righteous people that have suffered? How do we feel when we look around and see people who have no regard for God and seem as if life is easy come, easy go, and they are blessed materially and do not have the troubles and trials that others do?

Lesson 8

Here We Go Again

Lesson Text: Job 12-17

Job Responds to Zophar (Job 12-14)

Now, we have three chapters where Job, in turn, answers the things that Zophar and his other friends have said. Let us look at some of the selected verses out of these chapters.

Job challenges their wisdom (12:2-3). Then, he describes his condition. As we read just a few of these verses, it emphasizes how easy, sometimes, we throw up our hands and quit. Remember also that Job is finally left; he has no one to turn to but God. He has nothing to uphold him but his faith and his trust in God. So, look at some of the things that have happened to him.

“I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn” (12:4). Now, just imagine our neighbors laughing at us, and people saying that God is mocking us.

Therefore, he has said that here are the wicked that prosper (12:5-6), and look at with what he is going through.

“But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee” (12:7-8). Job says that if we look at these, we can see the wisdom of God.

Thus, he talks about the wisdom of God (12:12-13).

He continues then to give a description of the wisdom of God (12:16-17), which is manifest in the various areas of life.

Job knows in his own heart that there has to be something wrong with what they are accusing him (13:1-4). Therefore, they are *“physicians of no value,”* and so, he appeals to them to be quiet.

Therefore, he said that the best thing they can do is just to stay quiet and leave him alone (13:5). Now, he is going to make his argument. Notice what he says in verse 6, *“Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips”* (13:6). Now he points out to them that they have had the wrong concept of God and have misrepresented God.

Job said that they have argued for the partiality of God (13:7-10). They are saying that God is partial. Now, he knows that will just not do. He knew enough to know that God was not any respecter of persons.

He describes how they have helped him (13:12). Look at the language here—now that is how much help they have been to Job, but watch now, he is going to make his appeal.

Job said that he had all he could take (13:13-14). Now he is going to have his say, even if it costs him his life. That is the basis of Job 13:15: *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him”* (13:15). Therefore, Job said that he is going to appeal his case unto God. Now

he may kill him for it, but he is going to maintain that he is a righteous man. Then, he sets about to make that appeal unto God. Notice some of the appeal that he makes.

Thus, Job says to just remove all of this off of him for a little while and give him a chance to make his appeal (13:20-21). Place him in a situation where he just will not be afraid.

“Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me” (13:22). Now then, he wants to raise the question, *“How many are mine iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sin”* (13:23). Now, remember, Job is not acknowledging his sin here, but in view of what his friends have said, he is saying that if that is the case, then make it known to him what they are. He does not know them. He does not have any knowledge of the sinfulness such as they have been talking about.

Therefore, he thinks that God is behind it all (13:24). He continues his discussion with the troubles that he is facing and he is conscious of the general sinfulness of humanity, but the knowledge of the fact that he is a righteous man.

Now, when we come to Job 14, Job’s hope has become very dark.

Therefore, Job said that if we cut down a tree, it would put back out again (14:7-9). We can see how dark things are looking for him. Notice the contrast now as he looks at man on the other side.

Now Job has just about reached the bottom as far as despair is concerned (14:10). Satan is really working on him. His friends have become instruments in the hands of Satan, insisting that he is suffering because of his sinfulness. Job knows in reality that it is not the case. He believes that God is behind his suffering, and now then, his hope is beginning to slip away from him.

Here he sees nothing beyond (14:11-12). Now, if we read these verses here and leave what Job has said here, we would think that Job did not see a life beyond this. That is the reason that we must study this in its proper context. When we come to Job 19, we will see that through the struggle of it all, Job, though he has almost let his faith get away from him, and his hope became dim, he never did give up completely.

“If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come” (14:14). When he raises this question in the context here, it shows that he really did not know or see anything. Therefore, in that verse, there is still darkness as far as Job is concerned.

Thus, Job is struggling to try to find some light to be able to get through what is taking place (14:21-22).

Eliphaz Answers Job Again (Job 15)

Well, Eliphaz then is going to have his answer. He accuses Job then of talking about things that he does not understand.

He said there is no use in reasoning or talking with a man that is unprofitable because his speeches are not any good (15:2). Then, he describes the wisdom of God and the fact that there are things that Job does not understand (15:3-8).

Then, he talks about the aged and the knowledge that they have (15:9).

“Are the consolations of God small with thee? Is there any secret thing with thee?” (15:11). Some very often misapply this verse. Now, what Eliphaz is saying here is that they have been trying to bring to Job the consolations of God, and wondering why Job is not listening to them. If he had been listening to them, he would have appreciated the consolations of God. Although we find it hard to imagine that the things that they had been saying could be in any way a consolation to Job, this is what he is saying. They have been trying to bring to him the consolations of God, which means that we need to be careful when we are talking about things that we do not properly understand, and we need to be careful about what we say. Sometimes, what we say for consolation may be as they said—there may not be much consolation in it, and we may base it upon false knowledge of God.

Then, he further describes the wicked man (15:12-19).

Therefore, he is still insisting that here is the problem: *“The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor”* (15:20).

There is no way that he is going to win (15:24). *“For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty”* (15:25).

Now, the philosophy that they had is in Job 15:29-30. Then, he encourages Job to put aside trying to deceive him and the trust that he had that was false. *“Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity: for vanity shall be his recompense”* (15:31).

“For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery” (15:34). Now, to appreciate what Eliphaz is saying to him, let us remember that they are defending in their minds the integrity and justice of God. Their thought is that Job has attacked the character of God, and they are trying to defend that. Therefore, they are going to be plain—they just say to Job that he is just a plain hypocrite—that is what his problem was.

Job Responds to Eliphaz Again (Job 16-17)

Then, we have Job’s answer beginning in Job 16. I believe we find some of the richest language, descriptive of things that I have ever read, in the book of Job.

Look at Job 16:2: *“I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.”* Well, we can understand why Job would feel that way about it. They have not helped him out in any way whatsoever.

Now, look at what Job says, *“Shall vain words have an end? Or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?”* (16:3).

Job said that if they could just swap places for a little while, he could do some talking as they were doing (16:4). They have not been in his shoes. Well, there is a great deal of truth in that now. Sometimes, we may be as Job’s friends—we may be talking when we have not been in somebody’s shoes, and when we have not been in their shoes, we may say things as Job’s friends said to

Job. Yet, to get in their shoes can change the way we think about things, although Job said that he would not treat them that way. Here is the way he would do it: *“But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief”* (16:5). Well, now, that is what Job thought, but I doubt if Job would have done any better in helping them with their problem than they have helped him under the circumstances, had it been turned around the other way.

This is a real vivid passage: *“And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me: and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face. He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me”* (16:8-9). Job thinks that God is the cause of all of this and that he treats him this way.

“God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked” (16:11). Now, he did not realize what he was saying there, but that is exactly what had happened. God had said to Satan to take him and do everything to him, except spare his life. Satan was using his friends as an instrument to try to accomplish his purpose. Of course, Job said more than he realized.

Then, he described his previous life (16:12).

Now, Job had been appealing and praying to God and he knows that his life is righteous, but there is no answer to his prayer (16:16-17). He is still suffering. There is the pain and the agony through which he is going. He knows that there has not been any injustice in his hands. He knows that his life is righteous. He feels that he has been mistreated (16:18). It is as though he is saying, *“...let my blood cry out.”* Job said that he is willing for his record to stand in God’s book and there is where his witness is, and he knows the kind of life that he has lived (16:19). Therefore, he is still having tremendous difficulties (16:20-22).

In Job 17, he continues to make his appeal as to the problem against which he is up. Now, he is at really the darkest day of his life (17:15-16). His hope is gone. He is in danger.

Conclusion

Well, Bildad will make another try in Job 18, and then Job will begin to see just a glimmer of light in Job 19. To read the book of Job and think about it is to remind us how that the irritations of life can become the means of our turning from God, and the failures of those round about us and the misunderstandings that may come up, even from friends, can be a tremendous force in pulling us away from God. I trust that because of our study of this book, every time something arises in any way that would interfere in our holding onto God steadfastly, we will remember that Satan is using this as a means of turning me from God. If we can see it in that light, it will be altogether a different thing, and we will not allow the things of life that come up to cause us to cease to trust God or to think that God is unfair or unjust or to think that God is not good and that God does not love. If we can learn this from the book of Job, then truly, this will be a profitable study, because most of the people that start out to serve the Lord

and then quit allow some of the difficulties or the misunderstandings of things that develop to cause them to throw up their hands and quit. Job is an example of the fact that a man can serve God in spite of all of these, and though his hope may become dim, he can continue to believe in God until that hope becomes a light and enables him to hold on. We all will face dark days and times in our lives, but let us never let our hope become dim. We have light that Job did not have. We have an understanding that Job did not have. We have advantages that he did not have, and it would be tragic in view of that, with the light that we have and the opportunities that we have, if we allow things and the disappointments of life to discourage us and to cause us to give up our hope and our faith in God.

Questions

1. Can we imagine the kind of thing that Job's friends had been saying that could any way be a consolation to Job?
2. How would we like to have somebody to come and talk to us as Eliphaz did in Job 15:34?
3. When we look in the mirror, do we ever feel as Job described in Job 16:8-9?
4. From what we have studied thus far, will Satan win the battle?
5. Discuss Job 14:14 in its context.

Lesson 9

Job Sees the Light at the End of His Tunnel

Lesson Text: Job 18-21

Introduction

Although Job evidently lived in the Patriarchal Age, the problem with which he struggled and with which his friends tried to help him is one that is timely for us even today. The lessons that we find in the book of Job are lessons that are not easy to learn, and yet, they are lessons that we all need to learn. Of course, the emphasis in the book of Job is the righteousness of God. The problem that he had was in trying to understand why it was that he suffered if God was righteous. His friends' philosophy was that he was suffering because of his sins. Job knew that was not true. He knew that he was trying to live a righteous life, and yet, he could not reconcile that with the justice of God, and that led him to make some statements that he should not have made.

Therefore, the only way really to appreciate the book is to see the things that unfold as we look at it. Remember now that Job has complained because of the tremendous suffering through which he is going.

Bildad's Disturbance (Job 18)

Then, Bildad is going to continue his emphasis that he is a sinner, and the fact that Job has insisted on his righteousness has upset Bildad. Therefore, he tells Job, "*How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? Mark, and afterwards we will speak*" (18:2). Then, he says that Job has not listened to anything that they have had to say and that Job had treated them as beasts (18:3-4). Then, he reminds him of how the wicked are affected (18:5).

"For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare" (18:8). *"Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet"* (18:11). *"His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street"* (18:17).

Then, he concludes his argument (18:21). Therefore, Bildad insists that Job does not know God, and evidence of it is the fact that he is guilty of sin.

Job's Redeemer (Job 19)

Then, Job begins his reply. Notice the answers that Job gives.

"How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me. And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself" (19:2-4). Then, he begins to point out his attitude toward wrong, and the suffering through which he is going, beginning in Job 19:7-10. Job 19:11 shows the problem that Job is having—Job said that God counted him as one of his

enemies. Now, that is not true. That is where Job is wrong—there is the misunderstanding that he has.

“He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintances are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight. I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I intreated him with my mouth. My breath is strange to my wife, though I intreated for the children’s sake of mine own body. Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me” (19:13-18). Now, just think about finding ourselves in a situation as this. Here, Job is isolated and alone. The friends that he has have tried to make him believe that all of his problems have resulted from his sins.

He pleads, *“Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me”* (19:21). Therefore, he said that God has brought all of this on and he has described his situation—isolated and alone. Satan has asked, *“Doth Job fear God for nought?”* (1:9). The temptation is tremendous to give up. Just try to place ourselves in Job’s situation.

In the midst of what is taking place, he is going to face up to it by saying, *“Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh? Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!”* (19:22-24). Now, with his faith almost gone, he says, *“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”* (19:25-27). Job says in spite of all of that he knows that his life is righteous, and that at some time and place, God will be his witness and will testify that he has not been what they have accused him of being. Therefore, we ought to mark Job 19:25-27. Here, we see one of the values that have come out of the trials through which Job has been. Remember that God permitted Satan to try him as Satan has done so. God is not the author of evil—God permitted Satan to do that, and there are always two sides to every trial. Here, we have a picture of it. Satan uses that trial to cause one to renounce God and give him up. God used that trial as a means of increasing one’s faith and helping one grow, and in so doing, he uses it for good, which is what we see. Now, look at what has happened to Job. He has made progress, and here is a statement that he made that has caused him to look beyond life, to recognize the immortality of man, and to see beyond this life. In spite of everything, in some way, somehow, sometime, there will be victory for the righteous—that the man who lives right will triumph and come out on top some time, somehow and in some way. Now, at this point, Job does not know how that is going to take place, but instead of Satan winning the victory, Job has grown in his faith, and though he does not understand and is still lacking in some things that he needs to learn about God, he has made progress in what has taken place.

Therefore, here is one of the lessons that we ought to learn about every trial of life that we have, whether it has to do with finances, our physical problems or whatever it is. We ought to remember on the one side, Satan is attempting to use this as a means of pulling us away from God, and if we listen to him, that is what will happen. However, if we understand and realize that while Satan is trying to do that, on the other side, God has confidence in us and will help us so it can be used for our spiritual benefit and welfare, if only we will allow it to happen, we can become stronger and better because of it.

I had the opportunity of working with one of the finest friends that I ever had and one of the men with the strongest faith of anybody that I have ever known when I first began preaching. I remember when some would make plans for something, or things would go wrong, he would always ask the question, "I wonder what it is that God has in mind?" Now, he had learned the lesson of Job, that to use it right means that it would be an opportunity for growth and development, and instead of murmuring and complaining and blaming things, he would watch for an opportunity to turn it to his advantage and to grow spiritually. This is a lesson that all of us need to learn. Too many times when things are not as we would like them to be, it is easy for us just to murmur, complain, and say, "Well, why is my lot in life as it is?" We are not going to profit by it that way. On the other hand, why not try to think and say, "How can I use this to my advantage? How can I turn this to my good? How can I use this for my profit?" There is always an opportunity to use it for our profit, if we will take the time to think about it and to try to see how to use it. Therefore, that is one of the lessons then of Job.

Therefore, Job is still struggling with the problem (19:29).

Zophar's Accusation (Job 20)

Now then, Zophar is going to try to help him.

He is telling Job again that he has the problem of sin and he might as well admit that is the case (20:5).

Then, he warns him about the consequences of evil (20:9-10). He said that whatever he tries to gain by sin would not profit. If he gains something, then it is not going to last—it will be taken away from him. Look at what he says in Job 20:15, "*He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly.*"

Therefore, he said that wickedness is not going to do him any good (20:18). Whatever he gained by wrongdoing, he is going to lose finally. He tells Job that he has lost everything he had. Therefore, it must be evident that he had gained it by wrongdoing.

He reminds Job then that wickedness is not going to profit him anything (20:22).

He said that Job just could not win in doing wrong (20:27).

Therefore, he said that there is no way that evil can ever be successful (20:29). Of course, in a general way, that is correct, but the problem is that Job was not that kind of man.

Job's Response (Job 21)

Now, Job is going to reply to him in Job 21. Let us look at some of the things that Job has to say.

He said to let him have his say (21:2-3), and he knows that he has already tried to convince him, but he was not going to listen. When he gets through, he keeps mocking him, but he is going to have his say anyway.

Now he is going to raise some questions for them to answer (21:7). Their argument has been that the wicked always suffer and that God always punishes the wicked—that the righteous are always blessed and that God never punishes them to suffer—that is their thesis and argument. In essence, Job said, “Well, here is something that I want you to explain to me. How do you account for the fact that sometimes the wicked do live and that they become mighty in power?”

“Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes” (Job 21:8), that is, they do not lose their children as Job did.

“Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them” (Job 21:9). We all have seen wicked people prosper. That is one of the arguments that atheists make—that if God is good, then why is it that good people suffer and that wicked people may prosper. Job has to deal with this problem. He cannot understand the argument that they have been making, and he knows that what they have said is not correct.

“They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave” (21:13), that is, they live and enjoy their prosperity, and instead of suffering as Job has, they just die and go on and do not have to go through all the pain and suffering that Job has. We have known wicked people to enjoy all of their prosperity and then instead of suffering some kind of long illness, to die and be gone in a flash, while a righteous person may lose their material things and suffer days without end. Job said that we cannot argue on that basis—it will not do, and we need to learn that.

Then, not only that, he said, *“Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? And what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?”* (21:14-15). So, Job said that they do not ever consider God at all, and yet, they are not as Zophar says.

Job said that he cannot understand that (21:16)—it is beyond him. He does not understand how the wicked can enjoy all of that, and the righteous suffer. Then, he raises the question, *“How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! And how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger”* (21:17).

“For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst? Shall any teach God knowledge, seeing he judgeth those that are high? One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure” (21:21-25). Sure, life is as that. Therefore, the claim that Job's friends were making that he is problem was because of sin just will not do.

“They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them” (21:26) refers to both the righteous and the wicked.

Now then, note what Job says to his friends: *“Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me. For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? And where are the dwelling places of the wicked? Have ye not asked them that go by the way? And do ye not know their tokens”* (21:27-29). This is an interesting comment. Job said that they got their information from travelers that are passing by. They just made their argument based upon their observation. We need to learn the danger of judging people purely upon observation—we cannot do that, and Job called their attention to that and said that they made a mistake.

Therefore, Job will not give up (21:34). He is not going to admit that this is his problem.

Questions

1. What will Job do after he describes his circumstances in Job 19:13-18?
2. Now that he has lost it all, what will he do? Having lost everything, including all our friends, standing alone, suffering physically with the stress and the strain that comes from all of this and not understanding his relationship to God and wondering what it is all about, would we still hold onto our faith?
3. How many times have we seen wicked people prosper? Have we seen that? How do we answer that? How do we deal with it?
4. Have we ever known wicked people to do as that? Have we ever known wicked people to enjoy all of their prosperity and then instead of suffering some kind of long illness, to die and be gone in a flash, while a righteous person may lose their material things and suffer days without end?
5. Is not life as Job describes in Job 21:21-25? Do we not see things as that in life?

Lesson 10

The Final Arguments

Lesson Text: Job 22-31

Charging Job (Job 22)

Then Eliphaz has decided that Job has a misconception of God, and so he is going to pursue it further.

Eliphaz says that God does not profit whether a man is righteous or is a sinner—it just does not matter (22:2-3). The argument that he is making is that neither one mean anything to God.

Then, he is going to accuse Job of specific sin (22:5-10). Therefore, Eliphaz says that they have been arguing around and been trying to tell him that he is a wicked fellow, which is the reason he has been suffering. Eliphaz is going to get down to specifics now and tell him what he has been guilty of doing. He claims that Job has been mistreating people and overlooking the orphans and widows—that is what is wrong with him.

Then, he reminds him that because of this, he thinks that God does not have anything to do with man (22:11). Therefore, in Job 22:13, he said that Job has been doing all this in the dark. He wonders if Job thinks that God does not know anything about it and claims that Job has been trying to hide it. Eliphaz says that they did not see it, but God knows what has been taking place. Therefore, here is Job's problem.

“Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee” (22:21). Then, he encourages Job to receive the law from his mouth (22:22-28).

Therefore, he says to just go ahead and confess everything (22:29-30), and then God will restore what he has lost.

Explaining His Difficulty (Job 23-24)

Then, Job begins a discussion of the difficulty that he has in understanding what is taking place. He would be willing to acquaint himself with God *“and be at peace”* (22:21), if he knew where to find him.

“Oh that I knew where I might find him! That I might come even to his seat!” (23:3). What a relief it would be if we could just find God personally and sit down and request explanation to us about what this all is in view of the things that are so difficult to understand sometimes! Well, that is what Job is saying, and I am sure that we have felt that way.

Yet, in Job 23:8-10, he says that he is searching for him, but he cannot find him. He cannot be at peace, but he knows that when God has tried him and when it is all over, Job will come forth as gold, thus, denying that he is guilty of sin.

Then, he explains the way he has lived (23:11-12). Therefore, Job said that he has not been as his friends accused him of being.

Yet, in Job 23:15, he said that he as not cast God off—he is still living for him. In spite of that, Job is troubled at his presence because he cannot understand what is taking place.

“*Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?*” (24:1). Then, he describes how that sometimes the wicked prosper (24:12). Therefore, he said that the wicked are blessed, and God does not affect them as he had Job. He names some real serious sins (24:15) and said to explain this about all these people. Having mentioned some specific cases of people who have been guilty of sin who had not suffered, he says, “*And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?*” (24:25). Therefore, he said that he had now given them some specific examples for them to answer. He wanted them to tell him about it. If he is wrong—he has given the facts—then tell him some explanation of it.

Running Out of Something to Say (Job 25)

Now, Bildad is about to run out of something to say. Therefore, Bildad has a short speech in Job 25. “*Dominion and fear are with him, he maketh peace in his high places*” (25:2).

People who teach total depravity very often use Job 25:4 to say that man is born in sin. Now, we can see the value of knowing the basis of how one makes statements. Here is a man who based his philosophy upon a misconception of God, and a man who has a misconception of God makes this statement in Job 25:4. How unfortunate that somebody would take that to try to uphold the false doctrine of total depravity of children being born in sin. This man did not know about what he was talking. His philosophy was wrong, and so we are to keep that in mind.

Answering Bildad (Job 26-27)

Then, Job is going to answer him.

He said that Bildad has not helped him at all (26:2). “*Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? But the thunder of his power who can understand?*” (26:14).

Job then continues. They do not have anything to say. This would suggest that a pause takes place here, and then they do not have any answer, and Job is going to continue.

Job said that they are not going to force him to admit that he had been guilty of sin (27:2-4).

Therefore, Job said that they have not answered his question or solved his problem (27:5-6). He knows that he is living. He has not been guilty of sin as they have accused him, and he is just not going to accept what they have said about it.

Then, he is going to describe that he understands what is going to happen to wicked men (27:11). Job knows the end of a wicked man, and in the latter part of that chapter then, he agrees with them. He knows that the ultimate end to

wickedness is that God is going to destroy it. He knows all of that; they have not told him anything about wickedness, but he is not that kind of man.

Discussing the Importance of Wisdom (Job 28)

Then, in view of the problem in Job 28, he gives a discussion of the importance of wisdom, and he shows the knowledge that man has in mining (28:1-11). He talks about what man can do as far as searching out hidden things. In the mines, he can find beneath the ground precious hidden things. He has the ability to do all of that, but then, notice Job 28:12, *“But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?”* (28:12). Now, that is the problem. That is what is needed, and notice now what he says, *“Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire”* (28:13-16). Then, he goes ahead and compares it with jewels (28:17-19).

Therefore, the only place where one can find wisdom is from God (28:20-23). Job knows where wisdom is to be found, but has not been able to arrive at it (28:28). He knows where understanding comes from.

Describing His Past (Job 29)

Then, he describes his past life with the blessings that he had before all this happened to him. Then, he points out how he lived. Now, Eliphaz charged him with mistreating people, and I believe it is worthwhile to read the description that Job gives of his life—it says some things about which we ought to think.

We need to mark Job 29:12-25. Now, that is how he was at the beginning.

Detailing His Present (Job 30)

Now, Job 30 describes what has happened now. Here is the way he is treated (30:1).

“And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face. Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me” (30:9-11). That is the way they are treating him. We ought to read these verses some time and if we ever feel as if we are being mistreated by somebody, I suggest that we ought to mark these verses in this chapter of the book of Job, turn and read it, and then we will think, “I am doing fine. It is just great. I really have not got a problem.” It is worth it just to read this if we ever feel as if others are just mistreating us.

Then, Job accuses God of being cruel to him (30:20-21). Therefore, he is still struggling (30:26).

Finishing His Closing Argument (Job 31)

Then in Job 31, he denies that he is guilty of sin. He points out in the first part of that chapter the purity of his life and how that he did not follow evil things (31:1-12).

Then, beginning in Job 31:13, he called attention to his attitude toward others. Job said that he never claimed to be better than anybody else was, even a servant (31:13-15). He never mistreated him or claimed to be above him.

Then again, he mentions how that he had tried to treat others right (31:16-18). Job 31:18 would indicate that maybe he had cared for an orphan. Therefore, that shows how he had treated people.

In Job 31:22, he said that if he had not done this, *“Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.”*

Then, beginning in Job 31:24, he shows that he did not worship material things (31:24-25). Then, he continues with that, and he closes in Job 31:40 by saying, *“Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.”*

Therefore, he has made his argument. Now, Elihu will take that up in the next chapters.

Questions

1. What specific sins did Eliphaz charge Job? How does he later answer such?
2. Have we ever felt as if in view of the things that are so difficult to understand sometimes, if we could just find God personally and sit down and request explanation to us about what this all is? Have we ever felt that way? Have we ever wondered about things and just thought how wonderful it would be if we could just talk to God and he could tell us why and what is back of all of this?
3. Discuss the error of total depravity from Job 25:4.
4. What passages can help us when we feel as if others are mistreating us?
5. What differences are there between Job’s discussions of his past and his present?

Lesson 11

The Transition of Elihu

Lesson Text: Job 32-37

Introduction (32:1-5)

Another man comes on the scene in Job 32. Job's three friends have had their say, and Job has answered them—that is, he refused to admit what they have said was true. They said that Job was suffering because of his sins. Job knew that was not true, and yet, Job is struggling with how to be able to reconcile his own righteous living with the righteousness and the justice of God. He cannot put them together. Now, a fourth man comes on the scene—Elihu. His approach is different. He will make some mistakes, but he sees the suffering of Job from a different standpoint. He does not believe that Job is suffering because of his sins. He thinks that there is a gracious design that is in the suffering through which he is going, and he tries to convince Job that God is not his enemy. He is not suffering because of the wrath of God, but rather there is a purpose for good in it, and he says some things that, of course, are correct, but perhaps because of his limited knowledge, he tries to say too much. I believe that when we come to the study of Elihu, the other men have tried to use the wisdom and philosophy of men and the experience of life to point out that history and other things show that Job was suffering from sin. It seems that Elihu had some revelation that gave him at least some insight to understand some things that his friends have not understood, and we need to think about it from that standpoint.

The Philosophy of Elihu

He mentions that Job had a problem in that he had tried to justify himself rather than God (32:2). Notice that he realized the total failure of Job's three friends (32:3).

The Need for Inspiration (32:6-22)

He wants them to be quiet now while he is going to speak, and he reminds them that they should have done better (32:7). Now, it is true that we learn some things from experience, but we can learn only a limited amount of things from experience. There is some knowledge that we will never be able to gain from experience, and so he seems in the next verse then to refer to inspiration or revelation: "*But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding*" (32:8). Therefore, man's experience can only carry him so far, and then, he needs information and knowledge that can only come by revelation, and it is because of this that he will make the approach from a different standpoint.

Again, he mentions the limited knowledge of man (32:9). By "*great men*," he means older men—those who are mature and experienced.

Then, he says, “*Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words*” (32:12). Now, here is the reason that he comes on the scene. They have failed to answer what Job has said because they had a misconception of God. Their philosophy of life was that the righteous always prosper and the wicked always suffer. Now, there is a general principle to that, but that is not always true—there are exceptions to it. Therefore, they were wrong.

Then, Job, in his attempt to try to reject and deny what they said, had gone too far and had made some statements that were not correct. Therefore, Elihu is going to answer them.

The Need for Sympathy (33:1-7)

Now, Job’s friends had been rather difficult on Job. They had gotten hard on him, and Elihu is going to do a little bit better. It seems that Job’s three friends did not have the sympathy with him, generally, as Elihu is going to express. “*Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words*” (33:1). “*My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly*” (33:3).

Therefore, he said that he is going to give his solution to the problem (33:5), and if he has anything to say to answer him, then he is going to give him the chance to do that, and we will note some pauses along where he gives Job the opportunity to reply.

“*Behold, I am according to thy wish in God’s stead: I also am formed out of the clay*” (33:6). Now, in this verse, it seems that he indicates that he is, by revelation, making some things known to Job. At the same time, he puts himself there on the level with Job and says that he knows that “*I also am formed out of the clay.*” Therefore, he would have some understanding.

Therefore, he said that he is not doing to deal with Job as the other men did (33:7). He is going to handle him in a different way, and this sets the ground then for the basis of what he is going to say.

The Need for Wisdom (33:8-33)

Then, he begins to refer to some things that Job had said. “*Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me*” (33:8-9). I believe in this, he had misunderstood what Job had said. Job had not claimed that he was sinlessly perfect. What he claimed was that he was not a rebellious, willful sinner, and some of the statements that Job had made would have showed, of course, that he realized his frailties. “*Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy*” (33:10). Now, that is what Job had said, and Elihu is going to show that this is not true—God did not consider Job as his enemy.

Then, he is going to make his argument (33:12). He said first that God is never accountable unto men (33:13), which is true. God is never accountable

unto me. He does not have to give an account unto us, and we should remember that. Sometimes, I believe we forget it.

Then again, he mentions revelation (33:15-16). In the Patriarchal Age, here is the way that God made known revelation.

In Job 33:17-18, what he is going to say is that we may use suffering in a profitable way, and because of the temptations that surround us, we can use suffering to cause us to stop, think and realize that other things are more important. What has happened very often in life is that some did not give any attention to their soul until maybe they faced some trial or problem. I have baptized people that were not even interested in thinking about religion until maybe they got sick or some other thing came along.

Therefore, there may be a gracious design in suffering, which is going to be the real basis of it. As we think about some of our problems from time to time, it makes us humble. Sometimes, we get to the place where we think we can get along pretty well without God, and that tends to create pride. Perhaps, Job had drifted almost in this direction in some of the things that he had said, because of the problems that he had faced.

Now, here it seems that Elihu understands that there needs to be someone between God and man to help man understand some things (33:23-24). Therefore, he says, *"I have found a ransom"* (33:24). No doubt, this now points to what took place with the coming of Christ, where he was mediator between God and men—the go-between and the one to help us understand some things about it.

Therefore, Elihu's thesis simply is that God is not the author of evil (33:26)—he allows it, permits it and uses it for the good of man to help man.

He has paused now as if to give Job a chance to say anything (33:32-33).

The Need for Understanding (34:1-35:16)

Then, he begins in Job 34-35 to pursue his discussion further. Notice some of the things in just some of the verses as we look through them. *"Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge"* (34:2).

Job had appealed to bring his case before God, and insisted that if he could do so, then he could justify the fact that he did not deserve all the suffering through which he is going (34:5). Therefore, he is going to raise some questions now. *"Should I lie against my right? My wound is incurable without transgression"* (34:6). This is what Job said. That is of what others have accused him.

Therefore, he is saying that Job had said that righteousness did not profit anything because of the suffering through which he is going (34:9). *"Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity"* (34:10).

He is saying that God is just—he is not as Job has been accusing him of being (34:12). It is impossible for God to act in such a way as he has suggested.

He reminds him, *"For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of*

iniquity may hide themselves. For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God” (34:21-23). Therefore, God is not going to allow our temptations and trials beyond what we would be able to bear. That is what the first chapters of Job suggest, as we have already seen, where God had said that. Then, he mentions the fact that unless there were some judgment in relationship to sin and wrong, the world would be in a terrible condition (34:26-27). Now, his purpose in doing that is stated (34:28-29). Therefore, the providence of God then uses the difficulties of life as a means of trying to call men back from the wickedness toward which men generally drift.

“*Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more*” (34:31-32). Here is an appeal to help one understand more about what life is all about, and to open the heart and to lead to self-examination, or as the psalmist prayed, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts*” (Psalms 139:23). Now, that is about the sentiment that Elihu presents here. Of course, that is the attitude that we ought to have.

“*Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me. Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom*” (34:34-35). That is correct, because Job had accused God of being his enemy and of suffering without there being justification for it.

Therefore, he continues in Job 35, where Job said, “*My righteousness is more than God’s*” (35:2), and said that Job had raised the questions, “*What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin*” (35:3). Psalm 73 sets forth this same problem.

Then, he points out that neither righteousness nor wickedness is an advantage to God (35:7). Now, there is only in a general way in which that might be true. “*Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him*” (35:14). So here is encouragement for him to realize that good may come out of it, and he does not need to complain, murmur and certainly accuse God as he had.

The Need for Revelation (36:1-25)

Then, it seems as if there might be a pause and Job has nothing further to say, and he will continue in Job 36. “*I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker*” (36:3), which seems to refer again to the fact that Elihu is not speaking purely by the matter of experience, but rather based upon some limited knowledge of revelation. “*He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted*” (36:7). Of course, that is in answer to what Job had been saying.

Here is one value then in which suffering may be used (36:10). It causes us to learn something and to profit by them. Therefore, here are those that fail to properly see any value or see any good that can come out of the trials and

difficulties of life (36:13). Then, Elihu continues his discussion in Job 36:25: *“Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off.”*

The Need for Humility (36:26-37:24)

Now, it is unfortunate that the chapter divisions are where they are. The chapter division should have started in Job 36:26. Then, he begins a discussion of God and his greatness, and when you have time, let me encourage you to read some of the things that both Elihu and Job say about God, and then some things that God himself will have to say on over a little but further in the book. Notice now Job 36:26: *“Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out”* (36:26). Now, that is his way of saying that there is not any way that man can come to know God completely. All that we know of God is through revelation, but even then, God has supplied us only with the information that we need. He has not given us the knowledge that he has so that we could take the reins of the world in our hands and rein them in the place of God. He has not done that, as we will see on over just a little but further in some other things that God brings up.

Then, he mentions some of the things about the world, such as thunder: *“Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth...God thundereth marvelously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend”* (37:2-3, 5). Now, here is the mistake that Elihu made in the realization of man’s limited understanding, even with revelation, sometimes he carried himself away a little bit, and this is a lesson that we need to learn. Even though we have revelation, we do not need to get to the place where we think we know everything, and where we think that we are smart. When we do, then we will find ourselves in trouble. It always behooves us to recognize our littleness, the limited nature of our knowledge at best, and admit that we just do not know much. Therefore, perhaps he went off a little on the far side.

He refers to God’s control of nature and the intended impact and good that comes from it (37:6). There will be further mention of that on over further.

“He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy” (37:13). Now, he sees in this both good and bad, showing how that one may use it for correction and possibly mercy. Suppose that it did not rain. Well, that might be as a means of causing men to stop and realize how dependant we are on God. If so, then there could be good that could come out of it. Again, it might be that if he withheld rain at the right time, it would be mercy to give the crops a chance to develop and at least to harvest the crops. Therefore, he has some knowledge about which is worth thinking.

In Job 37:14, he calls upon Job to *“consider the wondrous works of God”* (37:14). There is no way that we can understand all there is about God or all the things about life, but one of the things that we need to learn is that through all of it, God is always just, and God is always righteous (37:20-23). Never can one say under any circumstances that God is unrighteous in his actions. Therefore,

Elihu says, “*Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart*” (37:24).

Conclusion

Now then, Elihu has had his say. Now, if we will look at the six chapters from Job 32-37, if we accept the fact, which seems to me, that some of the basis of Elihu’s argument is the knowledge that comes by revelation. So he has made a step of improvement from what Job’s three friends have had to say, and what is said by Elihu makes the transition from the total failure of Job’s three friends to what God is now going to enter in and say himself, beginning in Job 38.

Questions

1. Which verses in Elihu’s speech seem to indicate that he is speaking by some inspiration and revelation?
2. Is Elihu more sympathetic to Job than his other three friends? How important is sympathy?
3. How often have there been those who did not give any attention to their soul until maybe they faced some trial or problem? Could we view this as a benefit from suffering (33:17-18)?
4. To what does Elihu refer when he mentions “*a ransom*” (33:24)?
5. How can one glean any benefit from suffering (37:13)?

Lesson 12

The Conclusion to the Book of Job

Lesson Text: Job 38-42

God Speaks out of the Whirlwind (Job 38-41)

God now picks up where Elihu has left off, as a reminder that while Elihu knew some things and was able to move up a step away from where Job's three friends were, Elihu did not have all the answers either, and the reason was that God had not made known revelation concerning some things. Therefore, God comes on the scene, as it were, to pick up and remind Elihu, as well as Job and his three friends, that God told some things, but he has not told them everything. They still do not know some things, and he is going to aid them a little bit now. What develops now is that God reminds them that they had been darkening counsel (38:2). Then, he is going to use some illustrations to try to get them to see his greatness, glory, majesty and holiness. God never does explain throughout this whole thing, even in his conversation with Job, how all things work. He still leaves some things that are without explanation, which we should keep in mind. The reason is, of course, God has not designed to give us perfect knowledge. He keeps some things to himself. *God Is Not Accountable To*

Job had been talking about a whirlwind (cf. 30:22) and some things in connection with that, and of course, the mysteries that are in it, as well as its power and other things. *MAN* "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me*" (38:1-3). Now keep in mind that Job 1-2 show that God is in control of all things. Whenever Satan said of Job, "Here is a man that serves you because of advantage," God said that it was not so, and he let Satan test that. Just remember that there were limitations to what Satan can do. Now, that shows that God was in control at all times—he never did turn the world over to Satan and say, "It is yours. Run as you want to." God never did give up complete control. Therefore, what he is going to do now is to remind them through the things that he is going to say that he is in control, and in doing so, he is going to raise the question to Job, "Now, you do not think that I have been doing a good job with it. Your three friends thought that you were a sinner, and you know that it was not true and thought that I was unrighteous in allowing what is taking place. Now, I want to bring up some things and I want you to think about them and just see—suppose that I turn the world over to you and let you run it. How would you do with it?" Now, these following verses are to remind them of how little man knows. That is the idea that is in this. Let us look at some of the things that he says.

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it

brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place; That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?" (38:4-5, 8, 11-13). Just stop for a minute. Suppose that God said, "Now, I am going to let you handle the sun rising and the sun setting from here on out." Well, I like to get up early. These folks that like to sleep until 8:00 AM, I would have the sun coming up about 4:00 AM every morning—winters as well as summer, and I would shake them out of the bed. Many folks would not be happy with that, plus the fact that when I did that, I imagine I would get nature in sort of a fix—things would not work out altogether right. Not only that, suppose that God said, "I am going to set you on the throne and let you control the seasons." Well, we would not have any winter—it would be spring (about 65-70° twelve months in the year). Well, these folks that like to see snow and all that—they would be upset about it. Therefore, there are problems in connection with that.

Then, he wants to know in Job 38:16-17, "*Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?"* Now suppose we had to answer some questions such as this.

Now, look at some of the things in Job 39 that he brings up. For example, he discusses the ostrich (39:14-17). Now, that tells us that God gave the instincts to the ostrich. Look at what he says in Job 39:18: "*What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.*" We know how fast an ostrich can travel. God is placing these questions before Job and said that he has done these things and if Job would have ever thought about this. Of course, this is a reminder of the wisdom of God in relationship to the earth.

He mentions the strength of the horse and its use in battle (39:19).

He mentions the hawk (39:26).

He mentions the eagle, where she dwells and such like (39:27).

Then, in Job 40, the book continues his discussion by stating, "*Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that proveth God, let him answer it*" (40:1-2). Now, here is something about which we ought to stop and think. Remember that Job's three friends were telling Job how they thought God ought to run the world—that the righteous ought always to prosper and the wicked ought always to suffer. They were contending with God and saying, "Here is the way you have to do it, and because this is the way you have to do it, therefore, Job is a sinner." Job was saying that God ought not to become an enemy with a righteous man and ought not to direct his wrath toward him. Furthermore, Job was having a problem, but watch what is going to take place.

Job said that he realized now that he was talking when he should have been listening (40:3-5). He had said too much, and this is a lesson that we all need to learn, especially is this true whenever it comes to the providential working of God in relation to the things when God is in control of this world. We would do

well to ponder the matter about our complaining about the weather—rainy, dry or whatever. I believe that we should consider these things.

God will continue then: “*Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?*” (40:6-8). Now here is the point that we need to remember. Job in his attempt to defend his integrity went too far, and the implications are in this verse that Job was practically guilty of assuring self-righteousness—that what he had done had earned him the reward from God and therefore, he did not deserve the suffering through which he was going. Here is a grave danger into which we will run. I may decide that because I live right, God owes me something. God does not owe me anything. I am unworthy of anything that God gives me. Never let me get the idea that God owes me anything. God is never a debtor to any man, but when we try to live right and do what the Lord wants us to do, unless we are careful, we may shift over into that gear and decide, “Well, I am doing this, and because I am doing this, God ought to do that.” No, that does not follow. I do not contend with God and tell God what he ought to do when I may be living right, because when I live right, I am still not perfect. When I live at my very best, there are still enough shortcomings in my life that God does not owe me anything—not the first thing! The tendency of man has been to conclude that because I live right and do right, then God ought to or should do so and so for me. No, that does not necessarily follow. Let us be careful that we do not move in that direction.

Now, look at some other things that God is saying: “*Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him*” (40:10-11). Therefore, God said that he would turn it over to Job for him to look at all the things that are going on in the world, including how he would deal with the proud man out here. Suppose that God would say to us, “The world is in a mess today. Now I am going to turn it over to you for awhile and see how well you can handle it and see what you can do about straightening out some of the things that are ongoing.” Now, think about what a mess in which we would get. Think about the idea, with the turmoil that is in the world today, for God to lay the government of the world in my hands and say, “See how you can handle it now—let us see what you do with it.” I do not want that task. I am afraid even to deal with my own life and handle it fairly well without trying to take over the government of God. So let us be careful that when we talk and complain about things that are going on in the world, as though we think that we could do better with it. If so, we are drifting into the same problem that Job and his friends had.

Then, he continues and mentions some things that Job would be unable to do (40:15-41:33). When we come to Job 41, God calls attention to some things to remind Job of the inability of man to govern certain things. For example, he said, “*Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? Or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?*” (41:1). It seems to be a crocodile or something on that order. Then, there is a picture of it, and if he cannot handle this, then how would

he expect to control the world and be able to tell God how that God ought to run his affairs. Again, here is the problem: *“He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride”* (41:34).

Job Speaks out of Understanding (Job 42)

We need to learn some lessons from the last part of the book of Job. I pointed out how that, in my judgment, Elihu had some light of revelation and was able to help Job see that he had made a mistake in complaining and saying that God was unjust and that God was his enemy and that the suffering through which he was going was a result of God’s wrath. Yet, even so, with the light and knowledge that Elihu had by revelation, though it changed Job’s mind, God still needed to say some other things. Therefore, he comes on the scene then in Job 38 and adds some things, not in answer to the question about why we suffer, but helps Job see how to look at life, to face suffering and to understand some things that he had not understood up until this time. It was necessary for God to add those things unless there was a misconception of God. Therefore, that is what we have in Job 38-42. Yet, in so doing, God presents things that show his power, authority and greatness in the creation of the world and how he arranged the world. He does all of this to bring to the mind of Job the tremendous wisdom that God has and to remind Job of his own littleness and of his own lack of knowledge, which is what happened. When he does all of this, Job said that he was vile, and that he laid his hand upon his wrath (40:4). Therefore, this brought Job to the realization that he had been talking about things that he did not understand and he had been trying to say some things about God that was not correct.

Job has come now to the place where he said that he knows God understands and knows everything, and he sees the point that God has made (42:1-2). Therefore, Job understands that God can do everything that needs to be done, because his wisdom, power and knowledge is beyond anything that man can really come to understand. The best thing that man can do is to appreciate it. He said that he was talking about things that he did not understand (42:3-4). Many times, we get into that same problem.

Then, because of seeing God properly, notice what Job says: *“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes”* (42:5-6). Now, mark it—at this point and time, Job is still suffering with his physical problem. He still does not have his prosperity. Remember that Satan had requested to take away from Job all that he has, including his health and his prosperity, and he would curse God. Now, with these still gone, he has now come to the right place and develops the proper attitude. His loyalty and devotion is even beyond where it was when things started. Therefore, Satan has not been successful; in spite of all that Satan has tried to do, he has been unable to ruin Job. Now, there were times when Job was on the very brink, but he was able to get a hold of himself and have enough light, increase in knowledge and understanding until he kept Satan from leading him away completely by denying and turning away from God. Job sees his own

littleness and understands that God was not unjust or unrighteous. He still does not have the solution to the problem. He just knows that God is handling everything, as he ought to handle it, and the book of Job closes without explaining to us how we can understand suffering, pain and everything else. God does not attempt to do that. What he does remind us of is that God is always righteous and just, and we need to bow in humility before him just as Job did. Therefore, here is a lesson that we ought to try to learn. As I mentioned in the very beginning of our study, Satan has tremendous power, but that power is limited. Through whatever we go, our concept of God should be such that we maintain our loyalty and devotion to God in spite of everything, and if we understand things aright, that will happen. So he has come to have a different concept of God, and whenever he does, he states, “*Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*” (42:6). Now, one way that we need to learn to study the Bible is to try to see God as he presents himself to us in the Bible. When we study the book of Proverbs, we will see that the beginning of all wisdom is the proper concept and knowledge of God: “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*” (Proverbs 1:7). Therefore, Job has come to that place. He has come to see that, indeed, all wisdom comes from God, and understanding that, he feels his own littleness and lack of wisdom; therefore, he now has the proper attitude.

Then, not only do we have this in reference to Job, but also now he is in a position to help his friends (42:7-9). God then rebukes Job’s three friends, but not Elihu, and that is the reason I said that Elihu made a transition from them to the place where God began his discussion. Then, notice that God kindled his wrath against Job’s friends, but not against Job or Elihu. God tells them to bring an offering, and then Job becomes an intercessor for them. Now, up until this time, Job’s friends were wrong themselves in that they said that Job was suffering because of his sins, to which Job knew was not true, but Job’s understanding and concept of God was wrong, so as he tried to answer his friends, he was unable. Now in humility and with a proper concept of God, he is now able to deal with his friends, and he thus becomes an intercessor for them. One of the things that we should learn—if we are going to help others—we must first of all have the right attitude toward God ourselves; that is, we must have the proper understanding and concept of God. Without the proper understanding and concept of God, we will be unable to help others. Notice how the proper concept of God affected Job and created within him the right attitude toward himself and toward others. When we study the book of Proverbs, we see this as one of the things that Solomon sets forth throughout the book. Here is something that we need to learn. The beginning of all right attitudes begins with the right attitude toward God. The one that has wrong attitudes toward self does not have the right attitude toward God, because he does not understand God as he is in the Bible. The one that has a wrong attitude toward others has a misconception of God, because with a misconception of God, he will have a misconception of himself, and with a misconception of himself, he will have a misconception of others. Therefore, God gave the Bible to enable us to know him (John 17:3). To “*know*

God' means to have a proper understanding and proper relationship with God. Therefore, here is something that we should keep in mind. God enables Job to become an intercessor for others. God began in the book by saying that Job was his servant (1:8). Thus, in Job 42:8, he said, "...and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job." The Bible uses the word "*folly*" as the very opposite of "*wisdom*." Therefore, instead of them being wise, they were foolish, and God said that he would deal with them in relationship to that, because they "*have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath*" (42:7). Now, Job had some misconceptions, but at the same time, Job's faithfulness and loyalty to God remained throughout all of it. So again, we can see that Job based his relationship with God upon his loyalty all the way through the book, especially when he came to have the knowledge and understanding in these last chapters. This is especially to what God has reference—not what he has said all the way through, but rather the things that Job has come to say in the last three chapters.

Now, the book of Job begins in prayer and ends in prayer (42:10-17). What better lesson for one to learn than the limited knowledge that we have and even with divine revelation, there is so little that we know, that it behooves us to realize our dependence upon God and our need of God and to realize the importance and the place of prayer.

In addition, this shows that the prosperity of Job was not based purely upon his righteousness. God gave it back to him, but not until he had come to have the proper understanding of God. Then, the book closes with a discussion of the things that God gave back to Job, and then the length of life that Job lived.

Questions

1. How could God explain, even in his conversation with Job, how all things work? How can our finite minds understand the infinite?
2. According to Job 1-2, how can God be in control of all things? How does this relate to Job 38-41?
3. Do we think that if we could not handle these things that God is bringing up—that if he seated us on the throne and said to just take it over and handle everything from here on out—how well do we think we are going to do?
4. Who would have thought about making a bird that can run as fast as a horse (39:18)?
5. If we look in the light of things that God says here, shall we get in contention with God and try to tell him how the seasons ought to be and when it ought to rain and when it ought to be dry?
6. What will Job do in control of the world in relationship to the proud man (40:10-11)? What would we do?

Lesson 13

The Summary of the Book of Job

Lesson Text: Job 42

The Lessons of the Book of Job about Suffering

Now, let me take some time and call attention to some lessons that I believe that we need to learn as we somewhat summarize the book of Job.

First, suffering longs for sympathy and understanding. This is a hard lesson to learn. Anyone that is going through suffering, whatever nature it may be, looks for somebody to sympathize and understand. Now if we just find somebody that is suffering, one of the things that he wants to do is to find somebody that can sympathize and understand through what they are going. One can do nothing more to encourage, help somebody, and lift burdens than to be able to sympathize with and understand the situation that a person is facing. In spite of all through which Job was going, it would have been far easier for Job to have dealt with his problem had his friends been able to sympathize and understand him. They did not have any understanding of that through which Job was going, and their lack of sympathy and understanding only added to the difficulties of Job. Therefore, let us learn from Job that when we find somebody that is suffering, even because of their own mistakes, because it is true that we suffer from our own mistakes, they need sympathy and understanding. We cannot help people that are suffering because of their own mistakes and help them profit by it and avoid making that mistake again unless we develop the ability to be able to sympathize and understand that through which they are going.

Suffering becomes a test of character. It was for Job. The things through which Job went proved the genuineness of his character. Perhaps nothing becomes a more severe test of character than suffering, and as we read the book of Job, we should keep this in mind. The book of James seems to have as its background the book of Job, and, of course, we find this principle in the book of James.

Suffering is a means of discipline. Now, we do not often use the word “*discipline*” exactly as the Bible uses it. For example, Paul is writing to parents and fathers when he said, “*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:4). The word “*nurture*” there includes instruction and discipline (cf. ESV). In fact, instruction is a part of discipline as the Bible uses it. In Hebrews 12:3-11 (ESV), where it talks about the chastening of the Lord, it is used in the sense of being instructed. Therefore, discipline then can be a means of instruction. Thus, we can learn things from suffering that we do not learn any other way. I remember when I was at David Lipscomb University, brother Charles Brewer used to speak at chapel, and he had a lesson that he gave on “The College of Hard Knocks,” which was one of the most interesting chapel talks that we ever had. I

heard him give it two or three times, and every time I heard it, I enjoyed it, but it talked about the college of hard knocks, which is a costly college to go, but it is one that is instructive if we will learn from it. Now, we can react to our hard knocks in different ways. Job could have been bitter. He could have turned against God, but he may use suffering as a means of instruction and learning. In Philippians 4:11, Paul said, "*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*" The word "learned" in this text is a word that means, "I went to school." Paul said that he had been to school, and out of the school of experience, he had come to realize the value, place and proper use of suffering, as well as prosperity. Read Second Corinthians 11:16-29 about some of the school that he went to and some of the things that he learned, which he stated in Philippians 4. Therefore, suffering can be a means of discipline.

Suffering can become the means of us sympathizing with others (Job 42:8-11). This shows that out of the things that Job had learned, he had come to be able to sympathize and feel for others. He could pray even for those who had really upset him. Think about some of the things that Job's friends had said about him and Job's reaction to some of the things that they had said. He had said that they were "*miserable comforters*" (16:2)—poor comforters, and yet, out of his suffering, there is now created within him a spirit of sympathy, and he is able to pray for them. Suppose we go back earlier in the book and listen to some of the things that they had said about Job, and just before we begin reading Job's reply, we imagine Job saying, "Now, you have been real ugly to me, and I am going to pray for you for a little while." No, Job is not ready to pray for them yet. He will talk back to them. He has things to say to them, but he is not ready to pray for them yet, but having gone through the series of suffering that he has endured, he now has a different attitude toward other people. A young preacher once called me about a problem that developed in a congregation between some people, and he wanted to know how to deal with it. Among other things, I told him that the most important thing that he could do in talking to both of them where there had been some disagreement was to realize the danger of allowing wrong attitudes to develop. One of the families felt as if others had treated them rather as Job had. Out of that can come an attitude of resentment rather than one of being able to deal with it in the proper way. Now, if they have ever gone through something as that prior to this and have some understanding of it, they can be able to sympathize with them. If they had made a mistake as this other family has made, they can look back and see how wrong that was, the attitudes that should not have been, and have an understanding that will help them into dealing with them.

Suffering encourages prayer. Now, this is not the first time that Job prayed. We can go back and look through the book and we will find that Job had been praying before. In fact, the book begins in prayer and ends in prayer, but there are some prayers between. We have read some of the things where Job has been pleading with God, but he can now pray better than he has ever prayed. He now has an understanding and an appreciation of prayer that he did not have before,

and suffering can give us an insight to prayer that we will not have any other way. We will appreciate it to a degree that we never will appreciate it until we confront some burden, and on bended knee and out of agony and anguish, commune with God. Paul came to have a greater appreciation (II Corinthians 12:8-9). He got an answer, which was, "No, it will not be removed, but there will be grace that will take care of it." Out of that came a greater appreciation of prayer. Therefore, he said that he would take pleasure in infirmities, realizing that out of suffering, he had come to have an insight into prayer that he did not have before. Instead of prayer removing the thorn in the flesh, through prayer, he came to see that while God did not remove it, there were resources in grace to enable him to handle it. Therefore, suffering can help us see that in prayer, God gives us resources to be able to deal with our suffering and to be able to handle it. Prayer will help us understand that there are resources that God has for our benefit that we will not ever appreciate any other way, until we come to know and sense our need, and then in recognition of that, these resources will be a continued blessing in our lives. That is a wonderful lesson to be able to learn.

Suffering helps one see his need of God. If we look at this all the way throughout the book, there was always in Job a sense of his need of God. He realized all the way through, and the more intense his suffering became, the greater was the sense of his need of God. When Eliphaz told him that what he ought to do was to turn to God, Job cried out, "*Oh that I knew where I might find him!*" (Job 23:3). He says that he knows that he needs him, and he has been searching and looking and hunting for him and asks them to tell him where he is. That is something that suffering can help us come to appreciate.

Finally, suffering will provide for us hope in the midst of life's darkest days. The book of Job shows us that this is true—out of the darkness of despair, when he prayed that even if he might not live, when he was suffering so that he said that it would have been better if he had not been born or he wondered why God lengthened his days because of all of his suffering that was taking place, and yet, out through the darkness through which he had gone, there comes to him through his suffering the hope that is given in Job 38-42—in the darkest days of his despair.

Therefore, these are some lessons that we should keep in mind as we study the book of Job.

The Relationship of the Wisdom Books

Job shows the need of wisdom. In Job, we have human needs searching for wisdom. Proverbs shows the place and provision of divine wisdom and Ecclesiastes shows the folly of man trying to live without wisdom. Therefore, there is a relationship between these three books.

The Connection of the Book of Job with the Book of James

I want to turn to the book of James and show that in the book of James, we have some things that evidently show the book of Job is the background of what James has written. I have never really thought about James against the background of Job until I began to study the book of Job.

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations” (James 1:2). I believe this is what the book of Job teaches.

“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:3-5). The problem with Job and his friends is that they needed wisdom. That is what Job’s friends did not have, and Job had a misunderstanding about it, which is all about what the book of Job is. In fact, in the book of Job, the real thrust of the book is human needs searching after wisdom, trying to find something that will satisfy the longing of the heart and the problem with which they are trying to deal. Surely, I believe there is a direct relationship between James says here and what we have in the book of Job.

“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways...Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:6-8, 12). Therefore, we have pictured the blessings of Job in the last part of Job 42, which is symbolic, of course, of *“the crown of life”* here.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man” (James 1:13). Job thought that God had become his enemy and that he was suffering because of the wrath of God.

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:14). There is the seed and source of our problem. Whenever Satan said to take away all of his prosperity, Satan knew this. Prosperity appeals to the material, visible things of life. Then, there is his health, which is but the physical blessings of life.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). God is not the author and source of evil.

However, watch again now in James 3:2-4. Think about the book of Job, Job’s friends and the things they said to Job. How much better would it have been if they had been able to control their tongues! How much more benefit they could have been to Job.

“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (James 3:13).

That is what was taking place in the book of Job. Job's friends claimed to be wise, and so did Job in trying to deal with the problem. Now, there is the attitude that they should have had.

"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth" (James 3:14). That is what they had done.

"This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:15-18).

In James 5, we will note that he also refers to Job again. Notice some of the things that he has to say now in connection with the beginning of it. For example, he says, *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain"* (James 5:7). Now, they are facing trials and suffering. I believe the judgment in James 5:8 is in reference to the Jewish return that was fixing to take place.

"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:9-11). Prior to the study of the book of Job, when I read that verse, the emphasis in that verse to me was always on patience, but that is not the emphasis in that verse. Patience is important, but patience is important only in that one may see the end of the Lord. Now, we are down to Job 42. *"...that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy"* is what we have pictured in the last chapter in the book of Job.

Now, when we look at James 1 where he talks about the importance of patience, prayer, wisdom and the fact that God is not the author of evil, in James 3 where he warns about the danger of the tongue and then the contrast between divine wisdom and the wisdom of this world, and then in James 5 where he talks about Job and his patience, seeing the end of the Lord that he is pitiful and of tender mercy, surely James was well acquainted with the book of Job.

Conclusion

I trust that this book has been of benefit to all of us in helping us understand how to be able to deal with some of the difficulties that all of us face from time to time—some more serious than others, and learn how to use our suffering and our trials so as to grow in grace and knowledge to use it for the discipline of our own life to help us grow spiritually as James says that we need to do—help us to become well rounded, well developed, wholesome Christians with proper attitudes.

Questions

1. Is it not worthwhile to be able to learn in life to have the attitude toward others as Job did?
2. Does the book of Job teach what James wrote in James 1:2?
3. In view of what James wrote in James 1:3-5, what was the problem with Job and his friends? Is there not a direct relationship between what James says and what we have in the book of Job?
4. In view of James 1:13, is that not the problem with which they were struggling in the book of Job—was that not Job's problem?
5. To what does prosperity appeal? Is not our health a physical blessing of life?
6. Can we not see what James addresses in James 3:2-4 in relation to what Job's friends have been saying to Job?

