

# WISDOM: THE FOUNDATION

## The Book of Job

Thoughts come from a wide variety of sources. Some from messages I have heard from individuals, some from assemblies Bible studies, some from home life and some from books I have read. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher who makes them real to me.

- "What the Bible Teaches, The book of Job, by David J. Newell, John Ritchie Ltd.
- "The Life Application Bible." Tyndale House and Zondervan
- A variety of versions of the Bible

In the Old Testament there are books that give historical accounts beginning with humanity and then narrows down God's dealing with mankind to books of His covenant relationship with the Jewish people. There are also psalms written in poetic form that give some emotional responses to the events of life and their impact on us. Books of prophecy give warnings and entreaties as well as insights into the future that take us all the way to the time when there will be "a new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Then there are books that give insight into daily living with practical instructions regarding living by faith in God. A few of the psalms do this as well. Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are these books written for our learning regarding wisdom in everyday life. Wisdom is the knowledge of what is true and right, linked with just judgments as to what actions to take.

Wisdom presented in Proverbs is optimistic and basically encouraging when acted upon with the understanding that faith in God is genuine. Ecclesiastes is a pessimistic account by Solomon of things "under the sun" with only a human perspective. It is a negative look at many aspects of life to remind us that everything we see is only temporary. "The things which are seen are temporal. The things which are not seen are eternal." We need both views because life is complicated. We live in a temporal world, but need to conduct life in view of eternity. That is why the book of Job is so essential. Even though we have strong faith in the One true God, that does not mean that our life will be easy.

Job probably lived in the time of Isaiah and some of the prophets who could look ahead and see what lay beyond the temporary prosperity of the Jews. People in Old Testament times looked at material things they accumulated as evidence of God's pleasure with them. If they were poor, or lost what they had, to those people they would consider that person had displeased God. But it was not only in ancient days people thought life should be good and easy as a sign of God's pleasure and blessing - it is the same with many today. Many people think if we do not always triumph over difficulties, sicknesses and win the battles over our enemies, then God is not real or not to be trusted. Many will say when things go wrong, accidents or sickness happens, or family life isn't what we had hoped, "Where is God now? If there is a God, why did He let that happen?"

The book of Job teaches us that the righteous do not always win in life, and the wicked do not always fail. But whatever way things go for us, there is no reason for us to abandon our faith. A life submitted to God does not mean we will know the reason for things, nor do we have the right to know. We are children in the family of God. He is omniscient, He is omnipotent and He is omnipresent, so it is enough for us to accept the fact that He is in control of all events and the outcome of the events. Our limitations of strength and knowledge does not change His sovereign will or the fact that faith pleases Him in every situation in which we are found.

There are many ways we can be strengthened in faith. "The trial of faith" is more precious than gold. "The word of faith" that we have experienced and preach does not change. A life of faith can be satisfying even when lived under the worst of conditions and full-blown tensions from all that is going on around us. Not everything will be fully understood by our finite minds. Nor do the difficulties and trials of life earn some special treatment for us. Psalm 73 explores the injustice that seemed so blatant, and no answer was given. But when the psalmist acted in faith and went into the "sanctuary of God," then He understood and saw the big picture of things. He had to deliberately face his doubts, go to the Lord with them, and then he found out what was the meaning of his life. When we go into God's presence, then we can begin to see what our natural being cannot perceive.

Life is not just "eat, drink, and be merry." Life is a testing time and a training time for our service for God now and in the future. Job had prestige, possessions and a lot of people in his life. He had a large family and friends. Yet when everything was stripped away in a very short time, all he had left was his foundation of faith.

Prosperity deceives us because it can go as fast as it comes. When everything but God is gone, what do we do then?

People may try to help us, and we appreciate their interest. Our emotions may be shattered to the extent we live in a condition of guilt and depression. None of that is an answer to the need we have of wisdom. Real faith in God is solid enough, and founded deeply enough on the sure word of God, that when all we had or claimed as our own is gone, we turn again in confidence to Him who fills us with His fullness. When that happens, there is grace given for grace needed. There is strength from God to meet our lack of strength. Even to our little faith, more faith is added when we return to the Lord our God. God is enough for us even when all else is gone. It is easy to say that when we have plenty, but when all we have is empty hands, we must lift them up without wrath or doubting.

We may never in our lifetime know the reasons for times of trial and testing, but our faith is in the Living God. The journey through the book of Job gives us the understanding we need for daily living in times of extreme trouble. Hardships, so-called friendships and pain test us in ways no one but God can help. No matter what happens, we must trust our Gracious Father. The book of Job will help us learn the practical reasons for tribulation which worketh patience. And patience has the work of maturing us so that we lack nothing of that which is truly important.

Where does wisdom come from reaching across the ages?  
There are warnings we hear from prophets, and truth from sages -  
The wisdom we need comes from the highest of all persons and places -  
"Have you considered My servant Job?"

How do we use the wisdom that comes from God?  
Day to day we are to conduct our lives in this ungodly world -  
As those who love Jesus Christ, and know Him as Savior and Lord -  
"One that fears God, and eschews evil!"

What effect does such wisdom have on daily life?  
The practice of God-given wisdom gives holy light -  
We can live in quiet peace in the middle of a world of strife -  
"When we rise early in the morning and offer burnt sacrifices."

**"Father, as I read through this book of Job, help me to lift my eyes above the scenes of earth and the suffering of mankind to where Thou art carrying out Thy plans and purposes in the life of Thy servant both in suffering and victory, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

### **Job 1:1-5**

#### **HIS RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER**

The first two chapters of Job and the last verses of the book are written in prose telling of the person of Job and some events in his life. It is really an introduction to the man himself and tells of God's confidence in him as a believer who lives by faith. Tragedies one after another are recounted that bring this man of faith down to where he is an outcast who was suffering emotionally and physically. The fact that he is described as one who "was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil," gives us an awareness of one whose wisdom is well known. He was a man of integrity and fidelity. There was a harmony between his words and deeds. One who fears God has a genuine commitment to God. He also used what God gave him wisely.

The character of this man was such that Ezekiel and James referenced him as an example of righteousness and patience when he went through the fires of affliction and loss. He maintained his integrity by living consciously in the presence of God. Looking ahead to what he went through, he was the kind of man who did not try to regain the temporal and personal blessings he lost by confessing imaginary sins. That was not in his character as a way to express his faith. He was able, in spite of all he lost, to acknowledge that God is not unjust even though the righteous may suffer.

It is possible for us to take our blessings for granted with casual words of thanks to God for all His gracious daily benefits to us. It is possible that what we lose is really more important than what we gain of material things. It is also possible we may never know the reason as to why hard things happen to us that seem to have no purpose. Our faith develops as much or more through unanswered questions as the answered ones. It is in experiences that defy explanations, that we face the fact that God does care for us in spite of who we are and what happens to us. Why should we then doubt God?

In our world today, good is not always rewarded and bad is not always punished. The innocent may suffer and the guilty may prosper. Sin does have consequences we know, but as one has said, "God does not always settle accounts in October." Faith is not based on rewards. It is confidence in God who has His own sovereign reasons for allowing difficult events to happen to us. His purposes are really known only to Him in their fullness.

Whether Job lived in the time of Abraham in the Genesis period, or in the time of prosperity before the captivity in which Isaiah lived, it is clear that Job did not take his prosperity for granted. His wealth was so great it is numbered by multiples of 10s - even his children. His appreciation for God was evident in that he daily functioned as a priest for his family. This did not require a journey to the temple each day, but was evidence that as a father, he had concern for his children even after they left his home. On birthdays or feast days when they got together, Job knew it was possible for them to say some hasty words. In these first verses of the book there is a concern about cursing that contrasts with the main subject of the book of Job being righteousness. Job offered sacrifices for his children as a regular custom, because he was afraid, they may have "cursed God in their hearts." Satan argued with the Lord that if Job suffered, he would curse God. Even Job's wife complained to him that he held on to his integrity for his own reasons. She encouraged him to curse God and die.

What is our honest motive for serving God? Do we serve Him for what we hope to get out of it, or because He is God? The responsibility of a father for his children is to guide them spiritually and intercede for them with God. Our devotion to God is demonstrated when our children know we are moved in our hearts to commit them to God. The spiritual welfare for our children is one of our deepest concerns for them. Our sacrifice on their behalf today is not to give them everything they want at our expense, but to intercede for them, help them grow morally and spiritually, protect them from dangers we know about because of our experience and age. Then we encourage them to live for the Lord that they might please Him, and have something put in the eternal treasury above. God has not given up on us and we should not give up on our children.

There is a sense in which a father is still a priest for his family. We are responsible to define the need of redemption and reconciliation to God. We know that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Burnt offerings were offer for sin, and were also to consecrate people or things to God for His use and glory. When it comes to our families, when they leave home, we do not have authority or control over them, but we know God does. That is why our offerings on behalf of our children are important. God can do for them what we cannot.

My family, Gracious Father, how can I influence them for good?  
They need more from me than shelter, love and daily food -  
Each needs to experience the power of Christ's sin-cleansing blood -  
Help me make that plain!

Each one is precious, Loving Father, to me and to Thee!  
Each one must know Thee in order from sin to be set free -  
May each one of them personally come to the Savior of Calvary -  
Help me tell that to them again!

May my attitude, Holy Father, make clear what I believe!  
May each one of them personally in faith the Savior receive -  
For the sake of the Lord Jesus, let no one them deceive -  
Help me to give meaning to them,

**In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
Amen.**

## **Job 1:6-12**

### **AN UNUSUAL SCENE**

In this passage of scripture, we are allowed to have a glimpse of a council in heaven in which heavenly creatures such as angels came to give account to God. There are a number of "families" that have appointed roles to fill in God's plans. Each is responsible to do what God wants in the sphere of His choosing. In the human family there are different roles to fill. The Jews are a chosen earthly people God had intended to be a kingdom of priests, but who did not live up to the terms of the covenant He made with them. Those in the church of God today have a position in the body of which Christ is the Head, but in this body each person has a role to fill having been gifted by God to do certain work.

From all nations God is choosing a bride for His Son, to be intimate participants in the ages to come in showing the "exceeding riches of His grace." This glimpse into the heavenly sphere lets us know that those in heaven know at least some of what is happening on earth. "The sons of God (angels)" must have been giving reports regarding the tasks in which they have been involved. The fact that Satan (Adversary) was there as well, makes it plain to us that he is here on earth, but is limited to the space he is in at the moment.

"Going to and fro," and "walking up and down" covers east and west as well as north and south. The whole world lies in the hand of the wicked one, so our adversary is not limited as to where he can go. Of particular concern to believers is that we read of him observing the life of Job and knowing pretty much all that he did. He is also able to influence what a believer who is acting in the flesh might say. Temptations come from Satan, but in the same way our Lord Jesus Christ dealt with the temptations in the wilderness, we are able to gain victory over temptations when we apply the word of God to present needs. "When we "resist the devil" he flees. We can overcome him by the "blood of the Lamb."

Another great encouragement to those who love the Lord and live by faith, is that God makes a "hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side." Satan has no way to get through that hedge without the permission of the Lord. When God allows Satan to touch a child of God, there is some divine purpose in it. It may be for teaching, or it may be for testimony as in the case of Job.

Satan despises human beings, likely because he got the first humans, Adam and Eve, to succumb to his enticements in the garden of Eden at the beginning of human history. He has been taking advantage of human weakness ever since. However, when a person is born again into the kingdom and family of God, he does not have the power to control the situation nor to manipulate the child of God.

Even Satan is accountable to God. He is limited to time, space and matter. He does not have access into our minds, nor can he foretell what is going to happen. God's people can overcome satanic attacks through God's power in us. God has put limitations on what the devil can do. It is important for believers to remember he is an implacable enemy, and will use every means at his disposal to defeat the children of God. That is the only way for him to defy God. It is essential that every believer "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you."

The insinuation in Satan's response to God's approval of Job's blameless and upright life, and his fear of God and shunning of evil, is that he lived this way in order to get what he wanted from God. Implied in the attitude of Satan toward Job is that he was a covetous hypocrite who really didn't love God at all, nor was he sincere in the way he lived, talked and raised his family.

God may allow testing times for us like he did for Abraham, Job and other people of faith. Some reasons for this are that it brings glory to God. The faithfulness and wise conduct of a child of God brings honor to our Gracious Father. The believer who passes through testing times with dignity, integrity and grace is often honored as others marvel at their positive testimony of faith. Another reason is that it is God's right to purify and sanctify His people now. Our testing times are here, where we can suffer for His name's sake. Also, many believers are encouraged to be steadfast and unmovable. We are to always, in every situation, abound in the work of the Lord in spite of difficulties, so that those who look on will see a strong testimony of faith in God.

Job was confident in his life for the Lord, because he knew his appreciation of God's interest was real. Adversity strengthens real faith and exposes counterfeit Christianity for what it is. When our faith is deeply rooted in our God, we will be able to go through serious trials and suffering. With our confidence in God, we accept the fact that God has allowed this for His own sovereign reasons. He knows what will happen to us, and is greater than any foe or form of opposition that is against us.

I will never understand all that happens to me each day  
But I do know I am responsible for all I do and say  
And I know God doesn't reveal ahead of time each step along life's way  
But I am sure of this, He is with me to keep me from wandering away.

I feel so insignificant in the wonderful universe God made  
I have experienced the bitterness of cold and enjoyed the coolness of shade  
My faith in the Living God is so assuring, and His joy I never want to trade  
Even though Satan may accuse me like Job, trusting in Christ, I'm not afraid.

Likely quite often, though unknown to me, Satan does before God me accuse

And likely he hopes that if he presses hard enough, my testimony I will lose  
I know he often uses temptation wanting me his evil plans to choose  
So, in order to stop his evil attempts, the holy scriptures I will use.

It happened to those like Job in the past, and will happen to me again  
The devil tries to hinder our work, and stop what God did begin  
He knows even though I am a child of God, sometimes I'm prone to sin  
But in faith by grace and the power and strength of God, the victory I will win.

**“O Father, this scene in the book of Job, although it is disconcerting in one way, has given me greater assurance that ‘my times are in Thy hand.’ In every situation and in every temptation, I know Thou are with me - and I am so very grateful. Thanks, from the depths of my heart. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

### **Job 1:13-22**

#### **FOUR DISASTERS**

We may not realize how much is at stake in the battle for souls. At first reading we might think this whole contest is unfair and unequal. The god of this world against one righteous man seems like there would be no hope for the man at all. But when we stop to realize who we are as believers and the fact that God is in us, with us and for us, then we can look at terrible disasters through different eyes. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

A young lad called David defeated the giant Goliath by the power of God working with him. His occupation as a shepherd helped him see beyond the power of Satan, to victory when even a stone is guided by God in whom we place our trust. Elijah triumphed over 450 idolatrous false prophets by the power of God working through him. After waiting the whole day for the futility of false religion to play itself out, he prayed simply and fervently to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel that he would, "Let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again." Now it was Job's turn and he was able to defeat Satan's purpose by the power of God working in him.

The people of God are not helpless in the battle for the minds and souls of men and women. But we need to remember that we "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." It is not a losing battle in which we are found, even though we may at times seem overwhelmed by the pressures of events, losses or suffering. "Greater is He that is you, that he that is in the world."

In one day, Job offered burnt offerings on behalf of his family lest they sin in some way. Nomadic Arab Bedouins took Job's basic means of producing food from the ground. When the Sabeans took that which made his business prosper, his cattle and his donkeys used for plowing the ground and moving produce, he would have felt a great loss. Then when a terrible lightning storm killed 7000 sheep and the shepherd who tended them, a fundamental supply of food and a source of clothing would have been lost in an instant. Likely the marauding Chaldeans who were hoping for success in war, took his camels and killed his camel drivers. The means of distributing his wealth and making money in trade was gone. No longer could he transport what he produced and his business was lost. To top off that terrible day of disaster, an unusually strong wind demolished the house of his oldest son where his family of children had met for a party. The house collapsed and those inside died.

The number four often symbolizes totality. These four disasters took away all that by natural would have given his life a purpose. A successful business can be lost quickly. Enemies and opposition can overcome us when we least expect it. But to lose one's whole family at one time is almost more than one can conceive. A lifetime of work gone in one day; and then the whole family gone the same day - how hard that would be to understand such unexpected losses in such unexpected ways.

Faith and spiritual wisdom at such times is an amazing testimony to God's work in a person's life. To be able to worship God in view of such losses is evidence of a work of grace in a man's soul that gave him the wisdom to see things through God's eyes. Faith gives access to grace. Tribulation with all its loss produces patience, which in turn adds to our experiences in life that gives us hope in hopeless situations. Our hope is in God, and that does not make us ashamed of our love for our Lord. It is a wonderful testimony to the people around us when a believer retains his or her composure during great adversity and loss - especially of our spouse or children.

Job acknowledged God's right of control over everything he had. His possessions, even his children came from the gracious hand of God. So, his only consolation could come from the Lord who gives and takes away. It was God's in the first place because God gave it all to him as a stewardship. God gave it once, and He could do it again if it was His sovereign will. Job in no way accused God of doing anything wrong. He recognized that basically all he had left was God, but that was enough. He "blessed the name of the Lord."

If God allows us to prosper, that is no excuse for pride or self-satisfaction on our part. When everything we have been entrusted with as a stewardship is taken away, that is when our moment of truth is come. That is when the reality of our faith is demonstrated. "Blessed be the name of the Lord" is not just a religious phrase to be used at church gatherings, but when we gain or lose that with which we have been given.

Grief in times of loss is not necessarily sinful. Job did not hide his grief, but even after losing everything, his response was to fall down in humility and worship the Lord. In true worship we acknowledge God in His sovereign grace to us, and like Job, give honor and praise to God for what we once had, and for the fact that in spite of our loss, we know our God is unchangeable.

The actions of Job were the exact opposite of that which Satan had accused Job. He had said to God, "He will curse Thee to Thy face." Instead Job said, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." One of the things we learn in this first chapter of the book, is that we need to pronounce death to self-life, and that blessing can come by way of suffering.

**Job 1:22.** *"In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."* Job 2:10. *"In all this did not Job sin with his lips."*

### JOB!

**"Consider him"** Satan, look carefully; the life that Job lives certainly pleases God.  
**"Perfect,"**- upright the word really means; he's open, like a book for all to be seen.  
**"Upright,"** in morals and in business too; his life's an example for me and for you.  
**"Feared God,"** for Job, he was truly no dreamer; he owed all his blessings to his living Redeemer  
**"Eschewed evil,"** when it showed, he did turn away; he lived his life in his Redeemer's shown way.  
**"Sent and sanctified,"** all the children knew, their father cared, and acted too.  
**"Rose up early,"** the rising sun, saw him praying for every one.  
**"Offered burnt offerings,"** to his God he came; each child in turn in the offerings he named.  
**"Continually,"** each day, he did never quit; he knew that his children all needed it.  
**"Escaped alone,"** everything was gone; of all things he had, now he never had a one.  
**"Arose, and rent,"** his grief it was real; his broken heart now unable to heal.  
**"Shaved his head,"** like a slave he's now seen: before his God, and his enemy keen.  
**"Fell down,"** Job's now lying so low on the ground; his loss is clearly known by those all around.  
**"Worshipped,"** and how can it truly be; that Job, at this time, a worshipper he?  
**"Sinned not,"** amazing! Under such circumstance; to sin he did not, would not take such chance.  
**"Nor charged God foolishly,"** God always knows best; he was different it's clear from all of the rest.  
**"Retain thine integrity,"** under pressure so great; even to his wife such an impact was made.  
**"Did not sin with his lips,"** no wrong words could be heard; Job knows his God could do as He would.  
The example of Job is important to me; if I lost all I have; then how would I be?  
Would I fuss and complain, would I grumble aloud; would I shout out my anger until I drew a crowd?  
Would I try to get help or gain sympathy; from those all around, would I want their pity?  
Or would I have learned from this great man of old; that God can be trusted to do as He would?  
My mind's true desire, and my inner heart too; is to be Job-like and to my God always be true.  
**"My Redeemer's"** the key, I truly believe; Job did what he did, for his God he did live.  
He's my Redeemer too, and on Him I depend; to make me like Him when the pressures do bend.  
I trust Him, I love Him, Him I want to please; so that from my life too can clearly be seen;  
Evidence that shows that no matter what happens; God is right because He has the pattern.  
So, all I need know is whatever He allows; is His right to send and to His will I do bow.

**“O all-seeing God, who knows the end from the beginning: I have a lot, and I recognize it all came from You. Give me the courage to truly say and mean, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **Job 2:1-10**

### **IN ALL THIS**

There are times and places where accountability to God is given now by "the sons of God" and Satan that define the limits of their activity. They are able to go so far and no further. We know in our future as believers there is going to be an accounting of things done in the body at the judgment seat of Christ. The great white throne judgment will surely clarify to unbelievers the extent of their sin before God. They will be judged out of the book of things done by the Judge of the Universe who knows every thought and intent of the hearts of human beings. When that account is made before God, everyone will understand that God is real, and He knows every thing about everybody.

It is of interest that there is this glimpse into a second gathering before God within a quite short time to which Satan was again allowed to attend. Again, God draws attention to Job, His servant, who was a very unique and special person. After everything is gone from his life that is important, his lively-hood, his family and his hopes for the future on earth, he still loves God for who He is, not just for what He gives. Again, the Lord points out the four points of Job's righteousness, and then adds a fifth one - integrity. Job's loyalty to the Lord was solidly and fully intact. Even though he had lost all his possessions and his children through no fault of his own, he remained faithful to God.

Presently God allows Satan to run the world. He is "the god of this world who blinds the minds of them which believe not..." He knows where the weak spots are in nations and even in people who he has made a point of his personal attack. God allows things that are painful to happen to us which we may not understand nor can conceive of a reason for which it has come upon us. These are not necessarily for punishment or to bring a change of behavior, but simply to have us draw closer to God personally.

Job continued to fear God and shun evil in spite of Satan's attempt to destroy him without a cause. We all have weaknesses and Satan will try to find them in order to take advantage of those who are not on guard against his wiles. It is God who allows testing of every kind He had allowed Satan to cause Job to lose his finances and his family. Now he was allowed to attack his physical body with painful, constant physical suffering. By God giving the explanation of the reasons for Job's troubles at the beginning of the book, we are able to understand ahead of time that there is a purpose behind all God allows in our lives.

Whatever the disease that afflicted Job was, it was so great that he itched, had ulcerous sores, his bones were affected, his skin was dark and peeling, and it affected his mind with terrifying nightmares. Behind Satan's attack on God's servant, was an even more sinister attack on God. He implied that God had to pay people to love Him. If He didn't entice them with things, good health, food etc. they would not have any interest in Him. That is a fundamental charge against the character of God. Unfortunately, that is the opinion of many unbelievers today. "Why should I believe in God? What has He done for me?"

A lot of parents in this affluent society today are determined that their children "will not have to go through what I went through." So, they make sure they do not want for anything. They will give them what they want, take them where they want to go, and let them do what they want to do. They are allowed to eat what they want and reject what they don't want. It appears that behind this kind of thinking and practice, the hope is they will be happy and love their parents. The fact is that only spoils them, and it often has the opposite effect. It is like paying our children to love us. This was and still is, the charge of Satan against holy and righteous living.

The love true believers have for the Lord God is because of who He is, not just because of what He has done for us, and is doing now. The tests that God allows to come on us is to refine us, purify us, prepare us for faithful service, and make our life of faith shine as a light reflecting our Lord. He endured the cross and despised the shame that was heaped upon Him when He suffered for us. He had an eternal glory always, but by the things that He suffered, when He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, there was a brighter glory yet. That was because of what He suffered. All of those who will forever praise Him, and His bride that will share life with Him will give Him greater honor than He had before He suffered.

When God's people suffer today, there is something that comes out of that which is of greater honor and glory, than if life went on full and successful without the pain of suffering having been endured. Whatever

sickness Job had, whether it was psychosomatic dermatitis or some other disease, he ended up sitting in a pile of ashes scraping himself with a piece of broken pottery. It was then his wife gave him the exact counsel Satan wanted. "Curse God and die."

The foolish women Job referred to were not lacking in intelligence, but were surly in their attitude of lawlessness and ungodliness. Whatever she meant; she was no help to Job. Her words in this chapter were words of temptation and blame against God. In chapter nineteen she rejected him because of his bad breath likely caused by the sickness he was going through. When Eve was tempted by Satan, righteous Adam was standing there in the integrity of righteousness that had never been tested. Before ever sinning, she succumbed to the words of Satan's deception and both she and Adam tragically fell.

When Job's wife told Job, the sinner, to curse God and die, he stood firm against that temptation. His righteousness was not in himself, but was the righteousness which is by faith in the Lord. That is the kind of righteousness that is imputed when we realize we have been redeemed and brought nigh to God by His grace. That righteousness lasts because faith claims its power through our Lord Jesus Christ. We love the Lord and the testing times reveal that power of God in us to stand against all the onslaughts of the devil when we put on the whole armor of God and resist the devil.

The triumph of the patience of Job over the malice of Satan, and of faith in God over the suffering imposed by the world, the flesh and the devil, sets the stage for the succeeding chapters of the book of Job. The seal of triumph in adversity teaches us that faithfulness to God and love for our Lord Jesus Christ, gives the power to live out in a practical way, the eternal life God gave us. In every situation we might face in life, God is on our side. Those are wonderful words that are written: "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly [1:22]." " In all this did not Job sin with his lips [2:10]."

**Job 2:3.** *"And the Lord said unto Satan, 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 movest me against him without cause."*

#### **CONSIDER MY SERVANT.**

A public man who can be fully trusted  
By those who themselves have often lusted  
With the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes;  
But God's servant is one whose uprightness lies  
Deep in his character linked with reverence for God  
And he will not be satisfied with a wink or a nod,  
When his reputation is at stake and his testimony too.  
He is consistent and faithful in all he is called upon to do.

When evil raises its head, he turns and goes the other way.  
When temptation lurks, he avoids it and waits for another day.  
The way he lives gives a plain message to others,  
"I am God's servant. Sin I cannot cover."  
When popular trends turn others away from what is right,  
He makes it a point to let his life shine as a light.  
He knows that words spoken in haste cannot be recovered.  
He knows what people think hidden, God will someday uncover.

He knows what pleases God, and is not too concerned with men.  
He seeks to save his children by offering all he can  
To God on their behalf knowing that in youth there are mistakes.  
And so, to set them apart, sacrifices to God he makes.  
He is watched by Satan; it seems like at every step the enemy wants him to fail.  
But by real faith and child-like trust in God he always will prevail.  
His name is spoken with good regard, his reputation is intact.  
He is noted for his character traits and the honest way he acts.

To be a servant of God on earth is not the easiest thing to do.  
As representatives of our risen Lord, we Christ-likeness should show.  
A blameless man is hard to find, but there are some around  
Who are known as upright men; their words are true and sound.  
There is no doubt they fear the Lord; their God they want to please.  
When others let go, he still hangs on to righteousness and his integrity.  
God knows who we are and what we can stand, and still to Him be true.  
We will be prepared for what is ahead if we trust God all the way through.

**“Father, I am asking today if my reputation needs some major work done on it. If so, please do what is needed to make me fruitful. May these meetings we are holding bring glory to Thee and blessing to Thy people and the unsaved people. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

### **Job 2:11-13**

#### **THREE FRIENDS**

After the historical background of the book of Job is given and we get behind the scenes in heaven, there is an introduction of three men who must have been known in that part of the Middle East as wise men. They are called "Job's three friends" although a lot of what they had to say isn't what friends usually say to each other. They must have had previous dealings with each other and shared an interest in philosophical discussions in the past.

Several months had passed [7:3] and Job's condition had deteriorated to where they could not recognize him when they saw him. The three parts of a human being: body, soul and spirit, each have an effect on the other parts of our personhood. All that Job was going through physically and emotionally was ravaging his body to such a condition his friends loudly wept to see what had happened to him.

This condition opens the whole poetic part of the book, and to the center problem in the lives of many people, namely, "Why do people suffer?" As we get older, we become more conscious of the brevity of life, and suffering physically and emotionally becomes more personal. When it comes close to those we know or to our siblings, we wonder when is our turn coming? The suffering of humanity in general is because "death has passed upon all men, for all have sinned." But in specific and personal ways we are inclined to look for reasons to point at and say this has happened because of that which is wrong.

It is into this setting Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar who had heard of Job's losses, came together and agreed that they should go and be with their friend in his time of suffer and seek to console him. To go to be with a friend who is in trouble is a good thing. The Lord Jesus said that when we visit one who is sick, it is the same as if we visited Him. If we visit one who is falsely accused and in prison, He considers it a visit to Him. It may not be what we say that is important, but the fact that someone cares enough to come to see us that can give emotional comfort to a grieving heart - and maybe even a measure of healing.

We really don't know the reason God allows what He does to happen to our friends. That is His business. Our part is to help bare the burdens they face. When the three friends saw the state Job was in, sitting in the dump instead of his home, disfigured by boils and disease, scraping himself to try to find some relief, ravaged by pain and loss until he was beyond recognition, they threw dust up in the air, cried with loud wailings and tore their own clothes. Then as the dust settled on them - they were stunned to silence, and sat down on the ground where they were.

Their initial reaction was likely to be filled with compassion for his grief and they wanted to identify themselves as friends with him. They could see his grief was too deep for words to bring him comfort. Deep, profound grief cannot be described because few ever experience the same things. Words that have such meaning are very few, and mere words can have the effect of trivializing what is so intense, and may be thought of a patronizing the suffering person. Wisely those three friends soon quieted down and sat silently as a way to try to comfort Job. They couldn't have done any more to help at the time by talking to him because they didn't understand God. They didn't understand Job either. They didn't even understand themselves and that they were actually going to be used by Satan to condemn rather than comfort.

When we think we have all the answers to a matter, that is evidence of our inability to be of any real help to one who is suffering. It is not necessary to always have something spiritual to say to one who is hurting from a terrible loss. It may seem too pat or smooth to one who is going through the valley of the shadow of death. A compassionate facial expression, a brief touch on a hand or shoulder may convey with silence, that quiet love is in the room. That can be of more value than a conversation or exposition of a biblical passage. There is a time for everything.

Seven days is a long time for four men to sit in silence and wait for something to happen or someone to say something. The three friends were philosophical thinkers who did not have a clear knowledge of God and His way. It was very likely those men sat there meditating on what they were going to say after Job opened up to them. Strangely none of them offered any real words of consolation. They came from three different backgrounds, so each would look at Job's condition from their own perspective. Each one would be thinking, "Job must be an awful sinner to have this happen to him. He must have kept things hidden and

undercover for so much to happen at once. God is punishing him, so we need to help him get his life straightened out."

Eliphaz was a Temanite. Teman was a grandson of Esau so he could have been a forceful man who had experienced a lot in life. Bildad was a descendant of Shuah who was a son of Abraham and his second wife, Keturah. His background was likely filled with a lot of religious tradition. Zophar the Naamathite was likely from an Arab heritage and much of that mindset comes from assumption rather than reality. Between them they would each have brought a different perspective from the others as to what caused Job's problems and how to deal with them.

Silence can be very helpful at times, but if it continues beyond a certain point, it can make a situation very uncomfortable. When people just sit and look at each other, after awhile it becomes the silence of accusation as each, waits for someone else to do something. When that happens, the consolation that could have helped the one who is suffering, gives the impression that something bad has happened here and we need to find out who to blame. But because no one wants to start being a bearer of bad news, no one says anything to begin seeking the solution for fear they will be challenged.

The long journey to come and comfort Job and show him that they cared for him and what was happening, was good. Even the loud crying, dust, and silence in the dust for a significant amount of time was not all that bad. But when silent condemnation accompanies long looks, unusual facial expressions and the shifting of countenances, then it has gone too far. The whole experience of Job from spiritual and personal success to the depths of loss, sorrow, pain and on-going suffering, now opens to Job's desperate words of unrestrained dialogue.

### **Job 3**

#### **THE POWER OF PESSIMISM**

Beginning in chapter 3, with the lament of Job and concluding with his exclamations of innocence in chapters 29-31, there is a series of poetic speeches between Job and those men who came to be with him. Then a younger man, Elihu speaks four times and directs the attention of those men and those of us who read the text to how God disciplines, how God rules, God's justice and God's greatness. Following his speeches, God Himself speaks, and Job answers God directly. The conclusion of the book returns to the historical form of writing.

Hebrew poetry is quite different than the rhythm and repetition of sounds that are used in English poetry. Hebrew poetry uses rhythm of thoughts. It addresses the same subject in two or more different ways of expressing parallel ideas. Job said he wished he would "Die at birth," and/or "Perish when I came from the womb." Both are the same thought, but the thought is expanded a bit when said in two different phrases. Contrasting thoughts are also used in Hebrew poetry to make the impact on the reader greater. Figures of speech and colloquial language is also used to paint word pictures. Many of the colloquialisms used in the English language comes from the words of the Bible.

- At the eleventh hour
- At your wit's end
- The blind leading the blind
- By the skin of your teeth
- To cast pearls before swine
- Eat, drink and be merry
- To fall by the wayside
- Feet of clay
- A fly in the ointment
- He that toucheth pitch
- The land of milk and honey
- The land of Nod
- A leopard cannot change its spots
- Like a lamb to the slaughter
- A millstone about your neck
- To move mountains
- There is nothing new under the sun
- The handwriting is on the wall

These are all phrases that we hear in everyday language that come from Hebrew poetry and Hebrew literature.

In the story of Job's suffering, the source was Satan who was temporarily allowed to use physical and natural disasters to show the character of one of God's servants. Suffering in that case came from Satan. Suffering may also come because of sin as in the case of sinning believers in the assembly at Corinth. Our suffering may also come as a result of someone else's sins as in war between nations when many innocent bystanders suffer and die. Some suffering comes from avoidable disasters that could have been prevented if we would have taken precautions ahead of time.

The startling thing about Job's first words when he broke the silence of seven days, is the bitterness that burst out of his mouth at the first words. For one who was noted for his patience and piety, it seems quite out of character with the man. He began with a curse against himself. Never did he curse God. His complaint is that if he had never been born, all that happened in loss, suffering and physical pain would not have been done to him. There is underlying this thought in the case of Job, and also in the case of those who take their own lives, that God makes mistakes. It is like a challenge against God's wisdom in letting a person be born in the first place if bad things are going to happen to them.

Patience and despair are close companions. Patience follows tribulation when one's mind is stayed on God. But when the mind focuses on some thing or someone else, the thought that comes to the forefront is, "Why did this happen to me?" "What did I do to make this unfair problem dump on me?" It may have been that in the seven days of silence sitting with Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar who had come to comfort him, his mind would have turned to philosophical reasons that they had discussed in previous conversations. If we allow our minds to stray from the power and simplicity of faith when problems arise, we are in danger of losing our peace in times of pain, and contentment in times of complexity. Philosophical ideas make for interesting discussions and arguments that can be enjoyable. Likely the friends had talked before about the "Whys" of life and hope on previous occasions.

Job's first outburst was not a prayer of anguish or a statement of his faith, but a curse on himself for ever being born and the day he was born. Peace in tribulation and suffering is very hard to maintain unless we deliberately focus our attention and thoughts on the Lord Himself. The "Who" is far more important than the "Why". The "Why" may be finally understood when we find the "Way". The "Why" emphasizes what was lost rather than what is found in the "Who" of our faith that looks forward.

When the way of wisdom and patience is ignored or lost, there is bitterness, impatience and deep-seated complaints that are ready to take their place. Looking back at the "What ifs" of our past life has no real value in the present or the future. Brooding over present circumstances is bad enough, but when one is sitting with other "friends" who brood in silence, one is paying attention only to the present misery and a cloud of gloom comes over everyone there. The "darkness and shadow of death" overwhelmed the memories of joy and fellowship Job once had with the Lord. In his monologue, Job curses the day he was born and then this complaint turns into a lament in verse eleven as the "Whys" overcome his mind, and darkens his soul.

He considered miscarriage, abortion or crib-death better than life. He thinks that the state of being confined in a grave would be better than living with suffering. Even today we hear some people say without thinking when a person dies, "Well, they're better off now." That is so when a person is a child of God, but it is not so if a person is an unbeliever. Wicked people, fools, kings, world leaders and paupers are all thought by many people to be at rest when they die. Job was looking at life and death from the "Why" point of view rather than the "Who, What and Where" that is really the major importance of our existence now and forever.

This attitude can happen to believers today who get so involved in the affairs of this world that they leave no time for God, His word, prayer and the assembling together with other Christians. Job's final "Why" makes clear what his basic problem was. Why does God give life to us and then fence us in with restrictions and allow us to suffer loss, darkness of soul, and disappointments? He indicated that he had feared losing all that was good, given by the hand of God, and now what he had feared, had happened.

Our lives are not given for mere happiness and success, but are our opportunity to serve God and give Him the honor and glory that is due Him. Our lives are not based on what we feel, but who we love. God loves us without measure both in success or suffering, in loss or gain, in sickness and in health, in pain or in prosperity.

*Job 3:23. "For the thing which I greatly feared has come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me."*

**PAIN.**  
What can I do when there is nothing I can do?  
This pain is too hard to bear.

When there is no relief and I am pierced right through -  
Is there no one who can this burden share?  
Others cannot seem to help and there is no real relief -  
And I am totally at my wit's end.  
Furthermore, beside this pain is a terrible grief -  
Is there not some comforting friend;  
Who can come alongside and take some of it away?  
"My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"  
Then I am stopped to think, God allowed this today -  
There are things happening that I cannot see.

My faith is surely tested and my fortitude too -  
God knows me better than anyone else.  
Still, I am wondering if before this event is through,  
Will I fail my Lord - will I even know myself?  
How can God get glory when I am powerless - so weak?  
What possibly could He gain from this?  
There are so many questions and the answers I seek -  
I know my life is bound up in His.  
Through this dark valley I thought I could pass,  
And leave a good testimony behind.  
But now I am in it, I find it very hard to cast  
My burden on Him and relief to find.

O Lord who knows all, on Thee I call,  
Please take this pain away from me.  
But if it is Thy will to leave it with me still,  
Grant me some glimmer of hope to see.  
In this distress, please help me to bless  
Some who may be in worse straits than I.  
Give me the faith and some special kind of grace,  
So that I truly on Thy will do rely.  
If there are some lessons, some real good reasons  
That I can learn through this trial -  
Then help me to seize them in this difficult season  
So that my Savior and Lord I will not fail.

**"O Lord God, I know I haven't been through Job's trials - at least not very many of them. But for the trials of this day and the responsibilities too - please give Thy servant the needed grace and faith to trust Thee and serve Thee without question or quibbling. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

#### **Job 4 - 5**

##### **IS EXPERIENCE THE ANSWER?**

Likely Eliphaz was the oldest of the three men who came to comfort Job, but each of them came with pat answers to the question, "Why does suffering happen to good people?" Eliphaz opens his comments in a patronizing manner indicating his confidence in knowing why Job suffered. He considered he was the source of wisdom because of his experience in observing life for many years and experiencing many of the things that happen in life. He figured he had the experience needed to explain to Job why his problems were so great, and was passing on his advice from first-hand knowledge by the power of observation. His attitude was, "I have personally observed how God works and I have Him figured out." His answer to the dilemma was based on EXPERIENCE.

His approach to Job after a few diplomatic words was, "I have been there, done that," and I know what others don't know because of my wisdom of years and experiences in life. Then after acknowledging Job's piety and helpful concern for others, a paraphrase of what he said was something like this, "You are a good man, however, since you brought it up and I have been sitting here in silence seven days, I will now tell you why all this has happened to you. You are a secret sinner. There is something in your life you have been hiding."

This philosophy is held by many people today, if not by most people. "Bad things happen to bad people. Good things happen to good people." This has been watered down by many so they say, "Do the best you can, and God will overlook the rest." Some things Eliphaz said were okay, but his opinions regarding life were only opinions and not facts. He assumed a good and innocent person will not suffer. He also assumed that people who do suffer, do so because of past sins. His application to Job was he was suffering because he had done something wrong in God's eyes.

It is true that whatever we sow we reap. It is true that if we complain, foment division and rebellion, punishment will eventually come. But it is also very easy for us to make false assumptions based on our own experience. It is of God's mercies that we ourselves are not consumed. So, after Eliphaz's diplomatic words he said something like this, "Do you mind if I tell you something? Whether you mind or not I am going to tell you anyway. You are a wimp, a fake, a weak man who looked like he had everything together. You could tell others what you thought they should hear and do, but you can't follow your own advice."

Not everyone is qualified to advise on spiritual matters. A spiritual man can give spiritual advice that come from a biblical perspective. Even though a man may be up in age and had a lot of life's experience, that in itself does not qualify us to speak for God. Our own opinions are not valid if they are not consistent with what God says in His word. To mislead people can easily happen if we consider ourselves to have a kind of expertise based on our education, human experience and age. God's ways are not our ways and God's thoughts are not our thoughts.

Those who know God communicate with God in prayer and listen to God speak through His word guided by the Holy Spirit. Such people can know God from experiences with Him and know why bad things happen to good people. In the Bible we have examples of what we should do and should not do. When we keep God's truth in context and submit to it, we can understand things from His divine perspective, rather than our own so very finite experience.

From the lofty place of his inflated ego Eliphaz looked down on Job and said, "I have seen ..., " and further, "Who has perished being innocent?" This man was wrong and was being used by Satan to misrepresent God. He was implying God destroys His children who sin. We know from the scriptures that God disciplines His children, but never destroys them with a "blast of anger."

This same man claimed to have had a special experience with God when he had a dream that was so vivid that the hair on his head stood up. What was the wonder of this dream or what was so profound? His statement was almost like a child would say, "Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?" The obvious answer is, "Of course not." Eliphaz was simply making a big thing about himself, not about God and man. This very trivial comment demeaned his experience claim.

Some people have a way of telling other people how things are and how things should be done, and they have never experienced it themselves. Eliphaz was a man like that. He was of no help at all to Job. Some of the things he said we right but did not apply to Job's problem in any way,

**Job 4:4-5.** *"Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled."*

#### **FALSE ASSUMPTIONS.**

We may never know the reason we sometimes fall on hard times.

Perhaps we know on one occasion, and others no reason we find.

Because a person is a child of God doesn't mean our sailing is smooth.

Difficulties and painful experiences come lest our dependence on God we loose.

When God chooses to use one of His own for an example: that is His sovereign right.

Satan may think he has gained some ground until he hears your songs in the night.

Out of the darkness of despair and grief, often comes some of the greatest praise.

God has ordained this as a training time that will bless you the rest of your days.

It is not only because of some sinful deed: painful problems descend on us.

It may be that there is no other way God can teach us to place  
on Him simple trust.

When we don't know a reason for the pain, then we turn to our Lord in faith -

And give Him the burden, and ask Him for the needed grace.

Others will have opinions that may be false - a little of it may be true.

But God only knows all the reasons behind the difficulties we are passing through.

If there is some part of our life we know really needs some correcting -

Apply ourselves to change and what we know needs doing - act now nothing neglecting.

Never assume God is trying to hide from you what you need to know.

He is a gracious and loving Father who wants us in grace to grow.

The process of growth in spiritual things will call for toil and labor.

If the task or problems seem great, it may be an act of divine favor.

We cannot assume if a thing is prolonged that some things are left undone.  
Our response to what God allows should be to deal with them one by one.  
Not very often can we rush right through and see a work properly completed.  
It has been my experience that God leaves a thing until His will is heeded.

To assume there is failure that can never be fixed is to give wrong place to doubt.  
The results of pain and suffering may continue until the desired results come about.  
So, in patience continue, do not let unbelief have its way by making false assumptions.  
With confidence in God and pressing forward in faith, the event will come to a conclusion.

**“O Father in heaven: I am looking ahead into the hours of this day before me, and wondering just how I can effectively fulfill what Thou dost expect from me today. I am sure it is Thy mind that I be well prepared for preaching tonight. And I know I need to be prepared for the meetings coming in Halifax. The hours between breakfast and supper need to be useful. Help me to use them well. Please, if it would bring glory to Thee, save some souls at this time. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

In chapter five Eliphaz makes dogmatic statements in regards to God dealings with Job but does not apply them to himself. He claimed that even though Job was a servant of God, the problems he had were the fruit of his own sins and to resent that is foolish, because it will lead to your death. He gave a thoughtless example from his supposed "experience" of Job being one of the foolish people who cursed everything he had. It is true that trouble, suffering and sin do often come as a result of disobedience. Trouble often comes from some stupid action. Trouble may come on a child because of a father's discernment and judgment. Trouble may be a form of discipline from a caring father who wants to preserve you from greater danger. Trouble is sometimes and means of teaching trust and patience. Trouble may be simply a way of smoothing out some rough edges. Troubles may come to get our hearts and minds back on the Lord and that which is useful.

Eliphaz gave some good truth and some sound advice, and even truth about God, but it didn't apply to Job and his difficulties. It is a common practice for people to use some scripture reference out of context to rebuke or trap someone else. We do not know when trouble happens if it is for chastening, correcting, strengthening or blessing. That is God's business and He allows things to come on us for His own reasons.

Sometimes people speak more truth than they know themselves or realize. Eliphaz listed seven troubles from which God can deliver us but though pain can cause us to grow in faith. Renewed prosperity does not always follow repentance but Eliphaz assumed it did. God can deliver from famine. He can deliver from war and the power of the sword. He can deliver from the power of slander by the tongue. He can deliver from destruction by natural disasters. He can deliver from having no food at all to eat. He can deliver from wild beasts and from unnatural death. All of these things are under the control of God and He will do that which is according to His good pleasure.

Along with some of the good things Eliphaz said, other things were just right off the wall of his own marred experience rather than his knowledge of God. Unfortunately, this dogmatic egotist concludes that Job was suffering because he had sinned, and he needed to go before God and present his case in that context. In his arrogant way in essence he said, "I have searched out and examined this matter from my years of experience, and what I say is right. So, listen and pay attention to me and what I say, and then apply what I have said to yourself."

**Job 5:17.** *“Behold, happy is the man God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.”*

#### **GOD'S CORRECTION.**

There are times when we really don't know what is wrong,  
And by His hand God guides us with some needed pressure.  
The ultimate purpose is to make the weak one strong -  
That from His child God will get more pleasure.  
Such a principle work in everyday life -  
Our own children need our guidance.  
It isn't that they have failed, but to preserve them from strife,  
We seek to give them the benefit of our experience.

There have been some times, and may be some times yet,  
When I have stepped out of the path of God's own choosing.  
There are criteria for blessing which I have not met,  
And the results of such acts are not amusing.

But God does want me to change some behavior,  
That may adversely affect both me and others.  
So, He corrects me in a way that reminds me that my Savior  
Is the One represented by me, my sisters and brothers.

I do not have the right when my Christian friends suffer  
To try and find out some wrong they may have done.  
To even surmise God's dealing with them is for something undercover  
Is out of line of me to think it of anyone.  
I may learn some lessons as I watch the ways God uses  
To bring blessings out of what to me was sad.  
There have been some special times when there have been some bruises,  
But the end result was to ultimately make them glad.

Lest I wrongly hasten to think events are to chasten -  
I should stop and consider God's correction.  
It may be just what is needed for a loving God to grace them  
With assurance they are part of God's election.  
And when it comes to me, it is wise for me to stop and see  
If there is some reason for the hand of God to be felt.  
When I have come to the conclusion that God still works on me,  
Then I am reminded that in me the Spirit of God dwells.

**“Father, please keep me from ever despising Thy chastening. May I never be found complaining because of Thy correction. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

#### **Job 6 -7**

#### **THE ARROWS OF THE ALMIGHTY**

In many conversations, not all the comments, opinions or advice given is relevant to the topic being discussed. Nor is it always good to pay attention to it. Job's response to Eliphaz's first discourse wasn't that he was claiming to be sinless, but that Eliphaz insisted that it is only the wicked who suffer and that wickedness wasn't the bent of his life. He had no idea as to why he was suffering. To him in this second discourse the question seemed to be, why did such extraordinary sufferings come on him when as far as he could see, he had not committed extraordinary sins.

He first speaks to his friends who he had thought were there to help him get through the terrible trial of suffering rather than aggravate his suffering by accusing him of secret sins. In the first verses of the chapter, he justifies his right to complain and reproves them for being without pity, and then he grieves over their treachery toward him. His mourning is like that of a wounded animal that has been struck by arrows but has not died. Animals do not make sounds of complaint or pain unless there is a serious reason. His complaint is because of the terrible losses and the pain of his body, soul and spirit for which he cannot conceive of a reason for which it has happened to him. He wouldn't be crying if nothing was hurting him.

Even his own life had become so abhorrent to him that it was like food that has no taste. What he wants now is to die because at least he would not die the death of the ungodly. He has hit the bottom and even there has found no help. He has no longer any reason for living. He had lost everything of value and even his wife had said, "Curse God and die." As far as he was concerned his future in the world was hopeless no matter what Eliphaz had said. To him it would be his greatest comfort if God would simply crush him to death. His life was unbearable and all of Eliphaz's challenge to suffer like a man under the discipline of God for his inherent wickedness was so much nonsense.

In the last part of chapter six he charges his "brothers" with being like a brook of water that freezes and is too cold to help, and then when it thaws, it becomes a flood that overflows its banks doing damage rather than helping. Then when the water is really needed, it dries up. They had a lot to say, but when the need was there, they were no help at all, giving him nothing of benefit. His contention was that their reason for being without and pity for him, is for fear that the same thing would happen to them.

To trust God in the good times in life is certainly to be commended, but to trust Him when all one had and hoped for is gone is a test of our faith. How far does our trust in the Lord really go? Difficulties and loss do test our limits of confidence in God. In effect Job had said to his friends, "Did I ask you to come and bring me something? Was I asking for you to pay a ransom for me? Did I ask you to deliver me from some enemy or rescue me?" The answer was no to all the questions. All he wanted from them was some real personal concern, comfort and understanding, and all he got was criticism.

He indicated to them, "If you have something to teach me, then than teach me. I'm teachable. I will listen." He wants them to be his teachers not prosecution lawyers looking for sins for which to convict him. He does not deny that he has sinned because he is a man, and humans do sin. But he does deny that he has deliberately, consciously sinned against God as they were accusing him.

**Job 6:24.** *"Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred."*

#### **COMPASSION.**

The power of words is such, that often little is better than much -  
The ears of a hurting soul need to hear the tone.  
Words pouring out in a flood, speak more of men than God -  
And the result is not better but worse when they are done.  
A facial expression shows, the one who suffers really knows  
If the depth of your interest is real and sincere.  
The thoughtful few words you say, spoken in a sensitive way,  
May be just what the listener needs to hear.

True compassion cannot be faked; it is possible to make  
A heavy load lighter by drawing near.  
You may not have to say a thing, but the fact that you did bring  
A genuine and caring concern, helps one to bear  
A time of grief and sorrow, as they wonder if tomorrow  
Will bring relief or if the trial will go on and on.  
Compassion makes one stay, until they're sure they can go away  
And nothing they could do is left undone.

God gives grace for every trial, but sometimes to walk a mile  
With a friend is the best thing you can do.  
In faith we take the time to help our friend to find  
The peace and comfort needed to carry through.  
True compassion brings some light, into the darkness of a night  
That seems to go on forever without end.  
God's grace may be seen, where a compassionate one has been,  
And the comforted one is glad for that person God did send.

We need to be aware - all around us, really everywhere  
Are people who need the blessing we can bring.  
They may have ups and downs; few smiles, a lot of frowns,  
And they need to hear the uplifting songs we can sing.  
May I always be willing and ready; not wishy-washy but steady,  
To bring normality to a situation.  
And by compassion and grace, mixed truth and a lot of faith,  
Turn grief and suffering into celebration.

**"Lord God, remember that grieving family for good today. They have been living in bitterness so long, I am not sure if they know what joy is. Help those who are there to give Thy Word and not sympathize with their complaints about others, but "lead them to the Rock that is higher than I." In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

In the seventh chapter, Job turns his pleas to God Himself (You - v.12). He knows God knows Him completely, in and out, and that God has full understanding of who he is and what he has done. His friends did not know God, Job or themselves, or if they did have a small understanding of deity, they didn't know him as Job, to whom God was his Redeemer and Friend,

Job said that even hired labor or slave laborers look forward to some rest and relief after a hard day's work at grinding labor. The suffering of heat and strain of work gives way to a cool evening and rest. But he got no rest at night. Worms were in his sores. His skin had broken and running scabs. Now even his friends didn't bring him any relief. As far as he was concerned, his life and hope were fading quickly away and the grave was waiting for him. So, he wanted God to hear what he had to say what was on his mind. "Why are You treating me like a monster? If You are wanting to refine me through suffering, what is happening to me is too much for this frail man. I don't want to keep on living like this with this suffering. Just let me die in peace instead of suffering this terrible misery. After all, what is man? You set Your heart upon him and then discipline him without a reason and without any letup until he despairs of living and can't even swallow his own spit."

Then Job makes another plea from his heart to God. "What did I do to You? Please let me know. Please pardon me and keep me from doing whatever I did that was wrong, and then I will lie down in the dust and die."

Satan's merciless attack and the terrible adversity, brought Job close to the place where his integrity was close to being in jeopardy. It is in times like this we must draw near to God and to His people. It is from them that love and compassion comes that is real. That may not take away the desperate things that happen to us, but in such times, we are in need of the kind of help that can only come from those who are holy. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." "God is my salvation; I will trust in Thee and not be afraid."

**Job 7:6-7.** *"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good."*

#### **HOPELESSNESS.**

He tried and tried, he tried again to break the awful bonds.  
He hoped when he rose on some bright morn the craving would be gone.  
But it was still there, day and night, never did it cease.  
The cravings caused by human sin he never was able to please.

That son was their real pride and joy, he seemed to have it all together.  
A wife and children added to his character, he was a real good father.  
But when he was cut off in the middle of his years, what were we to do?  
It was very hard not to question God, and not be angry too.

Not very many people, who have this disease, live very long at all.  
Why should I hope that I'm any different; or God hears me when I call?  
I could just call it "quits" right now, and somehow roll over and die.  
But probably some, who know me well, would urge me to give it a try.

Hopelessness can come at times when we least expect it.  
The loss of confidence, the uncertainty, makes one want to hit  
A wall or door in frustration as we see dreams going down the drain.  
And there is no relief that comes to ease the recurring pain.

Day after day everything is the same, there is no relief in sight.  
The nights are so long, even dreams are bad, so I wait for the morning light  
To give some hope, but hope doesn't come, where can I turn for aid?  
I've read the Bible and read a hymn or two, someone came in and prayed.

When it comes down to the bottom line, the only glimmer of hope is God.  
Men failed Him, His enemies attacked, He saw the heavy load  
His Son had to bear all alone with no help; His emotions were severely tested.  
After all this, and He endured a lot more; there came a time when He rested.

"This too shall pass," I don't know when or how, but hopeless one - put your faith  
In Him who endured so much for you, and is wanting to give needed grace  
To help you through this time when there seems no hope; all there is, is mourning.  
Remember this truth: God's nature is love, and He will bring joy in the morning.

**"Father, I have been thinking and praying for those who are experiencing hopelessness. If there is some way I should act or something I should do to alleviate their hopelessness, please make it known so I can act upon it. Give power to Thy servants at this time that we may preach the Word in full fellowship with Thee, and use it to bring light and life to the hopelessly lost ones. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

#### **Job 8**

##### **THE ANSWERS ARE WHAT TRADITION SAYS**

Bildad plainly stated his position as to why Job suffered by rebuking Job for claiming to be an innocent man. His point of view is that God does not do anything that is not just. In that he was correct because the justice of God is always right and is not changed by the ideas of men, or the things they might do to earn His favor. God does not overlook sin of any kind, and it is on that ground Bildad took his position. But God can, and does, forgive sins on a just basis. That is where Bildad was wrong. He said God is perfectly just so does not allow suffering in someone who is just. If a person is unjust and they suffer punishment, they are evil. Evil always fails and righteousness always prospers was his point.

Bildad seemed like he was a rude man even compared to Eliphaz. His assertion was that because God hadn't healed and restored Job to what he once was, something was still radically wrong with Job. His traditional view was that when things are right with Job he will get rich and increase in every way because that is what the traditionalists believe. He rejected Job's defense of suffering without evil on his part having caused it. He ignored Job's charge of his friends not caring for him and giving him a little bit of sympathy. He did not consider all the months that Job had already been suffering patiently compared to Job's few words of impatience

Bildad was of a harder personality than Eliphaz when he said that Job's children all died because they were all wicked people. His lack of sensitivity stands out like that of the Pharisees and those who know their own traditions but do not know God. More than just what happened to Job and his family, Bildad takes the position that there are no exceptions to what he believed. One can deduce that if something happens repeatedly it is a general rule, but to be dogmatic that it always happens like that in everyone is not right. He was not right in Job's case.

Satan took advantage of Job by using Bildad to introduce the judicial aspect of suffering because of offended justice. The impact would be to tempt Job to think, "Where is justice? Where is the God of justice?" In Bildad's hard-hearted opinion Job's children's wickedness was fatal because they had gone too far in sin. He affirmed there was hope for Job because he was still alive even though suffering, so he should seek God.

The wisdom Bildad claimed he had was passed down from one generation to the next through the ages, and he accused Job of arrogance by not thinking that the traditional beliefs Bildad adhered to applied to him. We have seen the teaching of evolution become a tradition from one generation of school teachers to the next until it is accepted as a fact in many different parts of the world. People don't seem to mind that it does not stand up to scientific scrutiny, normal human logic and reason, but is based on mere speculation and unfounded faith that defies common sense. Evolutionists will say, "The past will teach us," so from bits and pieces of stone and bone they think they have learned all about origins and the development of the earth and mankind. This has become a modern-day tradition that is so accepted, those who believe it mock and openly oppose those who do not.

Speculation that all that people say and do is changeless and must be adhered to, comes from man's changing opinions. Bildad used a garden and a swamp that can be changed by cutting it down as an illustration, as to how change comes, rather than basing reality both of things that change and things that don't on the word and character of an unchanging God. He made some assertions that were correct when he said that the happiness of the wicked will be gone very quickly and it is fragile because it is based on appearances. But he mistakenly applied all of his traditional opinions to Job who did not fit the portrait of the wicked. Eliphaz had implied that there was hidden wickedness in Job, but Bildad bluntly asserted that Job was inherently wicked.

Bildad was saying that he had learned all this when he was young. It was told to him by others and passed on as tradition, people have been believing it down through generations, so therefore it was true. He seemed to think that by examining Job's situation through the eyes of the past traditions, he could tell him why all those things had happened to him and what to expect. All of what he said was not wrong, but was of no help to one who is suffering in great agony of body, soul and spirit. Even his warnings regarding the ungodly were directed at Job. He said God will not cast off a perfect man which is true, but there is no one perfect.

God will not reject the blameless is right, and he will not "uphold evil doers is also right. But the "if you are pure and upright" statement more or less negated the brief words of encouragement Bildad gave at the end of his discourse. To really sum up what Bildad said about Job so far is that Job is a hypocrite or none of this would have happened to him.

Those who are Bible-believing Christians have placed their confidence and security on the unchanging foundation of God and His word. This is not blind faith based on traditions or ideas of man who sees nothing greater than themselves. This is based on the observable and tried and proven scriptures of truth. This is a secure foundation that is not able to be undermined by speculation and opinions without any basis in reason, logic and observable evidence.

**Job 8:6.** *"If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous."*

**FALSE ASSUMPTIONS.**

“Something severe has happened. He must have sinned -  
Or acted in some terrible way.

You know God wouldn't allow such a terrible thing,  
If in some way he had not gone astray!"  
The carnal man thinks he is the center of his world -  
And everything revolves around him.  
He doesn't consider that God allows things to happen -  
Even when it is not caused by sin.

If God thinks a person can be more spiritually mature,  
He may allow testing times to come.  
He is not limited in any way by time or space -  
He is maturing us on our way home.  
It may be a lingering problem we wish would go -  
But He leaves it to reveal His grace.  
It may be something happens in a moment of time  
To give us opportunity to exercise faith.

The people around may look askance  
Thinking that something was terrible we did.  
It was really so serious that God stepped in to judge  
Some secret sins we thought we'd hid.  
But they do not know the mind of the Lord -  
Or the reasons He sends a trial.  
The Lord Jesus was tempted in the wilderness forty days  
So, we could know he does not fail.

When some event happens in the lives of other people -  
Never hasten to find a reason to blame.  
The time will come when serious things happen to you -  
And you will get a taste of the same.  
Do not make assumptions without all the facts -  
You may be making a serious mistake.  
Pray for the one going through the hard time -  
Because God knows the way that he takes.

**"I am praying today Father, for that family that has gone through the loss of so many. The cemetery stones to testify to all they have been through. May they get some peace and loose the bitterness they have. May they experience Thy presence in a very real way. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

## **Job 9 - 10**

### **I NEED A DAYSMAN**

Sometimes when bad things happen to God's people, we find within us a certain antagonism toward God and perhaps even some bitterness that we hate to acknowledge, but it is there. We feel we are being treated unfairly and we become impatient with God. Job's questions and claims of not deserving the suffering he was enduring bordered on arrogance rather than grief and misunderstanding. The charges of his friends only made the sufferings of loss and pain he was enduring, worse as they provoked a bitter spirit in him.

The reply of Job to the charge of Bildad follows mostly the same pattern as his reply to Eliphaz. He responds to the criticism of Bildad in chapter nine and then more or less addresses his appeal to God personally in chapter ten. In a bit of a sarcastic way, Job tells Bildad, "You have said nothing that is helpful or new. I know the wicked perish, but why am I suffering so much? Tell me that! How can I be just with God?"

Job insisted he was not pretending to try to deceive God. He knew he could not win if he were to contend with God. God is totally wise and powerful in every way. He moves mountains and makes earthquakes. He controls the sun and has arranged the stars to be in specific places in the universe. He can walk on water as the Lord Jesus demonstrated when He was here. He is the Creator of everything and maintains everything. Even though He cannot be seen because He is a Spirit and passes right by me without me knowing it, He is real and involved in my life and all that happens to me.

Job knew God is the Judge, and he wouldn't know what to say if he saw Him. It is almost like Job has moved into a scene in a courtroom and God is the Judge wanting to prosecute him, but he doesn't know why. He doesn't know what he has done wrong. It seems to him to be an exercise in futility to plead his case before God. Job seemed to think God was determined to condemn him without him knowing what charges were laid against him. If only God would answer him, he would appeal to God for mercy.

In the lives of God's people there come times of doubt, despair and impatience. We long for someone who really knows us to come and help us or at least listen to us. Frustration, hurt and a sense of abandonment are very hard to deal with and yet not be bitter in our spirit. Meaningful suffering tests our faith. It is a common opinion of most people that effect always has a cause whether it be good or bad. It is not natural for us to think that good comes out of bad. A faithful servant of God has to look beyond himself or herself, and deliberately put confidence in the Lord and His intentions even if we don't know what they are.

Job said, "I do not know..." because if what happened to him was justified because of something he did not know was wrong, it seemed so unfair. If by trying to do what is right and being punished for it, why would a person even try to be righteous. Why not everyone just be wicked and do what they want. After all, the same result comes. Job knew that some earthly judges favor the wicked as if God was okay with it. Job expresses his thought that pointless suffering leads to pointless living, so why live.

Even if he cleaned up everything in life to his own satisfaction, God would put him so deep in filth that his clothes couldn't cover it up. He concludes that he could not win in court against a perfect God, and he cannot prove his innocence. He has only one hope. He needs a daysman. He needs a mediator to mediate a just conclusion between him and God. How thankful we all should be that One has been provided.

"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." The one and only daysman who can mediate for Job and us is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is qualified to do that because He bears God's image, and man's likeness [Phil.2:6-8; Heb.2:14-17]. He is both sinless and the sin-bearer [Isa.53:6-10; Eph.2:13-18]. He endured God's wrath, and brings God's righteousness [Rom.5:6-19]. He is both the sacrifice and the priest [Heb.7:27; 10:5-22]. He performed the office of the mediator by taking our nature [1Jn.1:1-3], and dying as our substitute [1Pe.1:18-19; 3:18]. By doing that our Lord Jesus Christ has reconciled us to God [Eph.2:16].

Job anxiously longed for such a person who would connect both God and him in reaching a conclusion for the suffering he was going through. He had become so weary of life that he lamented before God, who he thinks is being unfair to him. He claims to have sought to be righteous and can't figure out why he is so condemned, oppressed and despised. He steps very close to sin when he said that it seemed like to him God was acting in judgment like a mere mortal man. Obviously, Job is needing to learn some humility.

**Job 9:1-3.** *"The Job answered and said, I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just before God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand."*

#### **IMPATIENCE.**

Eyes looking here and there, seeking movement - but there is none  
Sighs escape, at first unnoticed - then rapidly increasing  
The movement of the head increases - then the body turns  
Hands clench, fingers entwine- then loosen and twist again tighter  
Struggling against escape, words rise from within - harsh words  
But remain behind closed doors - hopefully controlled but temporarily  
Face line and brow lines deepen and the eyes squint against no light  
Body language shouts to be released - and loudly complain  
Tribulation continues its steady, implacable work  
Coming from opposition; coming from the forces of nature  
Coming from the measured steps of daily living  
Coming from differences of opinion and unchanging habit  
Why doesn't tribulation leave? Why prolong this terrible test?  
What is to be gained by the slowness of this event?  
And patience is tested from all directions and in many ways  
Lessons are to be learned that affect body, and soul and spirit  
Until the wholeness of the person; the whole being is synchronized  
There must remain the process; not just change without  
But from within where it is real and unaffected  
Reality shows itself in a calmness; a life now measured and reliable  
Only then can the Divine Instructor move on to teach us further  
Move on to other lessons; learned now by experience  
By outward expressions of a change that has been truly learned  
Through the chosen process step by step - patience follows tribulation

As experience takes its time to produce the lasting effects  
The Teacher watches and teaches again and again the same things  
Unknown to the learner, the process goes on with subtle changes  
Experience takes more time than even tribulation, but the lessons are different

Still, patience has matured and as the seasons of life pass by  
Through divinely ordered stages, the brightness of hope appears  
And one looks back from the heights of tribulation and experience long climbed, and sees  
the joy  
And is not ashamed - and patience smiles and turns to find impatience gone.

**“I believe I am learning, Father. The process does work just the way You intended. It is dark when I rise but it is light when I go forward in hope and faith, with joy and peace - both imparted by Thee. And I am ready to go forward or upward. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

His contention was that if God had a reason for what He was doing, then come out in the open and say so, so Job could know what was going down. As far as Job could see, the Potter who made him as a good creation is defacing what He made to be good. The life of a believer will hold many things and experiences that we will never understand. But in faith it is incumbent on us to accept that which God allows and give God the credit for doing that which is right according to His own divine will, whether we ever know the reason or not.

The hopeless situation in which Job was found would be right if he was being punished for his sins. But in Job's mind, even if he maintained righteousness God will punish him for arrogance, and will bring witnesses like his so-called comforters to bring charges against him. The friends thought Job could bring an end to his suffering by humility, and there is truth in that. But Job believed only God could make his suffering stop, so as things were, he just wanted to die. More than that he wished he had never been born.

We are limited in our knowledge and experiences in life, so it is wise for us to not jump to conclusions when there are things that happen to us that we do not understand. Wrong assumptions lead to wrong conclusions which in turn lead to wrong accusations that have lasting complications. Pessimism leads us to doubting God. We need to have all the facts before we jump to conclusions about life in general. We need to remember that God wants the best for us, and through us He shows His grace. People have endured great pain and suffering, and often find out later it was the best thing that could have happened bringing a greater good perhaps to many others. How many thousands of people have been helped by reading about the sufferings of Job!! We need to assume the best, not the worst, will come out of the difficulties we face in life.

**Job 10:13-14.** *“And these things thou hast hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee. If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.”*

### **JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS.**

It is not uncommon when things seem to go wrong  
That we take it in hand to decide  
That we are being picked on whether we are weak or strong  
Some one is out to get us and to deride  
What we think are accomplishments but are really acts of the flesh  
And we conclude wrongly they are out to get us  
We look at the perceived unfairness only, not considering God wants to bless  
Teaching us on Him alone to place our trust.

When accusations come and we start to plan our revenge  
Take time to stop and think  
Rather than, “When I find out who did this, I'm going to send  
It back to them and really create a stink!”  
Give them something to bless them if you possibly can  
Or else make no fuss at all  
If they receive your gift, you've gained the man  
Or by silence, the matter will stall.

God doesn't allow more than He knows we can take  
And to jump to conclusions about Him  
Will not bring any satisfaction or answers, but will make  
It easier with our mouth to sin  
To accept gracefully the trials that come no matter what is the source  
Will add strength to our character and testimony  
And these testing times, painful they be, soon will run their course

Perhaps making us stronger than we used to be.

If I have no explanation as to why someone accuses  
It is best to turn and walk away  
If there are some things to say, a wise person chooses  
Carefully all the words they say  
Challenges that are made but the premises are false  
Usually do not last too long  
To jump to conclusions without taking the time to pause  
May make everything to come out wrong.

**“O God, this problem does happen in me sometimes. I am looking for a reason and end up with a wrong conclusion. Give me I pray, the wisdom to quietly wait for the outcome, and trust in Thee all the way through. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **Job 11**

### **WHAT BRINGS SUFFERING**

Like Eliphaz and Bildad, Zophar's theme in his first discourse is that it is only sin that brings suffering. As far as he is concerned, the righteous prosper and the wicked suffer. There are no other reasons to consider as far as this egotistical man who is in essence a bigot, is concerned. He gives his dogmatic opinion and considers it to be right because in his mind, he thinks he knows how God does things. To him, there are two classes of people: contrite worshippers and arrogant sinners. His opinion is that Job was in the last class of people because of the rash words he used in his complaint.

As a legalist who had in mind the idea that God is limited as to how He does things, and why, Zophar can only see that God will do the same thing in the same way in any given situation. He is like a geologist who looks at some rocks and thinks he knows how old the earth is without considering any other thoughts or any extenuating circumstances or events that would be out of the ordinary. Testing as to age by carbon-testing was considered the final word until that test determined that the fossils and strata on Mt. St. Helens indicated it erupted thousands of years in the past, when it actually happened less than twenty years before. Scientists emphasize "laws" and do not take into consideration other causes and effects beyond what they think is always the same. Such people speak with legalistic and dogmatic finality, not considering anything by faith can be real unless they can prove it scientifically.

Zophar was in no way a courteous friend, and he seemed to be full of anger against Job, and that Job deserved worse than he was getting. He had an answer for everything but was totally insensitive to Job's situation. Like the other "friends," he was sure Job's suffering was because of Job's sin of being deceitful and hiding secret faults. In his opinion Job will only prosper again if he repents of hidden sin. Zophar was saying that Job was trying to talk his way out of his difficulties.

Actually, much of his premise was not wrong in that we know God sees every sin. Even the "thoughts and the intents of the heart" are known by God. Whatever we sow, we reap, is a principle of life. But that is not the only reason suffering happens to God's people, and that is what was wrong with Zophar. His mind was closed to anything but what he considered was common sense. He was both hard-hearted and hard-headed.

Specifically, Zophar accused Job of talking too much and was resisting the wisdom of Almighty God by asking questions. He thought God puts such a person in the "prison" of suffering and condemns him. Job should prepare his heart, repent of his wickedness and then after that God would remove his suffering. If he would do that, he would remember all that he went through in pain and suffering as merely "water under the bridge" that passes away as a vague memory.

Job had made it clear that when a man was in his condition of suffering so greatly that he wanted to die, he is not going to try to hide anything from God. He was not trying to be subtle and talk his way out of his difficulties or try to manipulate the Judge as Zophar intimated. Zophar said that if Job would "dig around you" he would find that what was happening to him fair. He went farther than Bildad who said Job was a hypocrite, by saying he was both a hypocrite and a liar, and that was why he was suffering.

Like some people indicate today, Zophar took the position of being on the inside track with God, and he knew what God will do in each circumstance. As far as he was concerned, Job was on the outside and should listen to him because he had the final word as to what God does. Some people today think that what they say is the Holy Spirit speaking through them exclusively and we should consider their words and comments in the same

way we listen to, and obey, the words of the Bible. Their opinion is, "After all, those who wrote the scriptures were only men like we are."

"Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" is certainly a true statement. We can't fathom God, and know what He does and what will always happen. We can't reach, even in our minds, the limits of the Almighty. We know that God is revealed to us, not discovered by us. A statement that is made may be true, but if it does not apply to a given situation it does not help at all and is meaningless in that context. We can talk about God, study what the Bible says about God and know some of what God does, and still not know God.

Zophar made lofty and sometimes true statements that to him indicated he had the answer to Job's suffering, but like the other two friends before him he was no help at all. Eliphaz considered himself a man of experience and wisdom; Bildad considered himself an expert in accepted tradition, and now Zophar's opinion was that common sense had the answer to Job's problem. They all agreed that Job was hiding sin in his life. If he would just deal with the sin and quit fighting the suffering, he would be fully restored. Zophar concludes that there will be absolute and complete judgment on Job unless he confessed to secret sin.

It is true that when we sin, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." To claim sinlessness is foolish and not true, but suffering and difficulties in life are not always because of sin. We have an implacable enemy - the devil. If he could he would have us in hell already, but by the mercies of God we have been preserved from losing our soul, so he would seek to have us lose our lives of testimony by putting us under the pressure of his opposition, either open or underhanded.

**Job 11:11-12.** *"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."*

#### **INSENSITIVITY.**

To lash out at someone when they are down  
Is not only mean and unfair  
But consider this fact if it was you who are tempted  
"What if it was you, not him, who is there?"  
Would you use those same words and that tone of voice;  
If you were on the receiving end?  
Would the words you have used be the words of choice  
If you were challenged by the words you send?

Consider carefully when dealing with a person in grief  
Or with one going through uncertainty  
That the objective behind your visit is to give relief  
And so, to make comfort a reality  
The trials and testing times are bad enough  
Without someone being insensitive  
Help them get over those hurdles that are tough  
And bless them by what you have to give.

It is true God knows deceit; He knows it better than me  
He is the only one who can look on the heart  
If we cannot make a grieving one better, leave them be  
To God's care who allowed the trials at the start  
Give some words of grace that will comfort the soul  
Do not in any way add salt to the wounds  
Keep in mind it is possible you do not know the whole  
And God allows weakness that grace may abound.

Keep in mind my turn might be next, and I'll be wanting a friend  
To draw near to me and some comfort bring  
I will be hoping that the one God chooses to send  
Will lift my spirits, may even quietly sing  
A song of hope and of love and of living faith  
And with genuine sympathy  
In sensitivity will come to me and minister grace  
That will bring into testing time some real spirituality.

**"Father in heaven and God of all grace: give to me the capacity to empathize, not criticize when I know a person needs uplifting. Help me to keep a freshness about any**

**visits or conversations I have today - and may it be for Thy glory. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

## **Job 12**

### **PARTIAL ANSWERS DON'T CUT IT**

Job's longest discourse is chapter twelve through chapter fourteen. In this he first addresses his friends, and then, as he did previously, he addresses God. To his three friends he pointed out that a study of life doesn't produce a set of inflexible life principles like they affirmed. In their pride they were rigid in their theology but insensitive in practice. Pious talk on their part didn't give him any insight as to why he suffered so much. They actually mocked him which would have been a disgrace to a person who was known publicly for his piety and concern for God and His ways.

Job began his answer to Zophar with a sarcastic comment, "No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you!" Then he went on to tell him that he didn't need any of them to explain God to him. What they had been doing in criticizing and mocking him, was producing a defensive mindset in Job rather than ministering to his need. As a consequence, Job was actually led to self-vindication which is a problem in itself and can quickly lead to sinful words and thoughts instead of being a benefit to him.

It is a point to be made for our learning that in "the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin." To be able to make a salient point in as few words as possible, strengthens the dialogue. Too many words of explanation may confuse something that could be explained simply. Our Lord Jesus was a master at saying what needed to be said clearly and plainly, and even His questions were easily understood.

Those three men who were Job's friends only thought of God as a God of law, not of grace and mercy. Experience, traditions and legality were all they brought into the situation and that did not produce any answer to the need Job had. They did not bring truth into the matter, only their opinions. When we substitute our opinions about the Bible rather than teach and practice the truth of the Bible as the word of God, then we are only going to create deeper problems that often lead to division between people and even between assemblies of God's people.

Many people today who are Christians boast of who they are, what they have done and how much they have contributed to God, and accomplished in their service for Him. We should rather recognize than anything of value is God working through us who are mere tools in the hand of the Supreme Carpenter and Master Potter. It is God who works in us to accomplish His will. All of us by nature are condemned before God because of our sin. "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." It is only by "the grace of God I am what I am."

Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar had a wrong understanding of themselves, and about God. God is to be praised and honored, not us. We get nowhere with God until we recognize who we are, our guilt, our condemnation - and then we will vindicate God in whatever He chooses to do whether it be good or bad in our eyes. Job took a look around and said, "Those who provoke God are secure." That appears true to the casual observer, but only those who have been through the mill of suffering will know what is really true by first-hand experience. There are times when we must "walk a mile in another person's shoes," before we give a whole lot of pat answers to those in hard times.

It is simplistic and false to think that God always acts in the same way in every situation. Those men thought God works simple predictable ways all the time. Job told the three friends that even nature teaches us that both good and bad come from the hand of the Lord. In the same way our ears test the words we hear as to whether they are good or bad, and our mouths test the food for quality. So he was testing their words and viewpoints. Job acknowledge the importance of learning from older and wiser men, but he believed our principles and practices in life need to take account of everything that surrounds a matter. Actual facts must be considered, not just opinions.

This is true whenever we are faced with a decision and especially when there are different opinions about a issue. That which we hear needs to be tested by the word of God to make sure the opinions and facts are right and true. God is sovereign. He alone is the source of all wisdom and strength Job said. God has His plans and can give to us the best ways to carry out His plans for us. Job knows this, but he still hasn't got a satisfactory answer from God up until that time as to why the suffering came upon him and what he can do to alleviate the pain.

He observes that kings bind their clothes around them with a band, and yet can be led away captive with no more than a belt if that is what God wants to happen. Wise and trusted elders can have no advice at all to give to others if God chooses to take that away from them. It makes no difference to God, whether there is

darkness or light. Nothing is hidden from Him. We can erect no barrier that will keep Him away from us or hide anything from Him. Even death does not keep anything from God's knowledge.

There is no real and true wisdom that comes from man that did not originate with God. Nothing that man studies, or the conclusions man draws from his research that can go farther than what our infinite God allows. It is from His infinite knowledge that he gives information to those who apply themselves to seeking for what they do not know. Those who submit to Him and diligently seek Him will find Him. All that He wants us to know is available to us.

There is no wisdom or source of wisdom that is greater than the wisdom of God. When we seek Him with all our hearts, we will find Him. God's sovereignty exceeds any explanation that we may try to make about Him, or even about life-experiences that we learn in the school of hard knocks. God makes foolish the wisdom of this world, and He can also make the weak things wise.

**Job 12:2.** *"No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you."*

#### **NARROW MINDED.**

Opinions are a personal matter, but often they will differ  
From those around who have theirs too but haven't had to suffer.  
So instead of pushing my opinion on them, this I chose to do -  
Let me hear theirs without interruption and after they are through  
I will decide whether to give them mine or keep them to myself.  
And hopefully we can agree to differ and put our opinions on the shelf  
Where they can stay indefinitely until it is necessary  
To discuss the subject one more time or the hatchet we can bury.

A narrow mind has an arrogance about it thinking only it is right.  
Sometimes a narrow-minded person will not leave a thing without a fight  
That never concludes anything, just keeps contrasting views alive  
And often I must be reminded, "The servant of the Lord must not strive."  
When it comes to the challenges of a narrow-minded course -  
We have to remember division has satanic influence as its source.  
I must stop to consider the outcome if I continue to want my way.  
The result is really confusion if a divisive spirit has its way.

The narrow mind can cause a problem if opinions are incorrect.  
But wisdom doesn't do its work if I insist on my mindset.  
It is wise for me to take the time to go over varying opinions.  
And God in grace can bring to mind, sin has over me no dominion.  
I must submit with dignity and grace to the leading of the Spirit of God.  
And sometimes I have to consider my feet and walk where the Savior trod.  
The final result of the matter when two people are not agreed -  
Is what would the Savior do, and how do I to His will pay heed.

A oneness can often result when each of us to the Lord submits.  
The conclusion of the matter is such that when to the issue we fit  
Our opinions around the main point, and to that point direct our attention.  
The potential divisiveness goes, that was the original cause for contention.  
So, to the glory of God, we back away from a narrow mind.  
And it is not long thereafter, a good fellowship we can find.  
We may not agree on everything but in the spirit of love and grace,  
Our differences fade into the background, and again we give God the first place.

**"I pray Father, that I will never allow my opinions to keep me from fellowship with Thy people. Give me the wisdom to not be narrow minded and critical. When opinions differ, give me the needed grace to be silent. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

#### **Job 13**

##### **WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?**

As Job continues this lengthy discourse, he tells his friends they are like doctors who don't know what they are doing. That would be like a dermatologist doing open-heart surgery. They know a little about what needs to be done to repair the heart but they don't know how to apply what they know to the action needed. The three friends knew a little bit about God and His ways, but they didn't know how to apply what little they did know to Job's present situation.

Some of what they said was right. God is just. They were right, God does punish sin. But they were wrong in their assumption that Job was being punished for secret sin, hypocrisy and deceit. It is possible for any of us to take a tried and proven principle of life and apply it in the wrong way to suit all circumstances. There are differences in lives that have to be considered when we make judgments and seek solutions to problems. Being swift to listen and slow to speak, applies to any situations that is not open, plain and easy to understand.

After receiving no help from his friends, Job again takes his case directly to God hoping for understanding as to why the suffering he was going through had happened. He was quite disgusted with his friends who he called "forgers of lies," "worthless physicians." It would be like saying you don't cure heart disease by brain surgery. His point was, that if they kept quiet, they would be smarter and more help than for them to keep talking.

He goes farther and talks very strongly to them by saying they are not representing God appropriately. They had put him on the defense and made it look like God was to blame for all that had happened to him. In their simplistic view of things and the way they expressed their thoughts and words to defend God in their own minds was actually violating divine justice. So, he speaks to them about God in a series of questions.

- Will you speak wickedly on God's behalf?
- Will you accept His person and represent Him by showing partiality?
- Will you take the place of arguing my case as if you are doing it for Him?
- Is it going to turn out good for you when He examines you?
- Do you think you can deceive Him like you deceive men?

Job said that God would judge them for misrepresenting Him. They had sought to break Job down by their own simple concept of God, but they will be very surprised when God examines their conduct. "He will rebuke you," because they applied the truth of just rewards and justice carried out by God, in the wrong way. The ashes of platitudes do not stand against the hammer of truth. What they had said in their discourses was like clay that can be pounded to dust by the truth, because their so-called defense of God was really an offense to God. God will surely reprove them.

In verses 13-19 Job goes before God in the boldness of desperation and said in effect, "Come what may, I am going in faith, into the presence of God. 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.' " He believes God will judge him fairly and he believes God will execute whatever justice demands, and will still show mercy. Job consider a hearing with God his only hope.

Whenever a person goes into the presence of God, there will be justice. God is not a judge who can be manipulated, nor is He soft-hearted or hard-headed. God is not a pushover who folds because of pressure or tears. He is a God of mercy, and has provided, by His grace, an acceptable sacrifice who can meet the need of sinners. In the light he had, Job knew that God was his salvation. The light of salvation may have not been as clear to Job and the Old Testament patriarchs as it is to us who live in New Testament day. But they did know that salvation from sin is in a Person, not an event.

Job was sure he would be vindicated, but he knew it would only happen if God would justify him. We can't plead our own sinful case before a holy God. Thankfully there is a Mediator between God and men, "The man Christ Jesus." He does that for us on the basis of the sacrifice of Himself for us. "God is just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

However, Job had another problem. He also didn't know when to quit talking. This is a common problem among human beings. People are prone to use words to justify themselves even when they know they need a Person to justify them. So, he asks for two concessions from God even before he stands before Him. The first was, withdraw Your hand and end my suffering. The second was, do not make me so afraid that I can't speak and present my case. In his desperation Job spoke to God and directed his comments to Him as if he were talking to a man.

This last section of the chapter is like a courtroom scene where Job confronts God and accuses Him of allowing his suffering. He seemed to think that was his right. But he, like his friends, thinks his problem is because of iniquities and sins he doesn't know about, rather than God's sovereign will. How wrong it is to try to tell God what to do. People often think God does not answer prayer if the answer isn't what I want. "No" is as much of an answer as "Yes." Because God doesn't do things like our preconceived notions dictate, we may think prayer is a useless exercise.

The point of prayer is to get us in communication with God so that He can change us and our point of view to be in accordance with His. We live in a world of people who are very limited to what we experience. We are like ants living in the world of people by comparison to God and the universe in which He dwells. The whole earth is as a footstool to Him. So, we are not used to such a large view of things. However, we get glimpses of that world of divine habitation occasionally. It may be in a gathering of believers in worship. It may be in a divine "teaching moment" when we are made speechless before some evidence of the glory, power and plans of God. It may be when in the desperation of pain that is so great our voice is silent because we have said, "Please help me!" so often that we can't speak or think.

Job was still in the role of an accuser demanding answers and was not at an end of himself. God waited. He was like a leaf blown about by wind in his affliction, but was still talking. God waited. He was even making charges against God for writing things against him and still holding him accountable for sins committed in his youth. He accused God for prosecuting him for what he considered trivial things and never letting him step over the bounds of God's expectations.

When we look at life and all that happens through natural eyes only, we are limited to knowing only a small part of what is going on. Job had a similar view of life as his friends. "If you do this, then I'll do that." "If you help me, I'll help you." "If you hurt me, I'll hurt you." This idea of life overlooks that big picture of life as God sees it.

So, Job laments at the end of his outburst of frustration and anger, by saying in essence, "What's the use. I'm just rotting away little by little." How important it is for us to keep reading the word of God and maintaining fellowship and communication with Him in prayer. In that way our perspective is able to harmonize with divine purposes and we will get glimpses of God's light in the darkness of these last days.

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

#### **I WILL TRUST.**

They were saying some things that are right -  
But were making applications that were wrong.  
They are pretending to have some good insight -  
But their common sense seems to be gone.  
They are speaking of things they know nothing of;  
They think they are speaking for God above;  
But they really don't know He is a God of love -  
So, I will put my trust in Him alone.

There are some who say they are speaking for God -  
But apparently have never experienced His grace.  
They think I should pay attention to their every word -  
But they are definitely not people of faith.  
I may not understand why God allows certain things -  
I may not appreciate all the difficulties life brings -  
I may not always have a spiritual song to sing -  
But I will still trust in Him and seek His face.

I really would like God to take these trials away -  
They seem to drain the life out of me.  
I really would like Him to draw near and say  
Why He has allowed this and let me see.  
But though this time of testing in death may end -  
If my heavenly Father doesn't some relief soon send -  
To the pressures of Satan, I will not bend -  
I will trust my God for all eternity.

There are some things I must go through without knowing why  
But I will trust Him and not be afraid.  
There must be some reason He feels my integrity must be tried  
But by His Word, I know on Christ my guilt was laid.  
So, there must be another reason this has come to pass -  
And although I don't know how long this testing time will last -  
I will take Him at His Word and on Him my burden cast -  
I will trust my God and rest in His grace.

**“Heavenly Father, I know there is today some of Thy people going through times of pain and uncertainty. Draw near to them and recover them to Thyself once again that they may rejoice in Thee. I seek the same for myself this day. Give us the joy of knowing and seeing Thy salvation. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **Job 14**

### **A GLIMMER OF HOPE**

In this chapter with much lament and despair, there are some flashes of insight and hope expressed as Job longs for relief. One thing is sure, all humanity will have times of trouble that cannot be avoided. Human limitations keep us from this state of frail, mortal man. "Full of years" are sometimes used as a phrase to describe a more or less happy life. "Few days," contrasts with that as Job deals with the loss of all his possessions, the loss of his children, the loss of his health, and then with disappointment in his friends that made his loneliness so grieving to him.

We welcome life and it seems so bright and hopeful at first, but then so quickly it fades as age comes on us and the past is like a mere shadow that we hardly remember. And - death is inevitable. There is no way to avoid it as it looms ahead, almost more real than life to those who suffer and are old. It is a great wonder that during the years of our lives, God who is eternal and lives in an eternal "Now," draws near to each individual during life's short span, and reveals Himself in a way that is understandable to each one in the context of life in which they are born. All do not have the same privileges, but "in every nation, he that feareth him [God], and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."

Human beings who are created in the image of God, have an inborn awareness of our limitations and God's greatness. By the powers of observation and reason we are God-conscious. Unfortunately, that which is normal to mankind is often taught away and/or discounted by teachers, philosophers - even spiritual advisors and parents to where millions are convinced there is no God, or at least "No God for me."

In all of Job's suffering, he never doubted God, just God's ways. He knew God to the extent he was communicating openly with Him. He knew we are all born sinners. He knew life was an allotted time in which we are given boundaries in which to live and a course to follow. "The valley of the shadow of death," is our lifetime, not just a short time before we die. We are surrounded by the shadow of death every day, but those who know the Lord know He is with us during this journey. We may become rich and famous. There may be monuments raised to declare to those who come behind us as a remembrance of some important event in our lives. Trees may sprout from a stump after it is cut down, but with pessimism, Job said it doesn't happen to humans.

Then, in spite of his pessimism, he looks ahead with a certain logic to the future where mercy overcomes "my transgression." His question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" gives a measure of hope to Job. From our place in the history of the world, we know the answer. Our Lord said just before he died, "If I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, U will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where i am, there you may be also." Our hope is sure and steadfast.

Then again Job falls back into a dark pessimism and rashly accuses God of holding his sins in a bag that is sealed until judgment day. How hard it must have been for him, and likely others in that day, to have hope against hope that there will be blessings yet to come. Two question Job asked in this chapter are still being asked by unbelievers, and perhaps by those believers who suffer from doubts caused by pain, or lack of reading and understanding the scriptures of truth.

The first question Job asked regarding the future is very searching. "But man, dieth and wasteth away; yea man giveth up the ghost, and, where is he?" To many unbelievers the grave is the end. To those who are thoughtful and observe life as more than "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die," we know that beyond death and the grave are two distinct and eternal destinations. Heaven is the dwelling place and hope of the believer. It goes beyond a location to the place where our Lord Jesus Christ takes His own people to be with Him. Hell is where those who will not put their faith in Christ go after their bodies are put in the grave.

The second question is, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Those who have put their trust in Christ as Savior and Lord, answer that question with a resounding "Yes!" because we believe the Bible to be the true word of God. Each person will live again. "There shall be a resurrection from the dead!" This is our "hope before God." We do not have to wait for an answer to this question. Both the just and unjust will be raised, either to everlasting life or everlasting destruction. The bodes of saved and unsaved will be resurrected and adapted to the eternal existence that is beyond the resurrection. For those who are children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, the new body they will have, will suit them to life and service for God in the new heavens and new

earth for their eternal future. For those who have ignored God or denied that he even exists in their lifetime, and for those who reject God's offer of salvation by grace alone through faith - they will find no mercy offered in the future. This is the time when mercy is shown. Their bodies will be suited for their useless existence in the lake of fire.

This whole chapter is like an essay or a discourse on death. It is like a eulogy that could be read at a pessimist's funeral. But in the darkness that seemed to cloud Job's mind, there are some glimmers of light and hope which give a counterpoint to his despair. A right set of doctrinal beliefs is not enough. To know what to believe is not enough. It may be that suffering will be the reason people move beyond superficial belief of the truth, to full trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for life, hope and the quality of life that goes far beyond whether we physically feel good or bad.

**Job 14:14.** *"If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."*

#### **TESTED TRUTH.**

I have read of it, talked about it, heard it spoken  
In my head I know it is true.  
But are the things I know intellectually as just a token  
Or are they truths I have grasped through and through?

The things I've experienced are really my own  
I know by faith and by results of the action.  
I know I put faith in the Lord Jesus alone  
And in His grace, I have found full satisfaction.

The practice of living by faith to me is real  
We've experienced God's provision time and again.  
There is a comfort in trusting Him daily that we feel  
We literally have gotten all we need from Him.

The miles we have travelled have taught us this fact  
God is there when we travel life's road.  
Not only on highways, but for us He consistently acts  
By lightening burdens and sharing with us each load.

I do not doubt Him, in my heavenly Father I trust  
Knowing He knows things unknown to me.  
It is not as difficult when seen things come upon us  
But the hard part is when there are things I can't see.

Faith springs into action when reading God's Word  
And the hidden things then are really made plain.  
The actions of faith mean I truly trust in the Lord  
Whether He chooses to bring me comfort or pain.

I know death is coming and that I have not tasted;  
By its nature it is contained in one single act.  
But in dying to sin, the lesson was not wasted;  
Because from death there is no turning back.

In the past Job wondered if resurrection is true;  
Now we know from God's Word how it will happen.  
Though I have not experienced it, in one way, I've been through -  
Being raised to new life in Christ is a personal action.

**"O Holy God, I do not doubt Thee even if I do not know what is ahead. I find great joy in the life of faith and seeing Thee open the way before us each day as I journey. I thank Thee for the full assurance of faith. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

#### **Job 15**

##### **THE FATE OF THE WICKED**

Reading through the book of Job I like following the course of a very aggressive ball game in which there are three periods of antagonistic challenges of the three friends against Job. The lines of verbal battle were certainly drawn in the first series of discourses, and now the second inning begins. This time Eliphaz does not speak as a lofty person who patronized his younger friend Job, but now comes out strong, more intense, rude, and even threatening.

The first debate with Eliphaz was somewhat civil, but this discourse is different. He had been offended by Job's rejection of his assurance that wisdom was on his side because he was more experienced in life. Job had touched a sore spot in his ego and profession opinion of himself and his "counsel." He was the spiritualist who had a dream and a vision which he felt gave him remarkable experience to which Job should have admitted.

In the speeches of those three men in this second round, they lost their patience with Job because he did not repent of some serious sin, they were sure he was guilty of and he did not take their counsel. Instead, in each case, he took his appeal to God directly after replying to them. So now, beginning with Eliphaz, they expounded on the terrible fate that awaits the wicked, implying that Job is one of the wicked.

Eliphaz starts his discourse by sarcastically saying Job's words were useless, vague, and empty. He plainly stated openly that as far as he was concerned, Job was a great sinner because he would not submit to the conventional wisdom that the righteous prosper and the wicked are punished that Eliphaz had given him. To Eliphaz, Job who claimed to be as wise as his older friends, was full of hot air (east wind). In the first six verses he accuses Job of vain knowledge because of the outbursts of impatience and frustration. To Eliphaz they were worse than being temperamental because they undermined the fear of God and human religion. He said Job's word came because of a bad attitude, and because he was the oldest of them, he was the wisest. Job's claim to was absurd in comparison to his.

Then he went further in his arrogance by claiming that by Job rejecting the counsel of his friends, he was rejecting God. He deliberately puts Job in his place as a bad person whose eyes flash with anger at being told the truth by his elders. To be told the truth about ourselves is not a bad thing when it is spoken with grace and compassion. "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one, in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." There are principles of behavior Christians should follow, and there are principles of correction and discipline that are God-given for us to practice. Confrontation and discipline always have change of behavior in view.

Eliphaz did make a series of true statements beginning with the truth that all have sinned. "There is none righteous, no not one." What he said about the heavens not being pure in God's sight is also true. In the redemption of mankind, there is also involved a redeemed creation, which includes "A new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." It is true also that mankind is filthy "from the sole of his foot unto his head." Romans chapter one and Romans chapter three make that very clear. But in the context of Job's unique experience of suffering, those true statements had no more bearing on Job than on any other person including the one who spoke those words.

So Eliphaz went back to his original contention that Job is wicked and is hiding his sin from them. He claimed that tradition supported his dogma, and that retribution is for sin, while prosperity is for the righteous. He contradicts Job's view that the ungodly prosper, not just the righteous. His idea is that the prosperity of the wicked is only imaginary, because a person cannot resist the Almighty and not be hurt. Much of he said was true but misapplied.

Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar were certainly superior in their understanding of life and of God than many teachers and philosophers today. They say that sin is only relative, and there is nothing that is inherently wrong with people. It is just the way they have been treated or their circumstances in life that make them do things that are condemned by modern society. If a criminal has been treated unfairly by their parents or society as a whole, it is not his fault if he does wrong. The blame lies on others. He just did not know what was "right or wrong."

The description Eliphaz makes of the prosperity of the wicked is that their sinful life is disappointing to them even though one is wealthy, successful and famous. He said that a wicked person may prosper but in the end it will all bring loss and destruction. Then at the end of his second discourse he quotes a couple of proverbs that imply the wicked will not prosper no matter how hard they try. True statements are okay to be stated, but Job's need of comfort had deteriorated into nothing more than a debate that ignored Job's plight.

In essence, Eliphaz said the same things he said before, but in a more threatening and rude way. It is possible to say right things in a wrong way or for the wrong reason, and all that is right is rejected along with the careless talk, personal opinions and insensitivity that has no bearing on the present need one has. Our speech should always be with grace seasoned with salt. Our Lord's "gracious words" made what He taught understandable and acceptable even though it exposed that which was wrong. We need to give advice that is right in a right way with the right motive with the objective of truly meeting needs. We should guide and

guard every word we say lest it have an adverse effect rather than be a benefit, simply because of how we say it.

**Job 15:3-5.** *“Should he reason with unprofitable talk? Or with speeches wherewith he can do no good? Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God. For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou chooseth the tongue of the crafty.”*

### **RUDENESS AND ARROGANCE.**

Hard bedfellows these two are when they come together -  
Their belligerence is hard to take.  
What one does not say is picked up by the other -  
Both of them false accusations make.  
Rudeness seems like he has not fulfilled his call  
Unless he puts someone else down.  
And arrogance lifts himself above all -  
Wanting others his arrogance to crown.

I am sure neither is aware of how base they are -  
And how negatively they come across.  
Rudeness for the feelings of other has no care -  
And arrogance is determined to be boss.  
The hard part of all this is neither can be told  
Of the damage the two of them wreak.  
Both rudeness and arrogance quickly grow old -  
And no one their counsel will seek.

May I ever be polite with genuine humility -  
I fear lest the other two are found in me.  
There is something always good about reality  
That comes with politeness, and through humility we see.  
Neither of these two have very much to say -  
They're more into showing their character by doing.  
Both of them choose to use a gracious way -  
To bring about God's purposes fulfilling.

Rudeness and politeness in the same room -  
Find it hard to coexist.  
Arrogance and humility have never been seen  
To come together and really mix.  
The graciousness of two of them and the belligerence of the two others -  
Pretty well settle the matter clearly -  
That if you are seeking to win the heart of your brother -  
Rudeness and arrogance will make you pay dearly.

**“I pray Thee, O God of all grace, that I will never lest those two characteristics be a part of me. Help me to stay away from even the slightest vestige of either rudeness or arrogance. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

### **Job 16-17**

#### **FAITH AND DESPAIR**

In responding to Eliphaz's second speech, Job seems to have sunk down even lower in his spirit after listening to Eliphaz repeat the same things as he did before only in a rude harsh way. Job hardly replies to what Eliphaz said except to express his disappointment on his friends who considered their words the "consolations of God." In his misery he calls them "miserable comforters" which in a literal sense means "comforters of trouble."

Some testimonies we hear from those who say they have "given Jesus my heart," are without the substance of truth. An experience one might have does not save their soul. Eliphaz had what he considered a remarkable experience, similar to those who say they have seen an angel so they are saved. Or others who say they felt all shivery with cold and then they became warm. Or others who say they have had some out of the body experience or have spoken in tongues so therefore they know they are saved. Those are what Job called "words of wind." They have no more spiritual basis than a catalogue or a phone book.

When we are called upon to give comfort, don't talk just for the sake of talking. Don't give pat answers or sermonize. Don't criticize or accuse one who is suffering. Do put yourself in the other person's shoes. Do offer help in any way you can. Do encourage the one who needs to see some light in the dark place they are

in. If someone you know is going through an experience like you have had, you will likely be the best person to give them comfort.

The "wordy arguments" between Job and his friends led to rancorous debate rather than a time of comfort for a suffering friend. Debate usually leads to vain, empty words that have no value nor relevance to those who are in need. It is important for those who speak on behalf of a congregation of Christians, to have something scriptural, spiritual, important and relevant to say. It is possible to speak a lot of words that are meaningless and listeners don't even know the point of the message when the speaker is done.

Job told his friends that if their situations were reversed, he would not treat them like they were treating him. He would want to "strengthen" them with his words. He would seek to comfort them and restore them to the Lord. We should always do that so that fellowship with the Lord and the Lord's people becomes very real to one who is suffering physically, emotionally or spiritually. Our Lord Jesus illustrated that when He personally washed the disciples' feet.

Instead they were making a shriveled up old man out of him who was sick. They said his physical "leanness" was conclusive evidence of his sin. Job said his conscience was clear before God, but those who were supposed to be his friends were treating him like an enemy. He looked at them as "ungodly" who looked at him with daggers in their eyes and meanness in their words.

To Job it seemed like both men and God were against him, and in his grief and suffering, he tried to defend himself before God. That is a dangerous thing to do because it brings God down in men's eyes to where He is no more than a judge who is doing something wrong when He allows bad things to happen to good people. In a brief glimmer of faith, Job stops his woeful lament and goes right to the throne of God. "My witness is in heaven" is his testimony of clear conscience and integrity. His friends call him a hypocrite and a liar, but they do not know Job, they do not know God, and they don't know themselves.

Job longs for a lawyer, and advocate who will speak for him, and then he will die. Believers have an "Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." How grateful we are for the "One Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time."

**Job 16:2-3.** *"I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all. Shall vain words have an end? Or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?"*

### **NEEDED COMFORT.**

When I go into the house of one who is in pain -  
What should I say that they haven't heard again and again?  
It would be wrong just to say a lot of words -  
That person doesn't want someone speaking just to be heard.  
I must think about some way God has previously used  
A passage of scripture or an illustration to choose  
To give some kind of light to the situation they are in -  
And trust God to guide me by the Spirit within.

Pat answers can be offensive, like ancient platitudes.  
They sound like sermons given with the wrong attitude.  
No one can say because the same problem was in another,  
That the same cause is the reason it has happened to this brother.  
He will probably want to talk about what is happening to him;  
And a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on is a good place to begin.  
Before solutions are found, the problem needs to be defined.  
It is hard to do much more at first than to comfort his mind.

Accusations and criticisms usually harden one's neck.  
Negative reactions are about the best things you can expect.  
That person has probably gone over them or heard them before.  
And criticisms have a tendency to shut, instead of opening a door.  
It is possible to place yourself in a sense in the other person's place.  
And think how you would react if accused to your face.  
Even if you suspect some reason for the situation he is in -  
If you were there, what would you need to hear from him?

Give some encouragement to let the suffering person see -  
You have something good to offer, something that would help him to be  
A bit more at ease, perhaps comforted in his soul.

They might open up a bit and ask for prayer before you go.  
If there is something in your power in the way of giving help -  
Offer your services to do what he can't do for himself.  
Bring God into the conversation; maybe read a verse or two.  
And the sufferer will be glad you came before the visit's through.

**"I am thinking of several couples right now Father, who are going through some real difficulties which don't seem solvable. Remember them in their need, and if we can give some encouragement - help us to do so in an appropriate way. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

In the first verses of chapter seventeen, Job is dying, and those who came to comfort him are mocking him and debating with him. His spirit has been crushed and his life will soon be over. He thought they could at least shake his hand, but instead of giving a "pledge" of protection as he slowly dies, they spit in his face. Those who were upright and knew the character of Job were astonished at his suffering, and were stirred up because the hypocrites were not suffering. However, that did not make those who were righteous change their lifestyle, but it rather made them stronger and more committed to do what was righteous.

In contrast, Job's three friends had a reputation for being wise, but he could not find any wisdom in them. In their own preconceived wisdom, they assumed because they were prosperous, God would be pleased with the way they were living and the counsel they were giving. Job's thought was that earthly success and financial prosperity was not proof of faith in God. He did not believe that experiencing suffering and trouble in life proved that a person does not have faith.

True wisdom comes from God only. Human success or failure may come from shrewdness, skill, subtlety or even stealing. But that does not last and can be very quickly lost entirely. True wisdom in a person comes when one is true and faithful to God, and who does not forsake Him and His word. Loyalty and allegiance to God are consistent with the wisdom of one who trusts in Him in both the good and bad times of life. The wisdom of God is superior to all the combined wisdom of man.

After rejecting with disdain, the counsel of Eliphaz, Job concludes his discourse with a description of death that he considers to be very close to him. In the second series of discourses Eliphaz insists that it is *only* the wicked who suffer. The Bildad insists the wicked *always* suffer And Zophar dogmatically stated that the prosperity of the wicked will not last long. Job replies that the righteous suffer as well as the wicked, and the wicked do not always suffer. Prosperity may follow the wicked all the way through life and even extent to their children after they are dead.

From our biblical perspective, we know that Job is right, and we also learn that when prolonged suffering occurs, Satan will try to take advantage of people in their weakened condition by using physical and emotional pain to make us doubt God's faithfulness. He seeks to bring down in defeat those who are spiritual to when they despair of living at all, let alone living by faith.

**Job 17:10.** *"But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you."*

**WRONG VIEWPOINT.**

"God surely has blessed him," we might wrongfully assume.  
Because he is wealthy and famous, we from human eyes presume  
That the evidence is there; just take another look and see.  
God has favored him highly; he is successful materially.

But success and prosperity may be the very things  
That to the one we thought God blessed, downfall to him brings.  
Those things may be possessed by long labor and human endeavor.  
They are not always because God bestowed on them His divine favor.

Contrary to that is trouble and affliction which some will suppose  
Is evidence of God's judgment and false comforters will propose  
A list of things you have done that is wrong, and God brought this to pass  
To bring you to your knees in guilt hoping this trial will not last.

Some people may be wise in their viewpoint of the ways of the world.  
Their success and reputation are built on what they have stored  
Of the tangible goods they have gathered by their wisdom and their skill.  
It was their personal initiative that their abundant coffers filled.

We should not jump to conclusions or hasty comments make -  
When from a person for some unknown reason, God from that person takes  
All they have depended on and even faithfully did use -  
To benefit themselves and others before all they did loose.

God's wisdom is such that I can't know - His ways are past finding out.  
I may never get the answer as to why this situation came about.  
All I really need to know is God promised to not forsake -  
Those who trust in Him and do His will in the course they take.

Sometimes it is best to keep opinions and questions inside.  
If God wants me to know His reasons, those He will not hide.  
My viewpoints will be safe, if within the bounds of scripture, they stay.  
And my opinions are limited - what I know is all I will say.

**“Father God, I am convinced of the need to keep my opinions and suspicions to myself. But I have problems sometimes of speaking without thinking. Please help me to be aware of the necessity of keeping quiet when I should, and of speaking only when it is right and profitable. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **Job 18**

### **THE FATE OF THE WICKED**

Bildad was the man who based his first speech on what he considered was the basic premise in life - "What happened before will happen again in the same way." He was a traditionalist by philosophy who could not see that suffering was not always punishment for sin. People in the past were punished for their wickedness, therefore all who are punished are wicked.

Those who, like Bildad are traditionalists, think in terms of colloquialisms and pithy sayings. "What goes around, comes around;" "Take it with a grain of salt;" "He woke up on the wrong side of the bed;" "Bite the bullet" are American colloquialisms. Bildad's second discourse has a whole collection of them which were based on the past in his culture. The problem was that none of them applied to Job's situation, but Bildad couldn't accept that.

His second discourse begins with a resentful response to Job's unwillingness to believe his "friends" knew what they were talking about. He thought Job should have kept quiet and just listened to them because what they said was what he needed to hear. Their opinion was that he was a wicked sinner and was being punished for secret sins of which he still had not repented. He was offended that Job regarded them like bellowing animals and considered them not worth paying attention to. At the same time, he was beating himself to pieces by going up against traditions that were as consistent as the function of the creation.

As far as Bildad was concerned, Job's light of life was going out because he was wicked and he was caught in a trap made by his secret sins. His thought was that the life and the way of wickedness was full of snares, traps and hidden obstacles all designed to bring judgment on sinners. The colloquial sayings he used had some truth in them, but Bildad was speaking from a false premise. What he had to say did not apply to Job, and he refused to acknowledge that fact.

Supposition of guilt on the part of another person is a danger that can happen to any of us. We may say to ourselves, "He is getting what is coming to him," or "It's about time something happened to expose his sin." It is quite easy to think like Bildad, but unless we know all that is behind a matter, we must be quiet. This is what was happening to those men in the book of Job. They were all talking, arguing and debating rather than being quiet and waiting on God to speak and reveal His purposes. In this regard all four men were in the same boat, including Job. God would not speak. We do not hear God's voice until we cannot hear our own.

We are in danger of having our own outlook on things and life itself, but if another person looks at things differently, we condemn him or her right away because they don't see things our way. This is especially true if we feel threatened. Any convictions we form, decisions we make or actions we take, need to have the word of God behind them to make them valid to us and acceptable to God.

Bildad saw Job being slowly consumed by death beginning with "the firstborn of death" which is disease. What a wonder it is for us to know that we are saved from the power and dominion of death by our Lord Jesus Christ who rose after His death as "the Firstborn from among the dead." We too are raised with Christ "To walk in newness of life." Whatever challenges in life come, and we do not know thy things happen, like a diagnosis of cancer or other physical condition that causes suffering, Satan will seek to make us afraid of "the king of terrors," - death. In faith we can say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" We

can look beyond the present distress to where victory is found in our Lord Jesus Christ over every enemy, the last of which is death.

Bildad, instead of speaking as a friend, spoke as an adversary when he describes the wicked, their position and condition, and then their end. He said to Job that was the description that fit him. He made the assumption that because he had seen it before in others, and it fit, therefore, it suited Job. His conclusion was based on his own opinion, and he would not accept any other explanation.

If we try to determine how God works in the lives of each of His people based on what has happened to us and some others, we are making a mistake. People and events are not all the same. God does not deal with everyone with the same rubber stamp. It is incumbent on us to withhold from making premature judgments based on our own experience or that of other people. In order to be a help to suffering saints, we need to not speak in haste. It is important that any benefit we can be to others, has the assurance that the help we offer has divine sanction and is appropriate to the person, the need, the situation in which he or she is found, and even the place.

**Job 18:14.** *"His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors."*

### **KING OF TERRORS.**

Before him we tremble even at the time of birth  
Anxious minutes pass as the watching and waiting grows more intense  
Minutes turn to hours and the dark king hovers as pain increases  
Then amidst the sounds of pain and anxiety - the sound of new life  
And the king of terrors leaves the room.

Laughter and the other sounds of children playing  
Sound around the home, the fields, the places of exploration  
And he sits silently waiting for his time to act  
But there, quietly guarding the children, are the unseen ones  
And the king of terrors waits for another time.

The busy pursuit of industry and pleasure fill the days  
The unceasing sounds of life continue relentlessly  
Unseen they do their work with only an occasional minor slip  
Until as age increases, a glitch occurs and panic rises  
And the king of terrors rises from his seat.

The urgency passes and complacency sets in  
But the king of terrors no longer rests unnoticed  
Each day brings a renewed sense of mortality  
And shows itself in lines, a bowed back and changing colors  
And the king of terrors bides his time nearby.

Then unseen, the breakdown occurs within the frame  
Perhaps the wheels are rolling without in undue haste  
The appointed time draws near on the calendar of life's events  
The moment arrives, and the three that together for years have formed the one - separate  
And the king of terrors claims the wages of sin.

But wait! What is this? There in the nearing future!  
Another King waits to do His mighty work!  
He defeated the king of terrors once - won a mighty victory!  
Early one morning He came out from among the dead!  
The same One who will destroy the king of terrors - for ever!

**"The implacable enemy waits, Lord God: I don't know just where or how he will seek to claim me. But I know my times are in Thy hands. And I leave them there in confidence, knowing without question - the will of the Lord will be done in spite of the king of terrors. Amen."**

### **Job 19**

#### **"MY REDEEMER"**

There was no question in Job's mind that Eliphaz's lofty opinion of himself and his wisdom of experience, or Bildad's angry challenge to him to submit to his legal traditions, were wrong. However, in some ways Job was wrong in stooping to their level in his attitude, his understanding of God and the cause of his suffering. He was deeply hurt by the harsh judgment of Bildad against him. Instead of understanding and pity, he was

condemned by those who he hoped would help him. To Bildad he was considered a wicked hypocrite. Consequently, his supposed friends were breaking down his defense. The more they talked, the more distant and alienated they were from Job.

Job himself thought that because they were wrong, he was right. Sometimes when accusations come, the worst thing you can do is try to defend yourself against those whose opinions are entrenched. They usually pay no heed to what you say because their minds are made up, and they do not want to be confused by the facts. A saying that is quite well stated is, "Your friends know you don't need any explanation, and your enemies won't believe you anyway."

It is best to remain silent when falsely accused, even though you are unfairly condemned without any evidence. When that happens, just quietly listen and say nothing in return. Then show the person to the door and leave the whole matter with the Lord. If He chooses to expose the falsehood, that is His prerogative. If it is His will to allow the false charges to remain unchallenged by others, quietly say to yourself and others who may ask questions of you about the accusation, "The will of the Lord be done."

It is easy to point out someone else's faults or sins. Job's friends did that to him to make him feel guilty rather than to correct or encourage him. If we ever have to go and comfort someone, do so with love, grace, empathy and sincerity. Not because he or she has annoyed us or caused us some inconvenience. Spiritual pride is just as bad as any other kind of pride. We must be careful to guard our minds lest we allow ourselves to think a person is getting what they deserve when they suffer. God permitted Satan to attack Job although Job did not know that, but God is not responsible for allowing wickedness. He does not devise evil. He does not tempt people to do evil. When He allows something out of the ordinary to happen that may seem to us to be negative in its results, we need to remember He is holy in every way. For reasons of testimony, maturity and the developing of faith, things happen to believers that often cannot be explained. So, we need to trust our sovereign God's who we know loves and cares for His own people.

Job felt isolated as he mourned his condition and sense of abandonment. He was blind to some of his own faults, one of which was he thought God was treating him as an enemy. Because he didn't get an immediate answer, he thought God didn't care. Bildad said Job had walked into a trap of his own making, but Job was sure God had done what had happened to him, but had not explained why to Job. His charge against his friends was that they were defending injustice.

There are not many things more painful than rejection by one's family and close friends. Job lists those who were estranged from him, considered him a stranger and an alien. Even those who worked for him wouldn't answer when he called them. His wife didn't want to be near him. Children mocked him instead of honoring him. There are some people who avoid going to see and comfort someone who is suffering because they don't like hospital, old people's homes, or can't stand being around one who has pain and suffering. That unsympathetic attitude is evident in one who is the center of their own life and is controlled with a "me first" attitude.

The phrases "skin and bones," and "the skin of my teeth," came into our language to describe sickness or a close call with death. It is then Job asks again for some pity from his friends in a plaintive plea for some help and understanding. It is in this context that Job realizes that help will not come from them and is able to gather some strength and hope in his great declaration of faith. "I know that my Redeemer liveth..." comes from his understanding of the reality of the resurrection. He was nearing death and wanted to die to get away from his suffering and troubles. There was no comfort he could find from the past or present, so he looked into the future.

Faith often shines brightest at the darkest times. Even though Job was unaware that it was Satan who was bringing all of his loss upon him, and he thought it was God, yet his faith in God was intact. "I know" - positive assurance; "my Redeemer" - personal knowledge; "liveth" - practical reality. His confidence was still that God was on his side, even though the present circumstances he was passing through made him think God was against him for some unknown reason. His positive belief in the resurrection of the dead was so strong that he was one of the first in the scriptures to speak about the resurrection of the body.

People who have put their faith in God down through the ages right to this present day, have this same assurance in common. No matter how severe the opposition, suffering or injustice God's people may have to go through in their lives on earth, justice will prevail at the resurrection. Bodies of believers may have disintegrated into dust, but the believer who leaves his or her body is immediately in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Redeemer is coming for His own people at the rapture and bodies, souls, and spirits will

again be one visible person. Those who have died in Christ will have resurrected bodies made to last forever like that of our Lord.

The light of truth and faith in the middle of all the debate going on, seemed to give Job some relief from all the tension he was going through. Even so, he didn't seem able to maintain this positive view of himself and God. He then turns to the three men who have spoken against him, and he speaks against their accusations to challenge them to look at themselves in view of coming judgment.

**Job 19:6.** *"Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net."*

#### **WRONG ACCUSATIONS.**

It cannot be denied, the events have really happened -  
But what is the source of the pain?  
The enemy rallied to bring to his baseless charge -  
"Job is really a faithless man."  
It is true Job didn't know, nor did he understand -  
Why all this was happening to him.  
But he was sure in spite of all he went through -  
God knew the "root of the matter" was within.

He wanted his testimony to be abundantly clear -  
In spite of all that happened, he knew God lives.  
The iron pen of testimony carved his words out plain -  
He knew the Redeemer was really his.  
What he didn't know, and often we don't know -  
Is the source of our suffering and pain.  
God allows certain things to come as a testimony to others -  
The losses are far less than all the gains.

As other people learn what a believer can go through -  
And still his faith remains fully intact.  
It stirs in the hearts of those who look on and wonder -  
"What makes him with such confidence to act?"  
But the time may come when we least expect -  
That the testing time will bear its fruit.  
And through God's eyes then we will see and bless -  
That by His grace He has brought us through it.

In a permissive act, God allows the enemy -  
To test us for reality.  
We have this assurance that He will not allow -  
The enemy to gain the victory.  
No doubt we learn more of God and ourselves  
When these hard testing times do come.  
In the future we may see the value and reason -  
From the viewpoint of our heavenly home.

**"I have been wondering Father, why we haven't seen some saved in these meetings. But now, hopefully seeing things from Thy viewpoint, I see there is more being done here than preaching the Gospel. May the will of the Lord be done. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Job.19:27.** *"Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."*

#### **I SHALL SEE.**

*"I shall see for myself":* Job had the confidence of resurrection, even before it had been clearly taught. This assures us that God has placed eternity in the hearts of men. Within the very being of man, there is the truth of the resurrection of the body. Many spiritual things are within man by nature, setting him apart from all other forms of creation. God's law is written in the heart of man. Without even being taught by others, the principles of right and wrong are within us. An awareness of God Himself is within the heart of man. Some try to put a form to this with idols or the worship of large and strong created things. Job had longed for the things he knew to be written in a book with an iron pen and carved in stone. He had absolute confidence in his Redeemer and His lordship over all of earth. He also had confidence in the fact of his own resurrection and knew he would see his God.

*"Mine eyes shall behold"*: Resurrection was not an imaginary thing; it is not intangible; it is not smoke and mirrors; it is a real act of God when He raises the dead. Job was not expecting to look through a dark glass. He had the confidence that he would fix his gaze on his Redeemer. Words from other people wouldn't assure him of the reality of His Person. John the Baptist called on others to "Behold the Lamb of God." John the apostle said he "beheld the Word of life." Faith now gives way to the object of our faith when our eyes behold Him.

*"Not another"*: Job was not looking for a substitute. He was not looking for a stranger. He was looking for his God. He would not have known that behind the scenes of all the disasters that were upon him, was Satan at work to bring him down. To him it seemed that all that had come upon him was from God, not just allowed by God. Yet his faith in God assured him that justice would triumph. He was confident in his God even though he didn't understand why all the troubles had happened. Abraham must have felt the same way when he was called upon to offer Isaac. We have our times too, when we wonder at all the things that are happening and, in spite of ourselves, question the reason. But Paul said it best when he said, "I know in whom I have believed; and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed, unto Him, against that day."

*"Though my reins be consumed"*: Job's heart was yearning for relief and release from the problems of his life. He was willing and wanting to die if this was what God wanted. But greater than that, was that his reins (the longings of his heart) were consumed with an earnest desire for the day he would look upon his Redeemer. He knew he belonged to God by purchase. It was God that bought him, and God could do what he wanted with him.

**"My Redeemer God: again, I am reminded that I am not my own. Everything I might try to claim for myself, including my body, soul, and spirit belongs to Thee. I am called upon to present it to Thee (Rom.12:1) even though it has been purchased with the blood of His own." So please help me loosen the grip of self-will and false self-ownership from anything I might try to claim. Amen."**

## **Job 20**

### **TRUE, BUT HARSH**

The way a person says a thing is often as important, and sometimes more important, as what they actually say. Zophar had a mean streak in him that was a yard wide, and that negated all the true things he had to say. He listened to Job's pitiful appeal for sympathy but he had none. He only waited until he could talk and vent his own self-centered anger.

Zophar had in his first discourse that in his mind there was a possibility of Job's recovery. But in this second speech, he speaks as a bitter, angry man whose exalted opinion of himself had been insulted and injured by Job's replies. In this angry speech he throws aside any semblance of compassion for Job in his desire to get even with Job and his rejection of the points the three friends had made as to why he was suffering so severely. He believed that even though Job had it good and had prospered for awhile, he had hidden sin and wickedness to which he would not admit. Therefore, they all assumed he was guilty of evil and hypocrisy. As far as Job was concerned, his three so-called friends had failed him, because they all assumed, he was guilty without a cause they could identify.

To speak truth is one thing. To listen and wait for an appropriate time, and carefully consider the results of what you have to say, is quite another. To oversimplify truth is to misrepresent it. We may say a right thing, and seek to support it with scripture, but to apply it in the wrong place or to a wrong issue, is wrong. We do learn things from history, but history and doctrine are not always compatible. God is righteous, and wickedness will be punished in a just way by God.

It is true that God is righteous and will be punished, but contrary to Zophar's philosophy, the punishment of the wicked may not happen immediately or even during this lifetime. Payday will come, but when it will be, we do not know. "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment." Sin is attractive and sometimes enjoyable, and people may live a long time in sin and even with the results of evil gain to use for their sinful pleasures. "If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many."

Zophar missed the fact that judgment for sins may not come in this lifetime. Sinners may seem to get away with sin for a whole lifetime, but death is not the end. He claimed that ancient wisdom supported his point that the success of the wicked is short. Sin may taste sweet, but it will ultimately turn sour Zophar said. In that he was right. What he was wrong in thinking is that it will happen before we die.

That is why we continue to preach the Gospel. While there is life there is hope for a sinner to repent and believe the Gospel. The Gospel needs to be faithfully presented while there is opportunity for repentance for sin to be real. Then faith in Christ as the Savior from our sin will have real meaning to us and the forgiveness of sin is promised.

The discourse of Zophar seemed to be for his own self-aggrandizement rather than for any benefit for Job. It is true that judgment for sin will cancel out all the pleasurable delights that sinners temporarily have "for a season." It is also true that what we have can be quickly lost or out-of-date so it is useless to us. It is possible to be fearful even though we have plenty or even much more than we need. Without godliness and contentment there is no assurance for living and dying, because material gain is no godliness.

The poetic form of drama that Zophar used to describe the wicked included description of personal physical pain in a person's body. Then he goes further saying that God will vent His anger on the wicked like a terrible storm or a bloody battlefield, and that the wicked will have no place to run to escape the righteous judgment of God. Much of what he said was true. God did create man to glorify Him and the wicked have defiled what God made and so will be punished. A man's sin will affect his children and even though he prospers, it will all end up like dust in spite of temporary sweetness.

God will deal in righteous wrath with those who act violently. Even so, He sometimes uses arrogant, ignorant and abusive people to carry out His divine will. He used Nebuchadnezzar to carry out just judgment on Israel and He will yet use the antichrist to bring Israel to Himself. Zophar knew about God and could talk a lot about God but he did not understand God nor His ways. He was sure the creation would testify against Job because he was hiding wickedness. He considered Job to be already condemned because of what he was suffering, and could not understand why Job would listen and take what he said as the absolute truth of the matter.

**Job 20:4-5.** *"Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?"*

#### **HYPOCRISY.**

Take heed when you accuse others of it -  
It likely will come around soon and you will be hit -  
Because for the hypocrite, the same as everyone else -  
When it bites a person, will be put on the shelf  
People won't trust him for they usually believe  
Hypocrisy has some ulterior motive to seize  
And claims one thing but really has another  
Motive driving him that he cannot forever cover.

It is true that hypocrisy God will judge  
It is hard for us to do that properly when we don't budge  
From a preconceived notion that we are positive is right  
And rather than admit it when wrong, we would rather fight  
To conserve what we perceive is our good reputation  
Not understanding that very thing is our condemnation  
Placing us in a position where from all sides we are hit  
With charges laid on us of being a real hypocrite.

Self-exaltation is a dangerous place to be  
Because when you think you are higher, everyone can see  
That you are one thing in public and a different person at home  
And no matter how you deal with it - in angry defense or aplomb  
You lose credibility and people don't think you can be trusted  
When it has been for the attention of others and for praise you have lusted  
Remember this simple comment is true, it is a basic fact,  
God is determined to put a proud man down, perhaps even on his back.

Judgment for sin may be a long time in coming  
We each must consider the clock on our life is running  
And payday is coming whether we like it or not  
It may be in the distant future or some closer spot  
Where we have to face the problems caused by evil and sin  
And there will be no time to change or start over again  
So, to be open and honest is the very best plan  
And hypocrisy is not acceptable in any woman or man.

**“Father God, I really do want to be open and above board. It would be even better if I was to be totally transparent. I know I am not. So, I do ask Thee now to give me whatever I need to not be in any way or shape, a hypocrite. I ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **Job 21**

### **LIFE IN THE REAL WORLD**

Typically, when a dialogue continues too long, it becomes an argument. An argument then becomes a debate, and a debate polarizes opinions until all that is left is a stalemate. Zophar's verbal abuse of Job didn't help Job's problem one bit, except that it did strengthen Job's awareness that the only person he could turn to for help and understanding was God. His problem though, was he was still talking. He didn't know when to stop.

His plain statement of faith in a living Redeemer and his confidence in the resurrection of the dead, was the high point in the whole debate up until this time. But in this chapter, he returns to argument rather than "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." It is in God Himself we find rest, not in our own understanding of all of our questions or the answers that may satisfy us.

The insistence of his three friends that he was a wicked man hiding behind outward goodness was completely rejected by Job. Their insistence in present retribution for sin which they had been pontificating about, didn't stand up in his mind to observation in the real world. Job pointed out in answer to Zophar that in the real world the wicked do prosper. Psalm 73 reminds us of another person who was perplexed by the prosperity of the wicked, until he saw them through God's eyes and saw their latter end.

Many people who prosper live sinful lives and die without seeming to suffer. But death is an enemy to both the righteous and the wicked. It is after death that just judgment really and finally comes. To measure present circumstances as a result of personal evil or goodness is not supported by reality. That is why atheists will not accept the truth of existence after death. They blindly live only for the moment because if there is a real eternity, in their minds they know they are in trouble with God.

Job had listened quite carefully to Zophar's speech and then refuted his major claims one by one. His concern was not to win an argument with them because his complaint was with God. He is wanting some understanding of God's reason for his suffering, and his friends were not helping at all with their faulty opinions. By this time in the dialogues previously, Job could see his friends had no real answers to his questions nor did they have any help to offer him in his suffering, but rather condemned him. So, what they had to say made very little difference to him. "Lay your hand upon your mouth," just be quiet was all he had to say to them by this time.

Physical pain, emotional pain and spiritual pain go together. Body, soul and spirit are all closely connected and are all affected by what happens in each area of our personhood. By this time Job seemed to be suffering more in his spirit than other parts of himself. Perhaps he had come to accept the fact that his excruciating physical pain would not cease until he died. Nor would the emotional suffering of the loss of his family and possessions stop until death. The spiritual loss of connection with God seemed to trouble him most by this time. He had previously, been close to God, but now God seemed far away.

Zophar had directed his remarks at Job personally when he spoke of the wicked. In his discourse Job speaks in general terms and refutes Zophar by pointing out the power of the wicked and the influence they have on other people. He made the point that instead of all the wicked being cut down like the other three men said, they live a long time and often flourish physically. They are even preserved from a lot of things that happen to others. Their businesses prosper, and their wealth is maintained without great loss. Even their family life is what everyone hopes for. They live in pleasure and seemingly prosper for their whole lifetime.

When the wicked dismiss God in an irreverent, insolent way, and yet live on in deliberate ignorance, independent of God in their own minds, Job's point was driven home that refuted the platitudes and opinions of the three friends. This is typical of our day. To many people, and likely most, to believe in and trust God is foolish. Some people say such belief is intolerant because our confidence is in the unchanging word of God in spite of what people and governments might say. They reject faith as obsolete mysticism that has no scientific support. They reject the idea that science in its basis is based on faith in ideas, not in an unchanging God.

Our testimony of personal faith is patronized and believers are avoided as much as possible. The greatest way of dealing with such skepticism is a consistent, godly life with spiritual optimism and contagious joy in the Lord. Most people want that and cannot find it in a life of far-fetched scientific explanations that cannot be proved, or continual pleasure that does not really satisfy the inner person.

Job made it plain that even though he saw and knew what the wicked did, he did not accept that course as right even though he suffered and they did not. It is important that we, like Job did with his friends, point out the facts and reject the far-fetched fantasies of those who "know not God, nor obey the Gospel." Even if the children of the wicked may suffer after the parents are gone, that is not retribution because the evil-doers are not here to see it and to suffer. Job experienced that and he knew what it was really like to lose a whole family of children.

The three friends seemed to think according to Job's understanding of their arguments, that they had to teach God what they knew in order for God to judge righteously. We demonstrate our attitude toward God by the way we deal with the difficulties and personal struggles in life. God is in control even though we may not understand the "whys" and the "wherefores" of a matter. When we have committed ourselves to the Lord without reservation, we will not resent what is happening to us.

Job spoke of one man dying in full strength and wealth and another dying in bitterness of soul and poverty. Both go to the grave whether righteous or unrighteous. The benefits or losses at life all stop at death. Zophar's comments were directed at Job personally, so Job asked them to put their opinions before neutral people who are not involved in the matter one way or another and ask them what they think. What is the experience of others who have travelled life's road? In the world the wicked generally escape calamity and judgment during their lifetime. They live in prosperity and are carried with pomp and ceremony to be buried in a costly grave, but it is still a grave. Job's argument has some truth.

The three friends have opinions that are dogmatic and yet false. In his response Job really does the same, only in the opposite direction. God does step in at time to punish the wicked right away like in the case of Adam and Eve. In the times of Noah, the wicked had 120 years before judgment came. Generalization and exaggeration, doesn't justify what a person may say. God is going to do what He chooses, in His own time and way in spite of our opinions because He is the sovereign God.

It is important for us to learn from the exaggerations of Job the value of fairness, logic, reason and falseness. We should always be sympathetic towards the sick and needy. By remaining confident of the scriptures and true to the doctrines taught in them, we have something to offer to those who need us. Hopefully we will be able to give them something that helps them understand what is happening to them and how to either deal with it or live with it. It is our own view of God and understanding of His truth that will be important to those who need us.

**Job 21:22.** *"Shall any teach God knowledge? Seeing he judgeth those that are high."*

#### **THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED.**

They have what everyone else desires; life for them is good  
Whatever they do brings prosperity to them it seems without any heavy load  
Of guilt even though the gains they have made are done in dishonesty  
The way they have accumulated all they have has not come through adversity.

I know real success is not measured in things I have but in a person's heart  
Outward performance is sometimes successful because of missing the mark  
That God has established as the standard to make us aware of sin  
That God doesn't change for men, even though they don't acknowledge Him.

It is not the right thing for me to measure worth by what a person has  
Success in business, a farm that is prosperous, possessions that are so vast  
May be the result of dishonesty; of maneuvering things to best suit  
A plan to achieve more than those for whom righteousness is their only fruit.

There is a Supreme Judge, higher than the judges of men on earth  
Who sees beyond the moment and amount of accumulated wealth;  
And discerns the thoughts and intents of every woman and man  
Before whom every person will ultimately in His presence stand.

Then the reasons for things will be made open and plain -

Then is when all that has been done will be measured for loss or gain  
Before the Judge of all the earth, everything will be given its real worth  
And the verdict passed down will be based on righteousness first.

The wicked have only a little time to enjoy all the fruits of sin they earned  
A day is coming when without one thing to claim, they stand before Him they spurned  
The prosperity of the wicked that comes so quickly, soon will be found to fade  
It will soon pass on to others who will claim for themselves all you made.

If one is able to prosper, consider who brought that prosperity to you  
Consider His grace and provision in making successful all you do  
If poverty comes, bless God, and accept gracefully what seems to be loss  
He knows what is best for you and what your losses really cost.

Be occupied with God Himself, and be thankful for whatever He sends  
When life's journey is over and you see the beginning and the end  
You will be able to gratefully thank Him for what He gave or took away  
Then you will understand better, the things that have happened today.

**“Father God, for some reason my mind seems to be kind of in a fog today. I am sorry I don't better grasp the meaning of this chapter. If there is anything in my response that can honor Thee, please accept it from the heart of Thy unworthy servant. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **Job 22**

### **FALSE ACCUSATIONS**

The charges of secret sins, hypocrisy and lying of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar made against Job in the first two interchanges of accusation and rebuttal between them, did not change the opinions and position of any of them. They had their minds made up and did not want to be bothered by trying to find out the actual truth. Instead they relied on experiences that happened to others, traditions they had followed that had been passed on from others and religion that they thought was superior to actual personal faith. Job's replies to the accusations of the three of them, was that even though some of the points they made were tight, they did not apply to his situation.

One of the serious results of on-going arguments and debated is that those involved will usually go too far, both in accusations and in defense. Often the result is also half-truths and, in moments of frustration, outright lies on both sides. Previously Eliphaz had approached describing his opinions in a patronizing attempt of being an older man talking sense to a younger man who doesn't know too much. But Job refused to accept the premise that because Eliphaz was older, he had all the answers. And that seemed to make Eliphaz mad.

This time Eliphaz lists specific sins against Job, and then takes it upon himself to explain God to Job, who "feared God and eschewed evil." Eliphaz in a sense put his foot in his mouth in his first statement when he said God is not concerned with a person's righteousness or way of living. He doesn't both Himself with such trivial things. We know a person can be profitable to God when they are committed to worship "the Father in spirit and in truth." Reverence, respect and honor for God are attitudes of gratitude. Love and thanksgiving to God come from those who appreciate the Lord for who He is, not just what He does.

It appears that Eliphaz thought God was too busy dealing with Job's wickedness to consider his righteousness. His opinion was that Job's positive morality which he stated, was only a smoke-screen to cover his wickedness which he then takes pains to list. To him the reason for Job's suffering had not changed. Job could say what he wanted, but Eliphaz was sure he knew better. God was punishing Job because he had taken bribes, had taken the cloths off the back of the poor, he would not even give a thirsty person something to drink or a hungry person something to eat. He said he took land he should not have had, wouldn't help widows and orphans. Now it was his turn to suffer. "No wonder you are suffering!"

Eliphaz implied Job may have fooled his friends by hiding fraud, greed, deceit and a hard-hearted attitude toward others, but he had not fooled God. These kinds of accusations came from the mind of a man who thought he was a man of experience and wisdom, and he just could not understand why Job would accept what he said. In his own mind he had obvious expertise in all matters of life and the knowledge of God.

To many such people there is the false assumption that if you are righteous or wicked doesn't matter to God or have any effect on Him. Even if it was true that you are righteous, do you expect God to be grateful to you for being what you should be? In Eliphaz's perspective, if a person is wise, appears kind, and has prospered, God will not allow him to suffer. He only allows suffering as a punishment on a person for their sin. Because

of Job's extreme degree of suffering and loss, his punishment is fitting his crime. His wickedness was very great or he would not be going through such a terrible time.

What Eliphaz said is partially true. God is not dependent in any way upon our righteousness and He is not diminished in any way by the actions of the wicked. So, we can in no way add anything to the attributes or actions of our infinite, sovereign God. As believers we know He is worshipped for who He is in His majesty and glory. Eliphaz then sets out to explain God to Job, who he thought Job could not figure out nor could see what God was doing on earth. It seems like he misunderstood what Job meant by "thick clouds," and "cannot see," and Job was limiting God. It is true God is not obligated to us in any way, but neither is it true God has no interest in what is going on in our lives.

Our God is a Father to those who believe on Him. We know He is involved in all aspects of our lives. He wants to give to His children the benefits and blessings that a Father gives His obedient children. When we sin, He is grieved and can deal with us in whatever way He chooses. When we obey, it is expected behavior. As our benevolent Father, he has the right to do what He knows is best for us even though it may not be what we want.

Eliphaz's denunciation of Job's lack of compassion and his basic inhumanity is perhaps a reflection on what he had seen in others or may have experienced himself. Smug complacency is a common problem to those who have no real needs themselves. They often choose to be ignorant of the urgency of the needs of others around. Eliphaz did seem to understand that to not do right, is as wrong as doing what we know is wrong. His charges against Job in this regard were false assumptions, not accurate charges. He was making serious false accusations which were wrong.

False accusations lead to false deductions. In charging Job with ignoring the needs of others, Eliphaz said Job was trapped by his own sins, fears, darkness of understanding and the disasters which fell on him. He thought Job was taking his sin problem too lightly, which is the case of many people who think God does not notice what they do. Because of his own personal opinion, Eliphaz thought this applied to Job when it really did not.

Like so many people today, Job's friends knew some things about God but didn't know God. They knew of His truth, the perfections of His character, but didn't know how to apply what they knew to reality and to life's real situations. There are very different in people who are different in personality, culture, spirituality and emotionally that respond to the same thing in different ways. God only knows how best to deal with each person and what each person is capable of enduring. "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

Job's understanding of God was far superior than that of his friends because he had been living for God and in fellowship with God for much of his life. He knew God was real and communicated with God in quite an open way. He had already come to God as a sinner and appealed for forgiveness as he mentioned earlier in the book. He had lived in the good of that so long that when disaster struck, he was confused as to what had happened and why.

Poor Eliphaz knew only enough about God to display his ignorance and spiritual weakness. Job on the other hand, knew he could go to God personally, did so without a lot of fanfare or drama, because he knew God. Eliphaz had though he flattened Job right out for charging him with sins against humanity, and then he went further by turning to history as a way to convict and condemn Job. He even told Job how God's judgment would come, in what ways, on those who are wicked.

Surprisingly then comes from the words of the uppity Eliphaz, some of the most important words in the whole book on repentance and faith. What he said next was right. His discourse on the steps of restoration after repentance, and what it means to return to the Lord is spot on. Reconciliation, responding in faith to God's word, rejecting anything that is wrong between us and God, will bring joy, fellowship, openness in prayer on the part of a humble person, and peace. When we have been reconciled and restored to the Lord because the barriers caused by sin are removed, then we are able in turn to be "reconcilers," with the "ministry of reconciliation."

Eliphaz's exhortations to Job were quite right and good. The message and the man with the message seem very different. His instruction was good but his attitude was bad. The information he passed on was appropriate, but the man's arrogance seemed to be incongruous with what he said. In his failure, ignorance

and dogmatism, he inadvertently drove Job to God, who he cannot understand but who he knows is absolutely righteous.

It seems like in some of the negatives in the arguments of Job's three friends, positive things come out in spite of themselves. God is not limited by our failures or by our positive affirmations. We may do bad things or not do what is right, but both are sin. When we have experienced life with God, we are blessed and can be a blessing to others because God can use frail mortal people to bless others in His name. A person who is away from God, can return in repentance and be reconciled to Him when he or she receives his word in its reality personally and rejects evil deliberately. Restoration in the life of one away from God, opens the door to real prayer, responsible living, benefits to others - and peace in ourselves.

**Job 22:2-3.** *“Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? Or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?”*

#### **CAN A MAN BE PROFITABLE TO GOD?**

Our limitations are obvious - limited to time, space and matter  
How can mortal man profit God who is limited by neither?  
We have a few senses including touch, taste and smell -  
And God with no limits at all truly does everything well!  
So with such limitations on frail and mortal man -  
What can I give God - is there something I possibly can  
Bring to Him; something that is uniquely from me?  
What could I do? What could such a thing possibly be?

An early morning talk with God, and a listening ear -  
May be one way I can honor Him and some reasonable profit bear  
To His throne of grace, and to the world around me  
Where through my human frailty, something of God people might see  
I cannot add to His creation, it is completely done - and good  
But I can avoid abusing it; maybe even display it if I would  
An explanation of an earthquake; of a mountain - even a flower  
Might be profitable to God as I tell others of His power.

If I could tell others of His grace, of His love and of His mercy  
Perhaps there would be some response to Him that can be used profitably  
And given, that would shed light on some dark and hidden spot  
And life would spring forth and glory given to God where previously was naught  
By preparation of my heart and mind, can I be profitable to God?  
Is there some glory and some blessing for Him when I am in His Word?  
I really hope there is, for at this stage of my life -  
Perhaps the best profit I can bring is to shed some simple light.

I am not discouraged - just perplexed as to how I can best God profit  
To sing a hymn of testimony or praise - or if a difficulty - rise above it  
Is probably one of the best ways my service can bring to Him  
Some profit that glorifies Him as the dawn of each day begins  
And through the day control my tongue and actions along the way  
So, profit to God may be a little here and a little there in the journey of this day  
When day is drawing to a close and my eyes are growing dim -  
May there still be some thanks and appreciation that is profitable to Him.

**“O God of all grace, I feel so unworthy of thinking the thoughts I just wrote. But if there is some truth in those things I am thinking, then be glorified in it and if there is profit - may it honor Thee today. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

#### **Job 23-24**

#### **"WHERE IS GOD?"**

Job had repeatedly listened to the discourses of his three friends, and each time they had made the same arguments based on the same premise. To their way of thinking, even though they approached the subject from different points of view, Job was guilty of hidden sin. As a result of that he was also guilty of hypocrisy and lying because he did not accept their verdict. He had answered each time with an open defense of not knowing what he had done that was wrong, and therefore was innocent of all their charges.

They were convinced that suffering is only because of sin, and it will come promptly during one's lifetime. Their opinion was the righteous prosper now, a similar position to the "prosperity Gospel" some teach in our

day. They did not even consider Job's view that God brings suffering on both the just and the unjust. He can and may bring suffering on one who is righteous for His own sovereign reasons. That was what Job was longing for. An answer, "Why is this happening to me? If only I knew what God is doing and why!"

In this part of the whole dialogue, Job doesn't answer nor make even a brief response to all that Eliphaz had to say in his third speech. It was just more of the same, only in harsher words and a more bitter challenge. He was not going to try to appease God by making up some imaginary sins to get God to act. Job was confident God knew what he was doing, but he just wanted to know why.

Again, for our learning, we may never know why some things happen to us. We may wonder for a lifetime why God gave life to our child for only a short time and then took it away. Or why we experience debilitating strokes, heart disease or cancer. Even an accident that took the life of a loved one may never be given an explanation. But like Job, we know, "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

When Job spoke this time, he had nothing to say to the three men there with him. But he had two main observations to which his thoughts and words are drawn. First, in chapter 23, why must the righteous go through such difficulty. In chapter 24, why are sinful people able to enjoy prosperity and seem not to suffer.

Injustice has always been a concern of most people, because we want it dealt with right at the moment and quickly eliminated. It doesn't seem fair to us that justice is put on the back burner in so many cases until the crime is almost forgotten. We need to remember that sin is sin, whether in the mind, motives, attitudes or actions. God is just - always. But He is also the "Justifier" of those who believe in Jesus.

There is much more to the character of God than justice. He is holy, of that there is no doubt. But God is also full of grace and is plenteous in mercy. His love for people isn't earned or haphazardly given. His love to all mankind is part of His divine nature.

In Job's discourse he is groaning and miserable as one may become when approaching a painful death. Because the bitterness of his suffering and the accusations of his friends, he is longing to find God. He is sure he would get justice if he could plead his case personally before God. What caused his great spiritual problem, even more than physical and emotional, was, "O, that I knew where I might find Him!" He speaks as a man who is before an earthly judge. When one knows they are in the presence of God, "Every mouth is stopped..."

Even though God is the Father of those who believe, it is a danger to us and our understanding of Him if we communicate with Him, and/or consider Him as we would a benevolent grandfather who is willing to give us what we really don't need and may not even be good for us. We do not deserve "the least of His mercies," but we do put our faith in Him personally and in the confidence that His will is being done justly, even if we do not understand the reasons behind the action. One is constantly impressed when reading through the book of Job, that over and over again, he confidently affirms that though he is not claiming to be sinless, he is upright and righteous in his life. He would gladly go to court, even the Supreme Court with the Supreme Judge on the throne, and plead his cause openly. He is sure he is not hiding anything from God. He just wants to be back in fellowship with God and enjoy Him as he did before. He wants his communion with God restored.

Job is not hiding from God because of sin, but is anxiously and earnestly looking for Him everywhere he can. Even though he could not find God, he was confident God knew where he was, what he had done, including what he was going through. He was confident in God's omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence, but he was not experiencing it, and was grieved by that loss. In his experience of pain and suffering, Job had come to accept, and perhaps understand, that he was in a refining process that will come out better in the end. But it seemed like he was looking beyond death for the final results.

**Job 23:10.** *"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."*

#### **CONFIDENCE.**

The answers evade us, we really don't know why  
These trials come to us, but pass other people by.  
They live in opposition to God and His unfailing truth  
And it seems like we are constantly being tested to check our real worth.  
Of course, our righteousness is not perfect in the eyes of men  
There are, no doubt, many criticisms about us from all of them.  
But in spite of all the things they against Christians say -  
God allows the trials to come and to testify along the way.

Many will not pay attention to our words when we preach.  
Others will avoid us all they can lest their conscience is reached.  
Some think the less they know, the less responsible they are -  
Hoping their personal standards are what God considers par.  
Believers in Christ need to be reminded it is not the things we know;  
But the way we conduct ourselves in times of stress is what to others show  
The difference which is we trust in Christ in spite of all that's done -  
And when trials come to those who won't trust Him, they are on their own.

God has an objective we may never know when through dark vales we pass  
Those days and night of uncertainty and grief, won't forever last.  
Even though He slay me, and if this is the ultimate test -  
He will not forsake His own, for He promised in Him we would find rest.  
The testing may take its toll upon our bodies and our strength.  
It may bring grief and anguish of soul that tests our mind at length.  
Our emotions may be so tested that we may say things best left unsaid.  
But to fail the test He sends me is what I mostly dread.

There is some light I can see farther ahead along life's road.  
A time is coming when this will be over and I'll find relief from this heavy load.  
When God deems fit to lift this off and cast it away from me -  
I wonder if I will know the reason, He allowed these things to be.  
One thing I have confidence about, none of this caught God by surprise.  
He is fully aware of the reasons Satan often tries  
To bring us down, but God can turn what seems like failure into victory.  
The dark times of the trial will pass, and may be most important in my history.

**“O Father, this year has been one of support more than of pressing ahead to see souls saved. If this is more suitable to Thee, then I am satisfied. But if I cannot be trusted to bring sinners to Thee, I really want to change. Please help me to do whatever will be best to honor Thee and be glad in that service. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

When God deals with us in the refining process, at the beginning we are anxious and may get panicky. Then we may even harbor some bitterness and consequently make unfounded accusations. As the process of refining continues to take place, we do not get used to it, but become more accepting of it when we know the Lord has either allowed it or arranged it. Then we can begin to live with the pain. This is part of the reason we are still here in this ungodly world. We allowed to serve God in adversity during this lifetime which we will not have in our future service after death. The learning process, and training in adversity is greatly enhanced because of problems. There is not the same impact or outcome when we serve in calm complacency.

Job knew God did not have to explain His actions to him. His concern was that he wanted to understand why God was allowing his suffering. He thought he could find peace if he knew that. Our human limitations come far short of understanding divine authority and power. As Job spoke about this, he confessed his ignorance, fear and terror as he considered thoughtfully who God is.

Like Job, when thoughts of God really grasp our intellect and emotions, it softens us, removes self-centered courage and makes us conscious of our great limitations and unworthiness of the least of God's mercies. There is a great sense of loss when a true believer cannot find the blessing of fellowship they once enjoyed.

In the second part of this discourse of Job in chapter 24, Job is wondering why God allows so much injustice when wrong is overlooked, ignored and accepted as normal practice. Job's friends had said that punishment for sin is prompt and falls on only evil people. So why is there so much wickedness going unpunished? Why does God allow evil to continue is a question many ask today as an excuse for their unbelief? The problem with that question is they choose to define wickedness from their own point of view. People reject the fact that sin is in our minds and heart. They do not accept that as being sin. Most consider only the action to be sinful, not admitting the action is only carrying out "the thoughts and intents of the heart." If God punished all sin, not a soul on earth would be alive.

In this chapter Job lists quite a number of civil, social and criminal injustices. The implication was that something was wrong because punishment was delayed. There were crimes committed in the area of property and ownership. There were social injustices in which poverty and homelessness that were not addressed. Some knew what was right and choose not to do it but rather did what they wanted instead of what God wanted.

How grateful we should be for the longsuffering of God. He is "not willing that any should perish," so God gives ample opportunity to our "repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus," to take place. God has a program of events planned for this earth to bring mankind to believe in Him, and share life with Him. He began with a time of innocence and then moved into dealing with men in their conscience after humanity lost innocence by choosing sin over obedience. People failed to obey their conscience, so God allowed human government which also failed. Then He gave Abraham the "If you do this, then I will do that," way of promises, but that failed. Then He gave laws, ten commandments, which people do not keep, so in our day He deals with us in grace. In the future there will come promised judgment on earth for sin followed by peace.

If Job's last words in the last part of chapter 24 are statements of his faith, or if simply stating what he observes, he is conscious that even if the wicked haven't suffered yet, there will be payday someday. Both the wicked and righteous may suffer or may prosper now. Justice will be served in the future. The conclusion of this discourse is that Job is getting a better understanding of what God does. The wicked should be punished, but in mercy, God lets them have "security" for a short time. If they do not repent but think they are getting away with sin, "His eyes are on their ways." They will "be brought low" and mowed down like grain in a harvest.

We have the benefit of further revelation of divine truth, and can see ahead to the fulfillment of God's promises. The person who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life and shall not perish. The person who does not believe on Him, the wrath of God abides on, and they will endure everlasting punishment.

**Job 24:1.** *"Why, seeing these times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him, not see his days?"*

#### **WHY DOES GOD WAIT?**

It is obvious to all that sin has been committed -  
Yet nothing has happened to them.

The thief and the robber are not apprehended -  
God surely knows how much they have sinned.

Some acts of sin are done out in the open -  
Other sins are done in the dark.

For some gracious reason God's judgment is holpened -  
For He alone knows what is in every man's heart.

There are laws men follow to keep the peace -  
But the hearts of all men are deceitful.

When wrong-doers are caught, for awhile they cease  
The activities that have been so harmful.

But they haven't changed inwardly - only on the outside  
There is an apparent change that gets them freed.  
There are inward desires that from God men try to hide -  
Laws deal only with the fruit, not the seed.

Payday is coming, of that there's no doubt -  
Whatever a man sows, he reaps.

Let no person think God knows nothing about -  
The evil or perverse pleasures people seek.

God is longsuffering, not wanting any to perish -  
Or to rush unwarned down to hell

So He patiently waits for Gospel seed to flourish -  
And for us His message to tell.

He has waited long, and times are getting worse -  
Yet still God waits for His reasons.

Perhaps there are some who are waiting to search -  
And God holds back on the end of "grace-season."

Lest I get careless and forget why I'm here -  
May God's waiting-time stir me to action.

I know the signs show evidence the Lord's coming is near -  
And I want to look on Him with full satisfaction.

**"O Lord God, we came here believing there were souls that needed to be saved and I know there are. Now we are finishing the nightly meetings and none have been saved. Have I failed Thee? Have I been unfaithful in any way? Search me, O God! In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

## **Job 24**

### **DIVINE PURITY - HUMAN DEPRAVITY**

In Bildad's last speech in the on-going dialogue, he makes a final weak reply to Job by saying much the same things as Eliphaz. And these words are true. It is true God is absolute in power and authority. It is true humanity is weak and helpless when compared to God. In these six verses, Bildad basically fizzles out of new arguments or anything else to say that applied to Job's circumstances.

But underlying the true words he said was the implication that the God Job said he is longing to see and talk to about his suffering, has no interest in making any connection with Job who is like a maggot feeding on stale bread or a dead body. Couched in true words is a harsh underhanded attack against the man they had supposedly come to comfort, but they now treated like a debased enemy.

It is possible for us to say the right things that are without argument as to their validity, and use them in a wrong way for wrong reasons. The tone of voice we use, facial expressions and body language can make a simple word like "Yes," mean a whole lot of different things. "Yes" said like a question, can mean, "Really? I didn't know that before!" It can also mean I think you are lying to me. If it is said with a loud voice, it can mean, "We did it!," or "Let's get to work!" The word "up," can be used as a verb, noun, pronoun, adverb, or an adjective. It all depends on the context in which it is used.

What Bildad said about "dominion and fear" was certainly true. God is not limited in His authority. There is no power in earth or heaven that can claim ascendancy or victory over Him. He can create or calm storms of every kind. He can shake or break the earth He created with the "word of His power." He can move stars out of their place. He can maintain perfect order in the whole universe so that all the multiplied trillions of heavenly bodies function in perfect harmony and order in the place to which he assigned them. He can make heaven and earth flee before His face.

It is only right for all His creation to submit to divine authority and reverence, respect and worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He still does for us. How far beyond our grasp of divine intelligence is the fact that, father-like He cares for us! He, the all-powerful God, tends to us and knows our needs far better than we know them. The "thoughts and intents" of our hearts are known by Him. He cares and He loves because that is who He is.

Poor, faithless Bildad knew truth about God, but he didn't know the God of truth like Job did. He was stuck in the limitations of his own experience. He knew God to be of supreme power, and that He alone can defeat the powers of darkness because of His absolute purity.

Whenever we think about God, we are usually limited to the extent of our own experience with Him unless we have the new nature which He gave us at our new birth into His kingdom. We are awestruck by His creatorial power. We are made conscious of our limitations and weaknesses when we test human strength against the principles of creation and the means by which "all things consist." Many of man's inventions are used to resist established powers like gravity, life and death. There is a sense of what is holy and what is not, at least to a certain degree, in every human being.

The contrast between God's holiness and man's depravity is obvious. That is why Bildad's question, "How then can man be justified with God?" is so important. In the question is a note of condemnation of all of humanity. Bildad certainly had that right. However, it seems like his point was to melt Job down to nothing more than a helpless blob of wicked humanity. It didn't seem that he was classifying himself personally as insignificant and no more than a worm. His statements of God's holiness were true, but in his application of truth, underlying the application of truth was, he was using it as a weapon to dismiss Job's arguments. We can use truth to demean a person and that is a wrong use of it.

Man can be justified with God if there is some way to justly deal with his guilt because of sin. There is no purity in man by nature, but "the blood of Jesus Christ His (God's) Son, cleanseth us from all sin." We can come to Him by faith and be accepted in Christ, when we have repented before God and put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bildad has basically run out of words with which to condemn Job. He had made his argument previously that Job was suffering because of his wickedness. Underlying this final attempt at convincing Job of his guilt, seems to be a point that Job was proud and didn't understand God. How could he even think that he had any right to approach a God of power and purity when he was such a wicked sinner!

Then he went on to describe humanity beginning with the humiliating way a person is born into the world. Implied in the word picture is that because human beings are born in that fashion must mean that people are not worth very much. Then he compares man to the moon and stars that to us seem pure and bright, but God knows all about them. Compared to them he speaks of humanity as worms and maggots. Worms grow in stale bread, even manna. David spoke of himself in that way when he was defeated and discouraged. This same imagery included how Christ would be humiliated, rejected and despised by people.

Bildad's point seemed to be directed at Job. He was making a comparison of the holy, pure, powerful God, with Job, a weak, wicked, worm of a person. Implied in this is, "How can you think God would listen to you and your complaints?" Bildad's position seemed to be he considered all humanity to be insignificant as as valueless as a despised worm. But that view was only his and in that conversation. God did create man first in His own image which has inherent value, which is restored when one comes to God by faith.

To use truth as a weapon to slap at people or misapply to support one's own opinion is a misuse of truth. It is true God is omnipotent. Our Lord Jesus said all power in heaven and earth is His, and under His command, authority and guidance we are to go forward with the Gospel. It is true God is absolute in holiness and is of holier eyes than to look upon sin. But we are told to be holy also, because He is holy. It is in this way we can have fellowship with God.

It is true man is in himself weak and sinful by nature. We have been "born in sin and shaped in iniquity." It is also true that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation). Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new." It is true that by one man, sin entered into the world, and all have sinned. When one comes to Christ and is "accepted in the Beloved," then our sins and iniquities are remembered no more because they have been put away legally and fairly.

When we keep truth in context and compare scripture with scripture, we begin to see things as God sees them. In Bildad's desire to bring Job down, he missed out on the beauty of God's grace bestowed on those who do not deserve the least of God's mercies.

**Job 25:4.** *"How then can a man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?"*

#### **JUSTIFIED WITH GOD.**

The problem of guilt must be faced -  
Sin's consequences must be paid.  
Righteous punishment on sinners is placed -  
Righteous justice on the guilty is laid.  
But then comes the voice of the Judge -  
A substitute for the sinner is found.  
A sinless One takes the place of the drudge -  
When sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

To be pardoned is truly a wonderful thing -  
But to be justified is so much more.  
A pardon can make a condemned man sing -  
A justified man can enter the door  
To new life with no unsavory past to be found -  
The pages of sins committed are wiped clean.  
The word "justified" has a beautiful sound -  
There are no traces of past guilt to be seen.

Justified by grace doesn't mean God overlooked,  
Any sin that could be charged again someday.  
It means the Lord Jesus when on the cross, willingly took  
Responsibility for all the debt I could not pay.  
So, by His blood I am completely justified -  
Because His death for me, fully paid my debt.  
The justice of God is righteously satisfied -  
And my past sins God has chosen to forget.

There is authority in His name that justifies me -  
By placing faith in Him alone, I am accepted.  
Christ rose from the dead, that from sin's claims I am free -  
And in Christ I have been spiritually resurrected.  
So, I am alive in Christ in a completely new way -  
I died in Christ and now in Christ I live.

God is just and the justifier is what the Word of God has to say  
Justified with God is a fact now because of all that Christ gave.

**“Tomorrow morning, Father, we will be remembering the Lord Jesus Christ in breaking bread and drinking from a cup. The two emblems remind me of my acceptance because I have been justified before Thee. I thank and praise Thee for this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **Job 26**

### **SCIENCE IN POETRY**

Job was finally so exasperated with his friends and their repeated assertion of his suffering being divine retribution for his wickedness and alleged secret sin, that he launched into a great poetic response that is remarkable in its depth of thought and knowledge, as well as his use of words. The book of Job is not a book of theology or history, but of poetic language that is not a doctrinal thesis. The human participants all said some things that were right and some things that were not. They were all influenced by their own ideas, prejudices and self-opinionated positions for argument's sake.

Yet, there is no question that Job did understand more of God's Person, ways and will than any of the three friends. His understanding of God was a result of his life lived before God, testified to by God Himself, and described at the beginning of the book. His areas of misunderstanding were colored, and maybe because of, the things he was suffering and lost. We are all at times overpowered by emotion rather than common sense of intelligent reason when there is unexplained pain that affects us body, soul and spirit.

With sarcasm Job responded to Bildad's last speech by saying in effect, that the three friends who looked on him as a helpless, quivering, sinful man, and had given him a lot of wordy explanations as to why he suffered, really didn't know what they were talking about and did not help him in the least. They had no counsel or wisdom to give in spite of their own exalted view of their intellectual prowess. Their advice was not sound nor were their words and the spirit in which they were given, of any help to him at all.

We need to learn and remember that when people need our counsel and help, it is up to us to move into the position where we can "walk a mile in their shoes," in order to be effective in our advice. To be able to truly empathize with another person we need to consider what I would need to hear if I was where they were. What would I want to hear if someone came to give me counsel? Understanding of where they are will give me a better perspective of their situation, and will produce better results than criticism and condemnation. Love and compassion will open more doors of understanding and give a more positive response to counsel, than giving advice or analyzing with a sense of scrutiny to find something wrong.

Job had listened to Bildad's speech, and told him right out that he knew what he said was copying the words of Eliphaz rather than his own philosophical opinions which were to Job spurious anyway. He put Bildad down as not saying anything worthy of paying attention to. He didn't have anything to say of value. He dismissed his opinions as useless in meeting the need of one who was suffering. Bildad had said a few things about God that were true, but when Job focused his attention on God, we can understand how much more he knew about God than his friends as he surveyed the God of creation.

First, he looked at things that are unseen. The souls of those who have died are under the all-seeing gaze of God. There are no braggarts in the place of the dead that proclaim there is no God. That attitude has changed. Those in the place of the dead tremble in fear before divine holiness which is no longer dismissed and unimportant by those who are in hell. "You cannot hide from God, though mountains cover you. His eyes your secret thoughts behold."

Bildad spoke of God in "high places." Job knew that His authority extends to the lowest of low places. Even though we cannot see the place of the lost, God is in control in the depths of darkness. He is also in control in the heights of space and the whole universe, of which we can only see a minute part. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things above and below. We see evidence of God in the very position of the earth with north and south being measureable and specific places, while east and west are non-specific.

In the form of an ancient poem, Job begins with earth being upheld by nothing but God. There is no giant turtle upon whose back the earth sits as some ancients taught. There are no legs like that of a table upon which earth rests like a flat tray like others thought. Job's view was not held by ancient philosophers because it was received from God, not man's imagination. What he wrote thousands of years ago was not considered a fact until a few hundred years ago when observation removed ancient speculation and the word of God was proven to be true scientifically.

The heavens, "the north," is where God reigns and even then, the vastness of space cannot contain Him. Earth is his "footstool," but for His own sovereign reasons, out of all the trillions of stellar things, God has set His love on mankind. All we have to do to be impressed with the awesome majesty, power and glory of God, is to step outside on a quiet starlit night and look at the sky. There is no great noise from the heavens. There is simply the overpowering sense of order, planning, beauty and wisdom that testifies to the Person, power and character of God.

Great amounts of water, millions of tons, are above us and is bound in place to be released a little at a time as rain all over the earth. Job knew that way back before scientists had been able to give an explanation of what he knew was a testimony of God. He had observed it and by his fellowship with God, recognized it as a work of God. Clouds covering the heavens, a spherical earth with a "circular horizon" and the boundaries of day and night indicating the spinning of the earth, were all evidence of God's wisdom, glory and interest in mankind in Job's day. Modern man has been skeptical of all that believers have known from ancient days until they think they have "discovered" the scientific reason of things as they are. We who know God have known by faith it was His work alone that creates, maintains and makes work nature and all associated with it.

In his poem, Job states that anything that would be in opposition or even potential opposition to God, will fail and be defeated, no matter what it is, what it does or where it comes from. The challenges of nature, of political powers, of men, or of evil cannot stand against the "thunder of His power." There were a lot of things Job had learned about God, and obviously from God, but he knew it was only a small whisper of knowledge compared with the fearful, loud clap of thunder from God's infinite power and wisdom. He knew he was only looking at the edge of the hem of God's greatness, and he was awestruck before even the little he knew about God.

His three friends thought they had God all figured out and were wanting Job to acknowledge their superior Knowledge. Job, on the other hand, was aware of his own limitations when it came to understanding the wisdom and greatness of God. That is one evidence of the reality of faith that all true believers have. The greater and more of our experiences with God, the more we are conscious of how little we know. It is impossible to describe, or even try to define the infinite wisdom, power, beauty and purposes of our God and gracious Father who is limitless in every way. It is like an ant trying to describe a human being, or a bird trying to describe the world.

Job was more aware of what he did not know than of what he knew. We are wise and teachable if we have the same attitude. Everything about God is limitless and unable to be fully described. What we do know is enough to make us love God and bow down our heads and hearts in His presence and sing,

"O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the works Thy hands have made.  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed."

Our response is truly, "How Great Thou art!"

When we get to the verse of that hymn that says,

"And when I think, that God His Son not sparing,  
Send Him to die, I scarce can take it in.  
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin..."

Then our awe is not only real, but is personal, and our worship of our Father-God is truly in spirit and in truth.

**Job 26:14.** *"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?"*

#### **THE THUNDER OF HIS POWER.**

The movements of planets and galaxies through endless space is not felt.  
Tides in their courses are uncontrollable except when His power is dealt,  
For there is no stopping the course of the seasons - man has no control over time.  
The moon even gave no light until His power made the sun to shine.  
How small man is in his place - how limited in his power.  
How great is the Almighty in grace! How many blessings on us He showers!  
Because all of the things God created had fellowship with man its motivation -  
All these evidences we see of His Person are small in the light of His salvation.

He, who hung the earth upon nothing, was the One who came to earth to save.  
He, who has the keys to life in His Person, was the One whose life He gave.  
He, to whom even hell is transparent, felt hell's flames when He suffered for our sin.

He, who maintains everything in its order, uses earthquakes to testify of Him.  
He, who made the sun to give light, turned its light out in the middle of the day.  
He, who answers our prayers, from His heart to His Father did pray.  
On every hand the thunder of His power is greater than the sounds we hear.  
His power is limitless in strength, yet in grace, He to me draws near.

There is a part of me that can't stop trembling, when His presence and power, I fear.  
There is a part that is comfortable and content, when I know that He is right here.  
I feel so limited in my perception of Him by my own feeble humanity.  
Yet I know He has existed for ever, and will, from eternity to eternity.  
Still in grace that I never can measure, He was found in fashion as a man;  
In order that any of life's consternations I have, He too, is willing and can -  
Apart from sin, identify Himself with everything I'll ever go through.  
When I will be called a load to bear, He has personally borne that load too.

The thunder of His power is extremely great, of that there is no limitation.  
But greater than the sound of His passing in the seas, is the greatness of grace bringing  
salvation.

He who uses thunder as a little glimpse to us of the sound of His voice;  
Gives in words, the truth of His Gospel, to help us all to make the right choice.  
He, who with the flash of His lightening can break trees, even rocks, apart.  
Has with the strains of His love and mercy, brought peace to many troubled hearts.  
By the thunder of His power and spirit, He sprinkled stars through the vastness of space.  
And yet, in a day that is coming, I will look upon His blessed face.

**"I am kind of shaky before Thee this morning, Father. I know I am not intruding on Thee, but I am very conscious of Thy greatness and power. I feel so unworthy of putting in childish words, thoughts that I know can never define Thee. Maybe, Father God, it is a good thing, that the back of my legs feels weak and trembly. I am afraid to stand before Thee. I bow my heart in reverence and respect. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

## **Job 27**

### **CLEAR CONSCIENCE**

Often when extreme pressure comes on a person because of the circumstances of life that catch us unaware, we may say things without realizing they seem contradictory to those who hear us. Our minds think much faster than we can say our words. So, in this chapter Job says some of the same things his friends said to him about the wicked. They applied their description of the wicked, and what happens to them, to Job. He spoke of the life and death of the wicked in general terms. He was not admitting to being a wicked sinner who was being punished for secret sins.

In spite of the pain of his physical suffering, the grief of emotional suffering that came with the loss of all he had including his family, and the sense of spiritual hopelessness because of not understanding what God was allowing, Job takes his oath before God that he is telling the truth. From his heart he affirmed that he was neither speaking nor acting deceitfully. He definitely would not say he had hidden sin or acted out of character, just to get relief or to submit to pressure from his friends.

In old age as we begin to wander from clear statements because of lack of memory, or when we are in serious pain and it is hard to maintain coherent thoughts and put them into precise words, we can expect that others may say, "What? I don't get what you are trying to say. That doesn't make sense to me!" It is not necessarily confusion on the part of both, but a whole lot of disjointed thoughts that each one is verbally expressing.

Job never doubted God nor did he doubt his relationship with God., but in his desperation he verbally and audibly complained about what God allowed to happen to him. When a person takes his oath as Job does twice in the first few verses of this chapter, that means he is not trying to deceive anyone, especially God. To say confidently out loud that we know we have eternal life, to many people is arrogance and/or deception. Our only right to say such a thing is if God's word supports such a statement. Only forgiveness of sin and a right standing before God, can let us say such a thing. But for believers in Christ, we are able to do so, not because we claim sinlessness, but rather forgiveness. It is in this way we can live before God and man with a clear conscience.

Job was not about to surrender his integrity with a false confession of guilt. He didn't know what God was doing or why, but he did know God. He was committed to live before God with a clear conscience, and before men without compromising his integrity. To be able to look people in the eye with a clear conscience is a

state of living we should all maintain. The state of being blameless is important to God and is expected in those who represent our Lord Jesus Christ, both in public and in private.

In this part of his discourse, Job proceeded to tell those who he thought were special friends, that they were hypocrites like the enemies who will face their own consequences for sin when justice is served. Then they will cry and not be heard. They will call on God and get no answer. In all their words and poetic speeches, they did not say anything he did not already believe. In the questions he asked, he spoke to the hopelessness of the ungodly and the fact of consequences that will come on the ungodly. Death is inevitable and trouble as a result of sin will not be avoided. His "delight" is not in the "law of the Lord" because he only lives for this life and the temporary pleasures it offers.

Moses also knew the "pleasures of sin" were only for "a season." Any who look for lasting pleasures in anything but that which pleases God, will never find satisfaction. To know and apply the word of God to life in general and daily experiences as well, brings to a believer true lasting pleasure. That does not mean we are immune from opposition and pain that is associated with life here on earth, but it does mean that when we draw near to God, He draws near to us. He comes with an open welcome that brings relief even in times of disaster, although that does not mean we will not suffer. He goes with us through the trouble.

Job said he could teach his friends because he had been in close fellowship with God, and now for some unknown reason, he was experiencing the governmental dealings of God. When one has been through times of testing and trial, they learn things from God and about God they would never learn when life is smooth and easy.

The consequences of wickedness, and why bad things happen to wicked people, was easily understood by Job. To those who live only for themselves and the pleasures of the world, the only things that count to them is what they possess. To then that is what life is all about. But those things are temporary and can be quickly lost. Even our child who are a "heritage of the Lord," are also subject to death when least expected. Even though our hearts are set on them, they too can be lost very quickly. The wickedness of parents and the lifestyle in which they have been raised may have a serious negative effect on them. The sinner's finances, family and fame can all be taken away, and if that is all a person lives for, they will end up with nothing.

The descriptions Job gave of the wicked are like those Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar had made previously in the dialogue. He goes further than they did in some ways, so that he seems to be agreeing with them. But his big concern is not so much with them, as why those same things that happen to the wicked have happened to him who lived with a clear conscience and who will not compromise his integrity by telling a lie.

Job and the three supposed friends all agreed that there is judgment on the wicked, but the differences between them was that the three believed it was only on the wicked, and that judgment would come quickly. Job acknowledged that it comes but not necessarily at once, and not necessarily even in this lifetime. The confusion Job had was to do with his own suffering. He could testify to them his own clear conscience and innocence in regard to secret sins, hypocrisy and wicked acts. He could not in any way classify himself with the ungodly when he was righteous, not even to alleviate his suffering. That to Job would be a falsehood.

We know we are not sinless, yet at the same time it is important that we do not yield to the temptation to exaggerate our sinful life before we were saved. Neither should we promote false humility or a sense of guilt after we have been forgiven and given the gift of eternal life. Salvation is a work of God for us, and it is not enhanced by us dramatizing our sinfulness and/or humility. There is no value in demeaning ourselves in an attempt to impress others with our self-denigration. Honesty and integrity imply we are grateful to be accepted by God because of our Lord's willingness to assume full responsibility for our sins by paying the price of redemption with His blood. Now we are able to live in quiet dignity, personal integrity and hopefully will be able to honor our Lord Jesus Christ by living righteous, holy lives.

**Job 27:11.** *"I will teach you by the hand of God: that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal."*

#### **IN THE HAND OF GOD.**

All around me are dangers, none of which I can control.  
Demons and forces of evil surround, trying to conquer my soul.  
But in this place where I rest, there is no fear in my heart.  
Here in the hand of God, there is rest which He does impart.

I venture out to reach others, and in this way God's will fulfill.  
And I find even as I move among crowds of people, I'm in His hand still.  
He doesn't leave me unprotected even though the god of this world -

Seeks to bring me down in defeat as against me accusations are hurled.

The roads I travel seem to be getting longer and yet I have no fear -  
In spite of all the dangers on each side, I know that God is here -  
And holds back with His hand dangers unseen and even those I see,  
The calm assurance that I am in His hand brings lasting comfort to me.

The moral darkness of the days in which my lot is cast -  
Remind me that things will get much worse before these days will pass.  
"Evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse."  
But I am safely in His hand, and protected from sin's curse.

There is no power in earth or hell that can take me from His hand.  
The Father has embraced me tight and the Son is the outer band.  
Through the downfall of the nations and the collapse of all that men trust,  
Those who are in the hand of God, know He really does care for us.

There is no place on earth where sinful man can hide.  
But here in the safety of God's hand is where I will abide.  
Not only in divine protection here, but there is fellowship with Him.  
A little foretaste of future joys, right here in His hand begins.

I do look out at the world at large and wonder where it all will end.  
I wonder how far God will allow things to go, or what the next calamity will bring  
In an effort to give mankind another opportunity to repent.  
Here in the hand of God I remain; in spite of all, here I will be content.

**"There are so many changes happening, Father, that I really cannot discern which are from natural causes and what is divine intervention. I guess I don't need to know, so I will just be content here, resting in Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."**

## **Job 28**

### **WHERE IS WISDOM?**

What does a person do, and where can he go when after hours, days, weeks and months of suffering and desperate search, and asking questions of others, he can find no answer to his dilemma? His friends can't help him and he can find no answer in himself as to why such a great disaster happened to him. Enemies, fires and hurricane have taken away all his possessions and his family for whom he cared deeply. His health was gone, his wife didn't understand him or his situation, and his friends accused him of being a wicked sinner, a hypocrite and a liar. Where is relief to be found?

This chapter seems to indicate Job finally stopped his desperate flying about in his desire to find out why he was suffering so. He seems to have calmed down in his spirit and focuses on one question, "Where can I find wisdom?" Usually most of the answer to our problems lie in being able to concisely state the problem in one or two sentences. When something is defined concisely, a lot of peripheral words and matters that have no close bearing on the subject disappear. Job's problems could be summed up basically by. "All I have lost and what I am going through cannot be explained in human terms and experience."

As a result of quieting down and calmly starting to evaluate his situation, he begins to think "outside the box." Instead of being irritable, he becomes pensive. Instead of trying to categorize his situation, he accepted the fact that what was happening to him is beyond normal human experience. This out-of-the-ordinary problem is more than can be explained. Instead of seeking for answers, he seeks for wisdom. All of the opinions of him and his friends regarding retribution, do not fit his case. So finally, he abandons the frustrating search for an explanation of the unexplainable. In a completely different way of thinking, Job begins to consider all that he knows is hidden and how hidden things can be found. Once it is found it can be brought into the light and ultimately be for the benefit of mankind.

Ancient people likely saw a glimmer of shining rock and when reached for, found there was a vein of silver. Then they found one of gold, and then one of copper - and all of them led into the ground. By following the veins, they had to dig into the ground and found precious stones and other important metals that had been hid from human eyes. Mining was the only way they could keep getting those metals and so a whole industry was born. Then the impurities in the metals were found to be able to be eliminated by refining with heat and the value was greatly increased, so another industry was born.

Ultimately the uses of metals as exchange or for their physical beauty made mining a means to get rich. Job's description of mining and refining must have begun to resonate in his mind as to how hidden things can be

brought to light and understanding. In searching for what man considers hidden treasure, even mountains will be dug into and hindrances removed and overcome. A thoughtful person can reason by the "what ifs" we face, and "so thens" become an answer.

Job thought about the superiority of man over animals that just walk over the land, while people begin a search for what is hidden. He thought about the distinction of humanity from the animal kingdom as he puts into poetic words his search for wisdom. People can reason and come to conclusions that lead to specific actions. Animals can be trained to do many things by humans, but they are not able to reason things out from a problem to a solution. They do not reason as to what is right or wrong, but react instinctively to pain, hunger and the need of survival God put in them when they were created. They react to physical stimuli as a survival technique.

Job also observed that "bread" comes out of the earth where it had been hidden from sight. With heat, water and light comes life from the dirt that sustains our lives. Millions of tons of food lie beneath our feet, hidden from our eyes, waiting only for the life-force God gives it to spring forth for our benefit. Job considered this and likely thought, "How did this happen?" In this context, Job asks the fundamental question of the whole book of Job, "Where shall wisdom be found?" Instead of frantically looking all over and asking opinions, he takes time, in spite of his pain and suffering to consider carefully what he really needs.

He had described people looking for hidden things by taking action, but it didn't fit his present need. Then answering his own questions, he begins with where wisdom cannot be found. He also draws on the results of the search for precious metals and stones, and admits that material things cannot produce wisdom or bring it to us.

This same fruitless search takes over the minds of philosophers and leaders of governments and religions. Unfortunately, most people look to them for the answers so they do not have to think for themselves. It is a well-known fact that wisdom is not in the laws, practices and opinions of people that change. Such things are changing faster than ever before as people realize they lack the wisdom to govern families, churches and nations. The changes that have no basis except for human opinion is epidemic among us. Not all the leaders and philosophers put together can give the answers to the human need of wisdom. We have to rise above the boundaries of human limitations to find the wisdom we need to live with insight, grace and happiness.

Human experience can give us some of the wisdom for survival in everyday living. To go beyond such mere fundamentals, we need to go higher. We need to know the Lord and have learned to trust Him and His supreme wisdom.

In his new thoughtful state of mind, Job had gone over where wisdom is not found, even when he compared it with the most precious stones like rubies. He recognized the value and essence of wisdom is way beyond that of tangible things. Finally, after all of his expressions of frustration, and to a point, disappointment in God because he had received no answer to his problem, he asks himself the two questions again. His own answer is that wisdom originates, and is in its fullness, in God alone. Obedience to God and practicing the principles of living God gives, is where wisdom and understanding can be found.

The Source of wisdom is God, and yet He gives human intelligence to people, and also gives the understanding and knowledge of how to use it in practical ways. He knows what is needed, and as the Master of wisdom, how it is to be applied. Divine wisdom in His creation has placed precious metals and stones where they can be found by human endeavor when they use God-given wisdom. He arranged for millions of tons of water to fall from the sky as rain to gently water the ground in the best way to produce fruit for the need of all living creatures. Occasionally He overrides the normal practice of rain and allows huge downfalls and floods to remind sinful people that God is still in control of the elements. Millions of thunderbolts come to the earth from the sky every day constantly bringing the needed nutrients to produce the food we need. The on-going order of creation is constant so that we can count on "seedtime and harvest, summer and winter" which are needed for human survival.

Work and various ways human ingenuity can be used, are ways we exercise the wisdom God gives. We cannot explain all that happens in human lives, but we can gladly submit to our Lord from whom comes all the wisdom we need and "every good and perfect gift." Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who are willing to read the Bible and practice what they learn from it, can be satisfied with their lives and live meaningful and useful lives to the glory of God.

Job finally got it, and hopefully I have too. "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." Job had feared the Lord and eschewed evil as is stated at the beginning of the book. The

character of Job did not preserve him from disaster and loss that are part of the experience of fallen humanity. Nor did it provide him with the answers to all of his questions, but he was reminded that the answers to all of them is in God alone. We have to leave it there until God chooses to make known to us what He thinks we should hear and know. The starting point of wisdom is in God Himself, who we serve with reverence, respect and godly fear.

**Job 28:22, 28.** *“Whence then cometh wisdom? And where is the place of understanding?... And unto man he said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.’”*

#### **WHERE IS WISDOM?**

They search for, and sometimes find, veins coursing through earth's body  
The elusive hope that gold and silver are supposed to bring -  
And then the hope fade into disappointment as reality sets in:  
Neither gold or silver, iron or brass - the things of earth; can ever make the heart sing.

Eyes search for, and feet walk into dangerous places - hunting:  
Trying to get there before another, more timid, makes his way  
To banks of shifted earth looking for something rare to claim for self -  
The occasional find making one more dissatisfied - so the search goes on to another day.

A road less traveled, even as the wild beasts tread softly over familiar ground -  
Is the path which no eagle's eye or hunting vulture can ever find.  
It cannot be found, or earned, or dug from the deep or measured by foot or pound.  
Nowhere in mans' frantic search can wisdom be found to ease the troubled mind.

Yet near at hand, right there beside the pure in heart, God waits,  
To show, to freely give what one seeks, but for some reason, wants to earn.  
It waits to bless when the humbled heart at long last responds to grace;  
And finds the Source of wisdom as close as each breath, and simply learned.

The head and heart both bow in simultaneous acquiescence  
To the One who knows the way to wisdom is not found in futile search  
But in reverential respect, and with the awe composed by the divine presence  
There is to be found in the full-blown action of faith; wisdom, closer than the arm's full reach.

The One who knows every path on earth that leads to hidden treasure,  
Is there waiting, the needed wisdom He has in grace to impart.  
He who knows each golden and silver vein and oceans' deep can measure -  
Makes plain that wisdom waits at the door for evil to depart.

The God of mercy withholds the forces that my life would seek to take.  
He is there to bless with the wisdom that hidden doors did hide.  
In great unanswered acts of grace and love long unrequited -  
Now moves to give the fruit of wisdom to those who in Him do abide.

The heart is warm, the mind at ease, the fevered search is over -  
The reverential fear has opened wide the gate behind which wisdom hid.  
And a sweet communion breaks forth with blessings that shower  
Unveiling greater joy and satisfaction than abundance of gold and silver ever did.

**“The joy of knowing Thee, Father, and the fellowship with Thee in all walks of life has brought me great satisfaction. I humbly praise Thee for imparted wisdom Thou dost give to help me fulfill Thy will each day. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

#### **Job 29**

#### **REFLECTION: DANGERS AND BENEFITS**

When our Lord Jesus Christ was here, he often spoke in parables. A parable is a well-thought-out illustration used to get across to listeners an important point to be made to affect the hearers in some way. It is still a useful technique by which the windows of understanding are opened.

It was in this way, after a pause to let his friends digest what he had already said, and time deliberately taken to arrange in an orderly poetic form his thoughts, that Job starts to speak again. His three friends had nothing to say, so there must have been a time of conscious and careful consideration on Job's part as to what he wanted to say and how best to say it.

In North America, and maybe some other parts of the world also, there is a different way of communicating. People often do not take time to think before they speak. "Off-the-cuff" comments are thought to be spontaneous thoughts from the heart, but may be only to be heard or be a personal reaction said without considering how it will affect the other people. Casual, irreverent, careless and irresponsible speaking can quickly deteriorate into polarized positions of thought that should never have been taken.

In this part of Job's discourse, he deliberately looks back in his life to the material prosperity he enjoyed before calamity struck and took everything away. He did acknowledge all he had was because "God preserved me." God was the One who was watching over him and provided for him. He knew all he had did not come to him just because he was smart and/or hard-working, but God had prospered him.

To review our past, and the ways God has been with us, helped us and prospered us, are a good exercise of our souls. Thankfulness for divine preservation and protection needs to be acknowledged both to God and to people around us. This will keep us from being lifted up with pride and in our own estimation of ourselves. The abundance of the necessities of life and things that make us comfortable is not just because of our skill and willpower. God honors those who honor Him and graciously gives to us from the storehouse of His fullness until we are full and running over. That is His right. It is also His right to withhold from us for His own reasons.

Job was conscious not only of the fact that God was preserving him in the prime of his life, but also that "The Almighty was yet with me." God was the Source of his "butter and oil." The abundance of his wealth that he enjoyed so much had come from the gracious hand of God, and he knew it. His personal life, his family life when his children were around him, and his prosperity were all from the Lord in whom he had placed his faith. He gave God the credit for all that he enjoyed.

In this parable based on his own life's story, he moved from personal and domestic blessings in which he was conscious of God's power and provision in making his life comfortable and wealthy, to his position in society. In the community in which he lived, he was notable among the people and he knew it. It is in this part of the parable that he runs close to the dangerous area of personal pride. There is no mention of God in this part of his speech. It is full of the "I... me... my..." talk that is indicative of deceptive pride. As he walks down this borderline between sin and sanctification, his perception of himself in the public sphere of his life comes close to self-exaltation.

This is a place we all come to if we make a success of something or even of ourselves. We claim some credit even when our business and our children seem to be going ahead by leaps and bounds. When we start to take personal credit for the good things that happen to us, we fall into the trap. A man who owned a schooner said when regaling himself, "I got my schooner all fixed up, painted and looking good. I got it all provisioned and went down the Labrador coast and I caught a whole load of fish. I brought it back, I salted and dried it and then I took it into the city and I sold it. I loaded the schooner with provisions and I took it back to our community. Then I went up the bay and I cut a whole load of firewood. But on the way back the boys lost her and she sank." He took credit for everything but the loss.

We can almost see Job though his own words, walking with self-conscious dignity out of his house and moving slowly with measured steps down the street. He would nod with condescending grace to the admiring people he met or who stopped what they were doing to look at him. Likely there were murmurs of admiration as people would say, "Look, there's Job! He's on the way to the place of the judges. You just watch how he does business! Look at the old men stand up as he comes closer, and the younger men bow their heads! See, everybody stops talking because Job is coming! What a man!"

It was true that not only had God prospered Job, but his position of honor was because he "feared God and eschewed evil." The respect given to him by people was because of his reflection of what they knew was right and honorable in life. Job's life in public was a reflection of his faith in God. He knew how people looked at him with esteem, and how they respected him because of his wisdom in business and political matters. The poor people may have been looked down on by many, but they knew Job would help them. Those in poverty, the orphans and widows, the sick and helpless knew Job would stand up for them when they were picked on by wicked people or when they were in desperate need.

To us we would think just by reading what he said about himself, that he was full of himself. Vitamin I, seems to stand out a lot in the monologue. But we are wrong if we pass a judgment on others until we have the whole picture of another person's life and know all the circumstances surrounding what they are speaking about. We need to learn not to think more highly of ourselves than we should, and we should remember not to recount our successes, our generosity or even our opinion of ourselves. It is normal to look at our lives through our own eyes only, and think other's opinions of us is the same as ours. But wisdom keeps our

mouths shut until we have something that is worth saying, and then to say it through the eyes of a neutral observer. It is of greater wisdom on our part, to recount the blessings God had abundantly bestowed on us, and assure ourselves and others to whom we speak, that we know "every good gift, and every perfect gift" comes down from above.

"Pride cometh before destruction, and a haughty spirit before the fall." Job was a righteous, honorable man of integrity and dignity. He was honored by other people, and rightly so. He was considerate and helpful to the needy, and wise in his dealings with those who were older, as well as with his peers. However, we learn from his parable that to experience blessing, respect and honor most times, does not mean we deserve it nor should we assume it will be the same all the time. It is only because of God's grace and mercies that we are not already consumed.

In his life Job had many important positions which likely made him assume all of his life would be like that to which he had already enjoyed. In a way that does seem like a reasonable assumption - if we forget the fact that "our times are in Thy hand." Job recalled how people waited for him to speak because they recognized the wisdom of his counsel, and often had nothing to say afterwards. His words were supported by his actions, and they could not be denied nor demeaned as partial, irrelevant and unimportant. People didn't challenge his verdicts because they were as sensible, reasonable and helpful like a perfect rain on fields of human ignorance, It is a good thing for all involved when there is a wise judge who knows what it is like to be successful in his personal, family and business life. Then when he is given a responsible position in society, he knows what he is talking about when he makes a decision and passes judgment on a matter.

A casual reading of this chapter would make us think Job was a man full of himself and full of pride. Then after reading it with care we realize there is a point to be made that he gets to after. Even if he had made fun of others, or they made fun of him, they took it good because they knew he was not putting them down for their hurt. By talking about himself and his past life as he saw it, he established a position relating to his past happiness. This led into the sudden loss of everything and the pain and suffering he was going through at the present time, and why he was so confounded as to why all this happened so suddenly and without any known reason.

**Job 29:2-3.** *"Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness."*

#### **RETROSPECT.**

Strange are the ways God allows things to come upon us.  
Is it only when things are good that God does bless?  
How can I measure divine favor with a finite mind that is limited?  
What measure can I reach for to determine what is really right?  
Does the things that we as humans crave for to satisfy the ego -  
Are these the ways that worth is measured and satisfies the mind?  
Looking back at carefree days and childish joys that faded  
Into dignified pleasure when people stopped to recognize my position -  
Is that really how I know the Almighty God is with me?  
Is He pleased with the place in His universal plan that I fill?

There were those days of fond memories that can be altered with passing time.  
Were they to return and I relive them step by step, and day by day -  
I wonder if they would be what my fading memory makes them out to be?  
Perhaps the simplicity of those times; the survival mode of living  
Is what makes them a template of my ancient joys - and, I think, of present ones.  
The different times, and wider spaces of interaction, make the past much larger in my mind.  
Were people more kind and friendly in those times, or is it a matter of perception?  
In retrospect I make mind paintings, and fill in the colors by the numbers  
Of my choosing, so I can make dark things brighter by adding imaginary colors.  
Were all the quiet comforts and days of "easy living" really that much better?

The sweat and toil probably seemed oppressive as we longed for newer days to come.  
There probably was, even then, hopes unformed by words that lay latent in the mind.  
And as accumulated wealth increased, it seemed to be, just beyond grasping fingers -  
Satisfaction lay waiting, or at least I thought so, but it had racing feet faster than mine.  
And fleeting time and years brought longed for "things" that evaded the treasure chest.  
All seemed so urgent - until my knees were bent - my head bowed -  
And my eyes were closed to see beyond the realm of vain expectation,  
To where the Almighty God waited, "father-like" for His child to come.  
Come back to the Source of life and blessings - past and present and future  
And in harmonious fellowship - all is understood and makes final sense.

**“O God of patience, how it must seem like my faith in Thee is so weak and little as I stand looking back, instead of moving steadily forward. Help me to look and move forward confidently through the confusion of troublesome events all around. Lead me by the still waters of divine purpose where the depth of grace keeps the waters fresh and nourishing. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

### **Job 30**

#### **PRESENT BITTERNESS**

Chapter 30 is in sharp contrast to chapter 29 in which Job had recounted his past with a calm, dignified account of his personal and family life, and also his public life in society. In this chapter we read the bitter lament of a suffering man in the terrible condition of his present state. This chapter goes beyond the effects of painful suffering and the emotional upset of one nearing death. In this part of his discourse, Job lashes out at the humiliating treatment he is receiving from the basest of men, and even more startling, at what he considers cruelty from God.

Who can know or describe the extreme pain and hurt of body, soul and spirit another person goes through unless they have passed through a similar calamity? Usually people try to hide the thoughts of bitter anguish and antagonism they have against those who afflict them. But in this part of Job's monologue he lets everything hang out in his bitterness toward man and God.

There is a dark side to human nature that seems to enjoy seeing those who are successful being brought down in shame and disgrace. If one who had been a strong leader is found out in some sinful matter, there is a sense of vindication in those whose own sin has given them a bad conscience. If one who has a godly reputation as a spiritual preacher and/or teacher falls in some way, there may be an unspoken thought of self-justification for some personal guilt.

People often rally together in their attacks against an unfortunate soul who has been brought down from the heights of popularity to a place of quivering helplessness. They soon are made an outcast for no known guilt, but supposition makes people think the worst of people when gossip. "Aha, he has been hiding something and now he is getting his comeuppance!" That seems like it was the state of mind of Job. He had suffered the loss of everything and was experiencing the awful pains of some terrible sickness that affected his bones, his skin and his whole physical being until even his face seemed to be disfigured and he considered himself no more than dust and ashes.

"Now" there was even more suffering caused by the taunting of young people. There were the children of those who were moral and social outcasts who formed gangs that preyed on the sick and afflicted. For some reason those young people seemed to find a sick satisfaction in tormenting, mocking and bringing further humiliation on Job. Unfortunately, there are those today who pick on old people and those who are down and out as targets. Job was their target of choice as far as he was concerned.

Scavenger dogs are commonly seen in many countries of the world and are despised animals that people do not want to be near. As far as Job was concerned, he didn't want those people even near his flocks of sheep. Job compares those who were antagonistic toward him like those animals in their character. The fact that a man who had been dignified and respected, well known for his kindness to the poor and wise in his counsel, did not make any difference to those outcast gangs of young people who taunted and ridiculed him, and made up songs against him.

Instead of being shown any respect, he was despised. Instead of being honored he was humiliated by the lowest people in society. In their disrespect of him they did not hesitate to push and poke at him, casting off any restraint as they tried to add to the suffering he was already going through. This same characteristic is increasing among young people today who seem to think they are entitled to what other people have earned without taking any responsibility for their meeting their own needs. Those who came after Job were the kind of people who apparently wanted to be the outcasts of society as long as they could make people afraid of them. Without moral and personal restraints, they were a rabble crowd of dissolute people who chose to oppose accepted normal and ordered behavior in a community.

They were not described as disadvantaged people, but rather those who were against that which was honorable and right for their own evil intents and purposes. They focused on Job like a pack of wolves on a wounded deer. As far as Job could see, their aim was to bring him down to a painful humiliating death. To him "terrors" engulfed him as he cried out to God and got no answer.

"Days of affliction" and nights of pain took their toll on Job's whole being. It was then he cried out in desperation to God but even in his frustration, he did not name Him. At the first reading of the text, it seems like he has stepped over the boundary of propriety toward God in his use of words. With words of extreme agitation Job expresses his despair at all he was going through. He didn't hold back from opening up his emotions to full exposure before God. It seemed to Job like he was a God of cruelty. Poetic usage of language sometimes takes a person's thoughts and words beyond normal speech in seeking to express that which defies common words. Taking liberties in the use of words does happen in some cases.

Job was concerned he was going to die without the truth behind his suffering being known. His cries and prayers for help had received no answer. He had listened to other people in distress when they had called out to him and he helped them. But when he called, no help nor mercy came. There is a certain degree of desperation we can come to in which about all we can do is fall on our face and howl like an injured beast. We just can't take any more. It is in times like that we think thoughts and use words that would have been better not said. When all we have worked for, struggled for and hoped for, disintegrates before our eyes, what can we do to alleviate our desperation?

Job's physical appearance because of the sickness that was on him, had not only estranged him from society, but it turned his skin dark and his very bones ached with terrible pain. His voice was fading and he was getting to the place where he could barely articulate words. He did not curse God, but in his mind, and the words he spoke declared that as far as he was concerned, God was responsible for what happened to him.

we do not know what is ahead of each of us in our future, and we cannot be sure of what we will say and do if or when tragedy comes to us. But we can remember the words of our Lord, and apply them to ourselves. The seven "I AM s" of Christ's humanity in Psalm 69 cover every situation a suffering saint will go through. Job experienced most of them, and we may too. Just remember that whatever God allows us to pass through in our lives, Someone has been there before us. Our Lord has been there and knows what it is like.

- v. 2. "Deep waters." - helplessness
- v.3. "Weary of my crying." - exhaustion
- v.8. "Stranger to my brethren." - abandonment
- v.12. "Song of the drunkards." - despised
- v.17. "In trouble." - needing an advocate
- v.20. "Full of heaviness." - personal sorrow
- v.27. "Poor and sorrowful." - circumstantial sorrow

**Job 30:26.** *"When I expected good, then evil came; when I waited for light, then darkness came."*

### **CALAMITY STRUCK.**

Everything you wanted to do; you were finally able to accomplish.  
Your name was known in your chosen field far and wide.  
Who would have thought in such a short time it could all be banished -  
And even those who worked with you now turn aside.

All you had worked for and the possessions you gathered  
Was the envy of all who knew you well.  
But in one stormy day everything, large and small was scattered -  
All that was left was a story to tell.

One hour with the doctor and everything in life was changed.  
Now life is counted in months - even days.  
Plans are abandoned - projects are all rearranged,  
Depending on what the oncologists say.

Your hopes and dreams were linked to the children who were born.  
Giving direction for the heritage God gave.  
But those are all gone - from your heart has been torn -  
The generations that would continue your name.

What to do is the question now that nothing is left -  
Everything except breath in the nostrils is gone.  
Now all the purpose of your labor - from everything, you are totally bereft.  
There is no reason for your life to go on.

Except there is one thing, buried deep it is true, but it is there -

Faith in God has been waiting for your attention.  
As faith is finally turned to, in the depths of your despair -  
You find God ready to make a connection.

So instead of losses, lost hopes and vanished dreams -  
You find One who is for you - and is alive and well.  
The things you had worked for, all the plans and schemes  
Are abandoned, as from God you learn what He will tell.

A whole new perspective is formed; a whole new life begins -  
Different, it is true, from the past.  
The goals are better, the power and strength come from Him -  
Who does all things well, and makes them all last.

**"I thank Thee, Father, for preserving me so far in life from things that cause great despair. Some of the issues in life have threatened to bring me down, and I so thank Thee, that in those things Thy great faithfulness has been real and lasting to me. I praise and thank Thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

### **Job 31**

#### **GOD'S PERFECT KNOWLEDGE**

In this last discourse, Job had looked back with a reflective attitude to the days in which he lived as one who had "feared God and eschewed evil." The false accusations of his friends couldn't take those memories from him because he lived in good conscience before God and men. Then in bitterness of soul, self-pity caused by extreme pain and loss, and frustrated by no answer from God as to why so many calamities fell on him, he cried out in painful anger for help.

In chapter 31 a whole new tone is set as it seems like he speaks like a calm lawyer setting his case carefully before not only the judge, but the reporters who will carefully record his words, the people among whom he lived and did business, and most importantly - to God who knows him in and out and can vouch for his integrity.

His first comments have to do with his testimony of integrity in his personal life. He takes his oath that he has never committed adultery, and more than that, he set his heart against looking at a woman with lust and fantasy. He states openly that he is innocent of outward and inward sins in this regard. More than just saying it, he is sure that God knows he is innocent in this area of his personal life.

In his personal defense he specified four different times what should happen to him if he has sinned in these ways. As a man of integrity, if he turned to open sin, he should lose everything for which he had worked. If he had turned to women other than his wife, or tried to tempt them into sexual immorality, he deserved to watch his own wife be brought down to the lowest place as a slave. If he had withheld from helping widows and those in need, then his own arm should fall off. If he had not tended to the land he used as a trustworthy steward of its benefits, then it all should be weeds and thistles instead of a source of grain and useful produce.

We can learn from this open testimony that righteousness and integrity go together, and should be expected in those of us who claim to know God and are His children by faith in Christ. He knows our innocence and guilt. He knows what I look at and what my response is to temptation. He knows the way I take and what I do when no one else is around.

Job also openly states that he has avoided saying things that are false. By not using the name of God in a wrong way, nor bearing false witness in court or in private, we avoid the sin of falsehood. Lies, misleading statements made to color an opinion or the outcome of a matter, are all part of falsehood and bearing "false witness." Using the name of God in inappropriate ways, or false statements from false prophets are as wrong as worshipping idols.

Fidelity in personal life and spiritual life helps us to maintain fidelity and integrity in public and social life. Justice, fairness and compassion to those who are less advantaged than ourselves, is to be expected in one who is a child of God and a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ. Job paid attention to the welfare of those who worked for him. When they complained he listened to their complaints and met their needs on the same level as he would meet his own needs.

It is not enough for us to say to people in hard straits, "Be ye warmed and filled," if we are not willing to be the answer to their legitimate needs. It is incumbent on us to be ready to be a father to orphans and a supplier of help and comfort to those who "are widows indeed." We do need to feed the hungry, and supply help to the needy when it is in our power to do so.

In Job's personal life he was a man of fidelity to his wife, a man of moral character to which others could testify. To his neighbors and those in need he was a compassionate and just man. He could honestly testify to helping those who were powerless and poor. His own servants could testify to his fairness and care for them. As one who "sat in the gate," his public persona was consistent with the testimony of the defense he was making. The legal system of the community in which he lived supported his claim of "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before God."

For Christian believers today, we are expected to be moral and upright even though society around us is immoral and unfair. The expectations of those who are not saved is that there be a distinct difference between those who have a real Christian testimony and those who are agnostic. All through this chapter in which Job swears to his innocence, there are the "if... then," statements that add weight to what he said. He was not in any way making rash, lighthearted statements. He was dead serious. It was before the Lord that he made these declarations that covered every area of his life. He was a man who had been wholly committed to pleasing God in his life.

In our day people seem to be obsessed with getting money, accumulating wealth and possession and trying every kind of pleasure they can find. This is a modern form of idolatry that has easily been accepted as okay behavior by almost all of society. Job knew that depending on wealth for happiness was idolatry. He had not worshipped the sun or moonlike others in the Middle East. He didn't consult astrologers or the alignment of the stars in his decision making. He knew, as do believers today, that life is in the hands of our Almighty Creator God.

Power and prestige that comes from accumulated wealth is never satisfying to one who has gained all they could. There is an insatiable desire for more no matter how much one has, unless they know God and fear Him. The warning to the successful is "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them."

As Job continued in his own defense, he states that he is a man of generosity meeting needs of others. He does not gloat over the misfortune and downfall of those who were his enemies and had fallen into hard times. He did not, nor should we ever say, "Finally they are getting what they deserved. He had it coming to him." All of those "if" statements indicate he was not self confident, but was calmly assured that all he was saying was true.

He was a man of integrity in personal life, a man of fidelity in his relationships, a man of generosity towards those in need, a man of honesty in business and public, and a man of known spiritual commitment to God. All of those characteristics should be seen in us who are God's people today in spite of all that is socially, morally, legally and religiously accepted by humanity as a whole. Job did not try to hide anything from God like Adam did. He actually took his oath, His "mark," again as a man innocent of deliberate wrong doing and hidden sin.

It is not uncommon for people to hide their sins by using deception. Cover-ups with lies that appear good for awhile to casual observers are not hidden from God as to what a person really is and does. We often can see inconsistencies in others and cover-ups in individuals and in governments, and wonder why they get away with what they are doing. People may not be able to see us in reality, but God does. Yet, He is willing and able to forgive our sins and give us a new life in Christ by making us a new creation in Christ Jesus.

As Job comes to the end of his defense and declaration of innocence before men and God, he urgently appeals to God to respond to him and the sincerity of his oath made before Him. 'oh, that one would hear me! That the Almighty would answer me!"

To him the adversary should have written out the charges against him in a book and listed them all so there would be no mistaking what had happened to bring all of this on him. If the prosecutor had done that, he would pick it up and carry it to present before the Lord. As far as Job was concerned, that would have confirmed his innocence. At the end of his speech, he thinks of another area of his experience that would support his claim. The very earth that he cultivated would declare that he had not misused it or claimed its fullness to be what he deserved or had exclusive right to.

The environment that God has provided for us to live from its fruitfulness, can be, and often is, misused. Job respected that which had been entrusted to him as a stewardship and didn't abuse that trust. Even in that setting Job used the "if... then" phrase to testify to his faithfulness. It is true that his whole discourse was self-centered because he was likely so overcome with what was happening to him. Pain and loss absorb our thoughts, and makes us consider all else that is happening around us as insignificant.

There are many lessons we can learn about ourselves when we follow through the experiences of others like Job. May we never forget our own limitations and God's fullness. By nature, we are sinners. That we cannot do anything about and we have to accept the fact that sin has serious consequences. But God is just and perfectly righteous in what he does and allows. He knows our limitations, and even though we have some limited insight about things and the intelligence to know how to do some things, we still have a tendency to sin. God is sovereign and will do what is right in spite of our failures.

**Job 31:7-8.** *"If my step has turned from the way, or my heart followed my eyes, or if any spot has stuck to my hands, let me sow and another eat, and let my crops be uprooted."*

#### **GOD KNOWS.**

My past lies before God like an open book -  
Far better known by Him than me.  
From the short limits of my memory and a cursory look -  
My mind conjures up the things I see.  
But God knows each incident, each word, each event -  
To Him it is like it is happening now.  
All those things that have happened have been sent -  
That in some ways His reality will show.

I think I know the story, and all that did surround  
The brief history of this life of mine.  
And I am conscious of this - some facts I may have turned around -  
So they are not exactly what happened at that time.  
But God was there, He keeps everything done - straight.  
My limitations may keep things said from total truth.  
An omniscient God keeps everything accurate -  
He knows what is valueless and what has latent worth.

It is up to me to be as careful as I can  
When tracing the ways of God through all my life.  
Things can be complicated because of the limitations of a man -  
Who sometimes can't tell the difference between day or night.  
But God who is longsuffering and knows the inner heart -  
Can often bring good results from bad.  
He has been near me all my life right from the start -  
And His corrections brought blessings when I was sad.

I may have biased thoughts, and may not get all things right.  
But of this I am most definite and sure:  
God knows every action; every thought in darkest night -  
He knows what is false and what is true.  
I will seek to maintain integrity; hold on tight to honesty -  
And not let my imagination go too far.  
God who is everywhere can help me say with clarity -  
The right things, for He knows just what they are.

**"Father God, I know it is as easy for me to get things mixed up as anyone else. But, Father, I ask Thee to help me walk in my integrity; to not exaggerate for any foolish reason. Please help me to use my brain before I use my lips. Help me to maintain a historical accuracy of things so that I do not offend others who may see things from a different perspective. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

#### **Job 32**

##### **A NEW VOICE IS HEARD**

When the "words of Job (were) ended," there must have been a silence that was oppressive and heavy. Silence in itself has a message. It may be that there is nothing to say, or nothing worth saying. Silence imposed or inserted in a speech can make a whole audience of people uncomfortable as they wait with baited breath for what is coming. As a tool of speech, it can force people to pause and consider what has already been said, or wonder what will be said next that is of such great importance as to have called for a prolonged

pause. There is another reason as well for silence. A stalemate has been reached and two opposing voices or opinions have both been vented verbally, and neither has given way to the other. So, they have run out of words in their effort to convince the other side to say, "You are right, and I am wrong." This is the setting of the last verse of chapter 31 and the first part of chapter 32.

Into this standoff of older, argumentive old men, is raised the voice of one who had been sitting by the whole time listening to the discourse between them. He had heard the who dialogue from beginning to end. Eliphaz, the oldest of the four, considered himself the voice of experience. Bildad thought he knew what was needed to be said because he was the man who brought a historical context of tradition into the situation. Zophar claimed religious piety was what Job lacked, and the three of him had not been able to convince Job of his guilt of abhorrent sin. Job, on the other hand, had not convinced them of his innocence. So, there they were, four speechless older men, sitting and waiting in fear for God to intervene and speak to vindicate their position. But God did not speak.

Into this impasse in which the others sat and waited in silence, the opportunity came for Elihu to speak after a respectful waiting time. He spoke up in an attempt to break the silence and bring some sense into the situation. He is the only one of the group whose background is given. His forbearers were from Abraham's brother who had a son named Buzz. This may have been written down by the author of the book of Job to give credence to his right to speak frankly and at such length. He had more to say in his four monologues than the others. But at least he had the respect to wait until they had all run out of words.

There are times when we become impatient and frustrated with long speeches that don't seem to have a point that relates to a present need. Some people even speak with passion about nonsense. When they are finished, we wonder what they had said, and what was the point of them getting upset and ventilating in such an aggravating tone of voice.

Job's friends had nothing more to say to Job, and he had nothing more to say to them. He wasn't going to invent some sin to satisfy their claims, and they were not about to surrender to his claims of innocence which he made - even to God. It was into this setting Elihu introduced his point. For Job to question God's justice horrified him. The simplistic opinions of the three friends gave no sensible answer to Job nor any relief to him personally. His general point of view was that suffering may reveal some sin or fault, or it may be to keep a person from sinning and going a wrong direction in life. It may also be a means of training a person for what is ahead. It may even be an act of mercy from God to preserve a person from something that could be of even greater sin.

In Elihu's opinion, Job's suffering would not go away until he realized his present sin was an attitude of bitterness against God for what he was allowing Job to go through, and for his arrogant attitude when he defended his innocence. By waiting in silence to express himself because he was a younger man than the others, he had time to gather his thoughts into a coherent frame of reference. He also showed he was a man of respect who lived up to the meaning of his name, "He is my God." There seemed to be a real God-consciousness in him.

Right from the beginning of the whole event, this younger man took an appropriate position of "holding his peace," until no one could say he was imposing himself into a conversation when he shouldn't have, or he was taking a position that was not his right to have. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent. In the gatherings of the Lord's people, it is often better to wait for awhile until one is sure the Holy Spirit is directing him to speak. His words need to be right words, spoken in a right way, at the right time in a meeting. Some people nervously jump into a space of silence because they think the wait is too long and they are impatient. The problem with that is that they may not really have anything to say but are making a noise that is discordant with that which has gone before. Also, sometimes what a person has to say when they jump ahead is simply a repeat of what someone else has said, or prayed, or is the same thing they always express - the same words, the same tone of voice, the same redundancy they always use.

Sometimes silence in an assembly meeting is because of the impact of an appropriate prayer that has moved the hearts of the Lord's people to quiet contemplation. Other times silence after a well-sung hymn of praise and adoration to the Lord, has moved people to being close to tears and they want to consider again the words they have just sung to our Lord's glory and honor, and it has created a desire for a few minutes of personal meditation. Other times silence may be because of the lack of preparation of heart, or because there is "dearth in the land."

When there was "no answer" from Job's friends, apparently, they conceded that he was a hopeless case because he would pay heed to their opinion, or perhaps he was right. It was into this silence Elihu jumped,

but it seemed like he had a wrong attitude himself. He was angry. He had done right by waiting as a young man until the older men had their say. He was right by showing respect for them in spite of their simplistic and hard-hearted words. He was right in not jumping in with a rebuke even though the older men displayed neither godliness or wisdom. To that extent he was right and had the spiritual sense to realize that even though they had learned very little in all their years of living, the three friends had a right to be heard first.

From the perspective of a bystander who had heard all that was said previously, Elihu begins to speak with anger and tells these three men they are not necessarily wise because they are aged. They didn't understand the fundamentals of justice that come from the "Almighty." He had waited for some sensible words that would show Job what was wrong, but they couldn't do it. They did not give Job a reasonable answer to his problem, so now he would. Even though in his impetuous anger of youthful self-confidence, he does say what is true. It is God alone who has the right to deal with Job. Elihu took the same position as Job had. God had allowed this to happen, so the answer to the problem had to come from God.

To us Elihu seems to be a bit full of himself as he tells the old men he is not impressed at all by what they said. It must have been humiliating to the three older men to have this "young upstart" upstaging them with his own power of oratory. "You had your say. Now I will have mine." He said, "I am full of matter (words)," and he certainly was. He was like a man who was wanting to reply to a preacher, and he said, "Let me at it before I bust."

Whether it was his own "spirit" that compelled him to speak or the Holy Spirit, or both, there was no question in Elihu's mind that what he had to say must be said. That is not always a bad condition to be in. When one has the word of God behind his messages, and the principles of life and scriptural communication to guide him in his speaking, it is well to listen to him. God does speak through human lips to declare his counsel. Elihu had been a good listener before he spoke. He knew what Job had said previously. He knew it was the Almighty who gives understanding to recognize truth when it is spoken and the ability to live it out daily. He also knew all real wisdom comes from God. But for some reason, he didn't really use it for himself.

In order for wisdom to be real to us, we have to practice it as well as know it. Elihu was certainly smart and seemed to be a very intelligent young man. He was also respectful in the social sense and had a reverence toward God that was commensurate with his age. And he also had the power of logic and deduction to speak without flattery or partiality. He thought if he did not speak truth "without respect of persons," God would judge him.

We need wisdom to be part of our life, not just knowledge. True wisdom is very practical. It makes us courteous and respectful toward other people. It comes when we have a right understanding of God and His sovereignty, and comes to us as a gift from God when we are humble. We don't necessarily have wisdom because we are well educated and/or are old. We may not be without it just because one is young, if he or she is a person God can trust with the responsibility of having wisdom. A person of wisdom understands that we may fail, but God never does. If people show partiality or flattery to get what they want or to please people, that indicates a lack of wisdom.

The introduction to the fourth man on the scene, puts a whole new and different perspective on the scene and the problem that still existed there. We can learn from this, that the unexpected events of life, and the unexpected appearance of someone we didn't really count on, may be an important and timely help to us when we are in a dilemma.

**Job 32:8-9.** *"But it is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding. The abundant in years may not be wise, nor may elders understand justice."*

#### **LISTEN TO THE YOUNGER.**

Pay attention to that man - he has had the courtesy to wait.

It is obvious he has something to say - look at his face, his body language.

He is younger by far than you and may not have the experience you have -

But he has the brains; the skills have been honed; he has learned from a different school.

Your training place isn't the only one God uses, so be quiet.

Let him speak and give him the courtesy of your unlimited attention.

Stop your chatter and don't you dare roll your eyes!

Listen; and you might learn a thing or two - or more!

He is not meddling because what he says is true - you have been unfair!

You may not have understood the reasons for all that has happened -

But why lay blame or be condemning when you don't know -

Everyone tries to put the best light on one's self, but maybe there is another side -

Maybe you are not as "lily white" as you want everyone to think.  
Maybe there are some things you should take time to stop and learn.  
Give the young man a chance to say what is in his mind!  
Listen; and you might get a new perspective on things!

You didn't think about that side of the issue, did you?  
It was only from your view you considered the matter.  
Sure; you were condemned by others, who isn't some time or another.  
But he is right, "Great men are not always wise" -  
And "old men are not always smart" is a known fact!  
He is getting your attention, isn't he - that's good!  
Now what is he going to say that will give you some insight?  
Add his observations to your experience - and you will be wiser!

**"Heavenly Father, I do thank Thee for some of the young men and women You have placed in my life. Certainly, I am grateful for the intelligence and spiritual understanding of these young brothers Thou hast allowed me to work with. Give me the sense to listen to them. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Job 32:8, 9.** *"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment."*

#### **A SPIRIT IN MAN.**

It's not always mine to demand from God an answer;  
For questions and decisions, are often far beyond;  
My ability or wisdom to discern what things are there for;  
Mine is the choice to accept, and travel on.

Just because I'm older and have learned some lessons well;  
Doesn't mean I know it all and can't be further taught.  
Age with understanding needs the grace of God to tell;  
The reasons for the problems may not be truly caught.

Understanding from Almighty God is always very near.  
But how I take His message, is therefore mine to choose.  
When I don't demand to know, what's often not too clear;  
He from His heart of love to me, my life He's free to move.

The spirit of this man, with God's Spirit then does blend;  
And the questions long unanswered, no longer trouble me.  
The wisdom so expected from me, God chose not to send.  
And my answer to men's questions is - "God let it be."

He's in control; it's not my job to make things come to pass.  
The Almighty knows the truth in every heart that's hidden.  
He speaks in pain and dreams, and visions too do flash  
Through life and seasons, that His will I do when bidden.

The younger often have some insight that in me is sometimes lost;  
Because of weights and measures, that I myself have drawn.  
So now I want to listen, and may have to count the cost;  
Of losing some pet theme or plan that hindered me so long.

My ears are now thus open, to hear what others say,  
And to heed and act upon their wisdom too.  
I may not understand nor know the answers here today;  
But I give them credit that through them God also speaks His truth.

**"Father, please keep me from the arrogance of thinking I know it all because of age and/or experience. Help me to keep the heart and soul of a genuine learner with the spirit of a discerner by the "spirit in man." In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

### **Job 33**

#### **THERE IS MESSENGER**

In the passion of youth against the entrenched opinions of older men who rely on their own opinions of themselves, Elihu had angrily dispatched the partiality and simplistic conclusions of Job's three friends in his final comments in chapter 32. In chapter 33 he speaks candidly but carefully to Job. In his desire to truly help Job, he emphasized his apparent sincerity and sought to come alongside as one who is honest. His

convictions are solidly established and he claimed to be speaking from his heart what he believed the Spirit of God had given him to say.

Elihu also understood the value of identifying himself with the listeners as an equal. Effective speakers make it a point of not speaking from a lofty position of superiority, but know people will at least listen if they consider him to "be one of us. He understands us." What we have in common with people is a major point of effective communication. To be able to find common ground, and speak from that place of personal identification with listeners, is what makes good teachers and communicators.

One can almost see young Elihu bending forward in front of Job sitting on the pile of ashes and dust, and looking earnestly into his eyes and saying, "I am the same as you, although I have not yet gone through the same things you have. I am not here to be heavy-handed against you, or to unduly condemn you. More than that, I have listened to what you have said." Then he gave an almost identical summary of Job's main argument. Job had said he was an innocent man, and he did not think God was just in the way he was being treated. He thought it was unfair as to what was happening to him by "putting his feet in the stocks, and watching his every move with hostile intent.

Job had not claimed sinless perfection, but he was claiming he was not guilty of sin that merited the suffering through which he was going. Elihu had listened carefully and recognized that there is a very close connection between being conscious of one's own integrity and smug self-righteousness. He knew what Job really meant: "I am innocent and righteous. God is being unfair and unjust to me in letting me suffer like this." It is to this opinion Job had of himself that Elihu said, "You are not right." All of us need to remember the absolute sovereignty of God. He may allow or do what we cannot understand. We may resent and resist what He does, but He is not accountable to us - we are to Him.

It is natural for us to want to know why things happen to us. That gives us a certain sense of security, but it does not require living by faith. It is faith in God that should give us a sense of security. We may not know now or ever know why bad things happen to us, but we do know "in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." It is in this way and with this knowledge that we can live contented live in sickness, grief and pain.

The truth of the matter is that God is in no way obligated to let us know why He does what He does. So what point is there in complaining about that which He allows. Perhaps that very thing is for our greatest good. Surely, we should not have the audacity of challenging Him to tell us all we want to know about everything. Who are we? We are like dogs howling at the moon to turn off its light. Or like ants arguing with a king. That is what people do in their attempt to bring God down to our level to be not much more than a wise human being. To trust in the goodness of God when we don't understand why bad things are happening, is a test of our faith in God. Our trust is to be in Him alone, not in what or why things are allowed to happen. If God allows Satan to tempt us, He must have a good reason, and He makes a way to escape. If pain is something with which we have to live, that doesn't change God's interest in us. If there are those who criticize, complain and challenge our sincerity for what seems only to humiliate us, our confidence still remains in the goodness of our God.

There are a number of ways God speaks to us to give understanding. Those ways may also keep us from going astray or getting proud of ourselves and our accomplishments. Pride is a constant source of danger to us in that it exalts us to where we start to believe our own estimation of ourselves. Then the next steps down because of pride is we may think we don't need God in everything, just the big things. By the sovereign grace of God, He allows us to hear Him in unexpected ways and preserves us from a lost eternity.

Dreams and visions may not be precise messages to us the way they were to some people in the past, but they can make us consider what we try to ignore or avoid. God did give plain messages to those in the past that had a great effect. Joseph, Nebuchadnezzar and others had dreams that were direct messages to them from God. As a result; individuals, families and even nations were affected.

Today we have the written word of God in the Bible that gives us precise instructions as well as general principles of life by which we live. Its history teaches us lessons from the past so we don't have to repeat the mistakes of others. Its prophecies let us see into the future. Its poetic books touch our emotions. The life and testimony of our Lord Jesus, reveals our need of salvation, as well as the guidance needed to live Christian lives to the glory of God. The letters to the churches and personal letters give us understanding as to the purposes and role of life for which we are each responsible.

God was then willing to communicate his will through dreams which seemed to be quite clear and precise when interpreted by those He chose. A second way was by allowing strong pain that overwhelmed even the desire for food. Such pain may be necessary to make a person stop and consider that in which they have been involved, and makes them look up as they lie on the broad of their back. Even further, when one has strong pain and sickness, they begin to look at death looming ahead, and to life beyond the grave. In the scriptures we read of quite a number of people who were brought down by pain and sickness before they were humbled before God. Apparently, there were even assembly believers in Corinth who were brought down in sickness and death because of carelessness in regard to the Lord's Supper.

There is another way God works for a suffering person. That is to provide a mediator who is able to work to bring a straying person to God. A skilled mediator understands what is needed to bring estranged people together. He knows what ransom price is needed and is able to make an accurate assessment of the barriers that need to be removed between two opposing parties.

It is unclear as to whether Elihu considered himself the needed mediator or the mediator was an angelic being, but he did have the understanding that God would deliver a genuinely repentant person. The deliverer would pay the ransom price needed by grace, and restoration would then take place because of imputed righteousness. All of this is a clear presentation of the redemption that has been provided for us. God purposes to bring this about through dreams, pain and deliverance that is undeserved. Elihu exhorts Job just to be quiet and listen, because he just wants to help him and bring him to a clearer understanding of God's justice. God does love us, but justice and judgment will be carried out if His love and grace is spurned.

**Job 33:17-18.** *"That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword."*

#### **WHEN GOD SPEAKS.**

The words are not always there to read  
But the message is just as clear -  
God has every intention that you should heed  
And with understanding you would hear.  
Why do you think He awakens you;  
When you are upon your bed?  
He is trying to get a message through  
And into your uncluttered head.

So, dreams and visions in the night  
Have a way of making a connection.  
If you pay attention right -  
And respond to his simple correction -  
It will keep you from troubles worse  
Then you've ever had before.  
You will be delivered from hell's awful curse -  
And your life He will restore.

Pain has a way of making us think  
Along lines we have tried to avoid.  
We pay attention when from pain we shrink  
And discomfort does more than annoy.  
We can't find relief so we start to pray -  
Hoping that God will hear -  
And when we listen, we hear Him say,  
A place of repentance is very near.

A messenger comes to tell me,  
A ransom for sin is found.  
He doesn't want me to further be -  
On a course that is leading down.  
He speaks for God in very plain words -  
Listening for the words, "I have sinned!"  
When such a confession is truly heard -  
Is when a new life begins.

**"O Lord God, there have been times when it has been very plain to me Thou art speaking. Other times I have had a somewhat restless night and yet nothing has come to me as a message from Thee. If I am deaf to Thy voice this morning, please open my ears that I might hear Thee speaking. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."**

## Job 34

### GOD IS JUST - ALWAYS!

Apparently neither Job nor the "three friends" had anything to say to Elihu after he had spoken frankly against all of them. He had condemned the friends for their lack of answers to Job's question and their false reasoning behind their condemnation of Job. Then Job was the object of Elihu's corrective words because Job had accused God of being unjust in allowing him to suffer as he had without knowing why. After the silent pause in which there was no reply from any of the four, the young man spoke again, going further in expressing his limited understanding of God. He charges the listeners to test his words with their ears, in the same way they would test the food they eat with their mouths to determine if it was good or bad.

We need to "try the spirits." There is a lot of teaching today that is not biblical or spiritual. Some is actually given that seeks to explain away the fundamentals of the faith. Probably one of the most prevalent of the false teachings is to challenge the doctrine of eternal punishment. Most people think "God is too kind" to punish sin. Even many "evangelicals" do not teach or accept the fact of a literal hell and lake of fire that awaits the ungodly who reject Christ in their lives. They think that is incompatible with their view of God who is merciful and loving. In their opinion, tolerance and acceptance, and just punishment for sin cannot coexist. Consequently, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of salvation, the doctrine of the infallibility of the inspired word of God are merely subjective. In order to accept this position their view is the Bible is merely allegorical giving a general view of humanity that is not based on unchanging standards of God's holiness. Even the ten commandments turn out to be mere suggestions rather than "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not."

Elihu's point in this chapter is that God is not capable of injustice. Whether He is silent or active, He has reasons behind what He does not do as well as what He does. Those reasons are just, because God Himself is just. In this dissertation he seeks to make Job understand, his claims against God for allowing calamity to happen to him, are unjust. Job also claimed that God was unfair to him for not telling him why he was suffering. We know a person in the throes of deep pain and emotional suffering, may often say things and think things that are extreme and exaggerated. The situation doesn't make it right, nor does it excuse us from the consequences that might come from what is thought and said, but we can identify with Job in this.

Job had been outspoken in his criticism of God, and that had offended Elihu. Job had indicated, even though he may not have articulated it exactly, that there is really no benefit in being righteous, because God is going to punish you anyway if He so chooses. This is a very important lesson for us to consider and learn. When we are in a condition of extremity, be careful what you say and how you act.

Ecstatic words or complaining words have a way of going beyond what we really mean or meant to say. Often those are the words people pick up on and remember. From them they will form opinions and even pass on to others what they heard or perceived from what was said. Even though it may not be consistent with what we actually meant or what we believe, when it is said, it may be easily taken out of context and used in a wrong way.

Descriptions of activities, suffering - even hell and the lake of fire need to be right, not speculation. To go beyond what the Bible says in explaining the doctrine of eternal punishment can be negative in its results rather than have a positive benefit to lead people to repentance. Bible knowledge and life's experiences do not negate the necessity of basing our convictions on the word of God in its context and entirety, not on taking parts of it out of context and making them suit our opinions.

Elihu contradicted Job's complaint that God acts as He wants in spite of the innocence or guilt of those involved. He states that God is too good to commit wickedness, and "He repays everyone for what they have done." God is absolute and unchanging in His justice, because He is the Creator and Sustainer of everything. He is Almighty and absolute in His supremacy. For Him to be unjust would mean there is nothing right. The whole basis of life is dependent on our unchanging God. Every standard of life we live by; every law that governs people and nations; every principle upon which our existence depends is based on the fact that God is just, all-powerful, all-knowing and unchanging in His character.

He does not favor the rich over the poor, the high and mighty over the lowly and humble. Every person is dependent on God for survival until the time of their death either in bed or on a battlefield. No matter who they are, life and death are in His just hand. Those who do wrong will not escape just judgment, and even then, God is not unfair when He "strikes" the "wicked who turn back from Him." God's judgment is always accurate and appropriate whether it be justice brought on an individual or a nation. If God chooses to take His time in bringing about the consequences of wickedness that is His prerogative. He is the universal Sovereign.

Elihu seemed to have a pretty sound understanding of God and His ways in spite of his youth and limitations. As he comes to the end of his second monologue, he questions his listeners to state if they know God has been wrong towards anyone who has sincerely sought for instruction from Him. It seems like he accused Job of commanding God to answer and deal with his situation on his terms. That would be like challenging God to prove that Job has been wrong in some way, and that God was obligated to respond to Job's challenge.

It is to this attitude Elihu addresses the three men listening as well as Job at the end of this discourse. He said Job spoke unadvisedly and without wisdom, and has "added rebellion" to what he had said, by refusing to yield to God by being silent and waiting for God to bring the whole situation to the conclusion of His choice.

Lest we be too condemning of Job and his complaints, we need to consider ourselves and how we would (and do) respond to tension, discouragement and what we consider unfair. Also, we need to think about what we would do and how we would speak in order to say what we mean, and at the same time not blame someone else for the disaster that comes on us.

The holy and unholy both have their humanity in common, and many speak hasty words without thinking of the consequences that may result. For us to "Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey," is easy to sing when things are going good with us. It is quite different when things all fall apart. Whether we like to admit it or not, doesn't change the fact that God is in control, and He has divine objectives that may be way beyond our comprehension at the present time. Our circumstances in life, "our time," and the length of our training time here on earth, are totally dependent on the sovereign will of God.

**Job 34:10.** *"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."*

#### **THE RIGHEOUS GOD.**

When men of arrogance with an existential mind  
Claim there is no God because Him they cannot find -  
You can be sure they are morally and spiritually blind -  
They don't want to think God is real.

There are others who are looking for someone to blame;  
For the things men have done, that have put him to shame  
So, they want God to eliminate their mess by the power of His name -  
They want a God who does what they want.

Others think God is vindictive and mean -  
Looking with angry eyes at the places they have been;  
Or passing severe judgments without even being seen -  
They have in mind a God of their imagination.

The God who speaks to us through the pages of the Bible -  
Is the One true God who in righteousness makes us libel  
For the decisions we make, and yet to us He is faithful.  
He has given abundant evidence of Himself.

God does not do evil so that out of it good will come.  
He allows things to take place and from that His will is done.  
The consequences of our choices sometimes bring us down -  
To acknowledge God in everything that happens.

Of this we are sure when uncertain as to why  
There are difficulties, we may struggle and we try  
To explain them away as we moan and cry -  
God has a purpose in it all.

He is a merciful God; a God of grace and love -  
Who is righteous in all His ways and in everything He does.  
Behind each incident in life, His righteousness is approved -  
God never has to prove His integrity.

**"Sometimes Father, I do not express myself the way I should. But I am thankful to know my limitations do not in any way hinder Thy understanding. I have this computer problem this morning, Father, and I am asking for Thee to guide me to a place where this can be fixed right away - if it be Thy will. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

## Job 35

### LOOK UP, NOT IN

In this short monologue, Elihu more or less repeats himself, but it seems like the thought he wasn't getting through to Job. The three friends were entrenched in their opinions, so to try to change them was a lost cause. His point was to try to help Job. Perhaps because Job was unresponsive Elihu challenges his previous words. There was no disagreement between them as to how great God is or as to His right to do what He chooses. But the difference was, did Job have the right to know the reason behind suffering when he was not conscious of some specific sin in his life that moved God to allow punishment.

Is there any point of being faithful and committed to our convictions when calamity falls and everything we have worked for and done in life is taken away? Why should I try to be righteous and maintain a godly testimony if it doesn't make any difference to God as far as making life easier?

Elihu reiterates again a good point. Instead of looking with a self-centered viewpoint into the mirror of ourselves and our own opinions, look up and think about what we know about God. He is not manipulated by man's goodness or man's sin. Nothing we do changes the character of God, His sovereign will or has a lasting effect on what He does or does not do.

Divine principles are not affected by our concepts of right or wrong, nor by our opinions and/or actions. There are principles of righteousness that God promises to bless according to His sovereign will, but He has not obligated Himself to do anything because we expect it or demand it. Innocence as Job claimed he had, is the right thing, but it has in itself no guarantee that we have the right to expect prosperity, good health and blessings, because we have not done anything, we know is wrong.

We do not give our children prizes every time they do what is right and what pleases us. That is expected behavior. We also have varying degrees of discipline to correct what is wrong or further guide them in ways that are right which they have not yet experienced. But that does not mean they will not have problems to contend with at school, among their peers or even among their siblings.

Righteousness and innocence, does not mean that there will be no problems with which we have to contend. It is by means of problems people are brought to maturity, and by how learning how to deal with the problems, or live with them, that we become useful people. Many of God's people have made their best contributions to the kingdom of God by learning from their limitations. The calamities that have come upon them and they have to continually endure, have been the means that which is good for the benefit of others has been brought to them. We ourselves learn who we are and who God is by the good and bad things that happen to us. God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. To say God is not concerned with us or our needs just because He does not intervene and take them away because we want Him to, does a real disservice to Him who holds our breath in His hand. His justice and objectives are not carried out on our timetable but on His.

Elihu made it plain that we do not enhance or dismiss God's purposes by what we do, whether it is good or bad, but we do learn about ourselves. When we look up, we become truly God-conscious instead of looking within or in a mirror. All that does is make us self-conscious. Our perspective of ourselves changes when we look at the expanse of God's creation above us, and compare that with the little sphere of life in which we live. It is when we "consider Him" that we get a little understanding of the fact that God is determined to put the proud man down, and lift up the humble. Then the phrase, "Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight," really means something to us.

There are a lot of oppressed people in the world who have been victimized, oppressed and live in absolute poverty. But they do not cry out to God or have calming "songs in the night" to ease their calamity and suffering. The reason God does not respond to their needs is that they do not want Him in their lives or have anything to do with Him. They want a god of their own imaginations who will do what they want. Pride makes prayers simply unreal complaints. How often have we heard people say, "If there is a God, why does He allow so many babies to die?" Then they go to an abortion clinic and have their own babies killed in order to maintain their own "quality of life."

The arrogance of men in challenging the sovereign purposes of God, is empty talk to which "the Almighty" shows no regard. There are those who regard God as no more than "the big guy upstairs," or on the same level as themselves. They casually use His name, or occasionally take a casual stroll in front of a cross and genuflect as they nod at the Savior. Their self-confident attitude about God and their relationship, or lack of it, with Him is a display of their ignorance.

God gives both sunny and cloudy days in life. Positive and negative lessons are part of our life experiences. It may be in those undistracted times of night-time suffering, whether the "night of pain," or sleeplessness on the bed, we are able to give undistracted attention to the words that come from our hearts to God who knows the thoughts and intents behind our sad songs, or songs of rejoicing.

Waiting for solutions to a problem can be very frustrating. To be uncertain or needing to take the time needed to learn a lesson is hard on our pride. We resist the thought that we are ignorant, although we find it easy to see that others are ignorant because they don't see things my way. Elihu told Job at the end of this chapter to stop making attacks against the Almighty for not answering his pleas for understanding as to why he was suffering. Just wait patiently. God is quietly waiting for you to get over your tantrums.

It seems like Job wasn't being patient at all, although James wrote about "the patience of Job." His outbursts of anger and frustration were real, but the prolonged period of suffering physically, and listening to the pontifications of his friends must have severely tested his patient endurance. Even Elihu's last words of this short speech would have tried Job's patience. For some reason Elihu thought he had to put Job down and belittle his suffering in order to defend God. To know when to stop talking is as important as to know when to have something to say. To conclude a message with a few all-encompassing comments serves to reinforce and drive home precisely the main points.

Our great God is great and greatly to be feared, not just above all gods of man's opinion and making, but also in "the assembly of His saints, and to be held in reverence of all that are about Him." Job, and we, must hold Him in reverence, no matter what we know or don't know about His reasons for dealing with us in His chosen ways. Let us continually wait on Him in patience and in faith.

**Job 35:10.** *"But none said, 'Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night.'"*

#### **GOD MY MAKER.**

Take a look up and see His order in the heavens  
Close to us more the sustaining clouds.  
A little farther from us relatively speaking  
Speeds our planetary system contained in invisible shroud.

Then far removed from us, looking like a jostling crowd -  
The stars with their names move through outer space.  
Each one testifying in perfect silence - not one out-loud -  
Maintained by God in each chosen place.

I look through a glass to see what is hidden from my eyes -  
And I see evidence of divine order to natural man unseen.  
Each unfolding glimpse of my Maker, pares me down to size -  
Giving further assurance all is made and controlled by Him.

The animals in the forest, the birds in the air;  
The fish in the sea; each has a story to tell.  
God my Maker formed them, and placed each one where -  
The evidence can testify, "God doeth all things well."

How strange that man who, though made in the image of God,  
Questions His existence thinking God is part of man's scheme.  
There is a reprehensible bent in man when called to bear a light load -  
That thinks the unseen God is responsible for the difficulties that happen to him.

God has been revealed to me by the Word and the Spirit -  
There is no question in my mind, the triune God does exist.  
And when a song in the night rises from me, I know He does hear it -  
Even though the thoughts are garbled, God knows their gist.

I have no real questions about the existence of God my Maker.  
The experiences of faith make them very real to me.  
He blesses without measure; each person is a taker -  
Of the necessities He meets even though they do not see.

**"O Lord God, I am amazed at the evidence of Thy unlimited power. I am, and will be, forever grateful for Thy unlimited grace. I am so blessed by all the proofs of Thy**

**mercy and unlimited love. With all of my being, I thank Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

### **Job 36**

#### **BEHOLD, THE GREATNESS OF GOD!**

This epic poem we know as the book of Job, is to the western mind quite beyond our normal way of thinking, let alone dialogue. We are used to rapid verbal exchanges of a sentence or two, and occasionally a monologue of a few minutes that open up questions and answers that are given as immediate response responses, not well thought out conclusions. Whoever wrote the book of Job guided by the Holy Spirit, must have been amazed, as are we, at the depth of thought and experience that came from Elihu after he had courteously waited for a response from Job to his last challenge.

In essence he had said, "Instead of looking at yourself and all you are suffering, look up and wait for God to speak to you in His own time and way." Perhaps Elihu was convicted by his own words of challenge, because after waiting a respectable time and getting no reply from either Job or his friends, he began to speak in a different tone of voice, and with a much loftier understanding of God.

The Spirit of God had taught him from his own words. This is not an uncommon experience from an exercised soul when they are preparing to speak or teach. In the reading of the scriptures and the assimilation of truth into one's own soul, one becomes convicted themselves about the message they are going to pass on to others. A Sunday School teacher becomes almost overwhelmed by the grandeur of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and pauses in prayerful thought. "How can I transmit what my Lord by the Holy Spirit just gave to me, to children?" Another who is seeking to connect with young people who spend most of their time looking at a screen in their hands, wonders, "Is there some way I can communicate across this barrier of grunts and glass?"

Elihu managed to do that admirably as the Spirit of God seemed to give him a new attitude of mind and heart, and a new tone of voice that was suited to the majestic subject he was called speak about. Words like, "Suffer me (bear with me)," "Behold," "Remember," all lifted his spiritual eyes, and ours, above normal human experience to One who is so great and transcendent that we draw a great breath in awe. As we consider Him, observe evidence of Him, we are reminded of His power and universal authority by considering all He has made. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handywork." The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory."

Elihu seemed to realize he had been somewhat arrogant and self-confidence in his earlier speeches, but had paid attention to his own admonition to look and wait before speaking again. Now there seems to be an underlying humility when he said, "Bear with me a little (longer)." He knew God is incomprehensible. He knew God is sovereign and can bless or discipline as He chooses. He knew there is no way to search out or describe God, and His knowledge is far beyond man's ability to describe.

The greatness of God had been impressed upon this young man. He knew any knowledge he had came from God, and that knowledge will honor God who is the "Maker" of everything. God's might and His authority in administering justice, seems to have subdued this man to where he goes to a higher plane of communication in which he is quietly confident in what he said.

If I heard a person say he speaks for God, I would probably first think he has an awfully high opinion of himself, and may tune him right out. But there are a couple of other things that could make me not reject him right off, and would make me stop and listen for a few minutes before walking away. His body language including his facial expression; his tone of voice and audible expressions by which I can sense his attitude, and what he thinks of his subject and of me a listener would all make me pay attention to him.

Also, the fact that a person has thought through a subject enough that they are speaking logically and reasonably would make me listen. If I recognized they were speaking profound truths in a poetic form, I would really be impressed that what is being said is definitely not "off-the-cuff" words this man is giving. I would definitely be inclined to listen to what was saying this time around.

At the beginning of this dissertation, he acknowledges that his knowledge come "from afar," that is from his observations of the vastness and order of the universe around him. This implies that he was finally impressed with his own insignificance, and was passing on "felt truth," not some theology of man's invention. The living God is mighty, is just, and knows who is righteous and He does reward the righteous. But He also disciplines them if they act in defiance toward Him. When God does something, there is always a reason behind it. He does not take action without some sovereign purpose. When we respond appropriately to what He does, then

our "ear" is opened to the instruction He gives, and the wise person obeys that instruction. To refuse is to die like the one who doesn't have the knowledge, even though they should have known and obeyed God's instructions.

God gets our attention by allowing difficult circumstances. The hypocrites may ignore what God is teaching, but the wise person who is afflicted, opens his ears and pays attention to what God wants. When this positive response takes place, we breathe a sigh of relief and step out into the fresh, pure air of divine acceptance. What joy and confidence comes when we learn to accept whatever comes, because our faith is in our gracious God who we worship with full hearts.

The opposite effect takes place when we set ourselves up to complain to God because we don't like the way things are going. That is the same thing sinners do. The "ransom" that God will need to bring us back into fellowship with Him, is whatever He chooses. In Job's case he will be brought to the place where he has nothing at all to say against God, and is subdued into the silence of humble acceptance of God's divine will. We can certainly learn the lesson of our own salvation and the ransom price that was paid by our Lord for us when He was like "a sheep before her shearers is dumb." Job had been complaining about injustice. Now Elihu's exhortation is for him to bow in worship.

Instead of asking to die, Job should have asked what he could learn from all he was going through. Elihu's words were good advice but he was pretty rough around the edges when he spoke to Job. We learn through difficulties as well as from the Bible and the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was here, "found in fashion as a man." It is important that we "magnify" the Lord and His work in our praise rather than challenge His justice and judgments in our frustrations. We will never know the answers to all of our questions or be able to predict what will happen down the road. Nor can we manipulate God in any way to suit our own perceived needs and wishes.

How much wiser it is when we learn from observation of looking up and seeing the power and authority of God in and over His creation, and realize it is this Awesome God in whom "we live and move and have our being." We gain some common sense about ourselves and our weakness when we watch the heavens gradually release rain a little at a time to gently water the earth rather than dump millions of tons of water on the earth at one time. The marvelous ways of evaporation and hydration testify to the wisdom of our Creator-God.

Storms that comes, and lightning that is continually striking the earth hundreds of thousands of times a day, help keep us alive by bringing the oxygen and hydrogen to earth that we need for survival. The on-going work of divine providence should focus our attention on our God, not on ourselves no matter what the situation is in which we are found. In this part of his monologue Elihu fixes his attention on how God has arranged the remarkable cycle of evaporation and rainfall to maintain life on earth. This creatorial plan has an effect on earth, sea, animals, plants and people - all in a positive way that defies human description. We know what happens, and from a purely scientific way how it sustains life. When we understand the fact of the Creator looking up at the greatness of God, we can see from the divine perspective, and hopefully from our human perspective, how important it is to make and maintain fellowship between us and God.

**Job 36:26.** *"Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out."*

#### **THE GREATNESS OF GOD.**

I stop at the edge of my experience, and look at the vastness beyond.  
The borders of our galaxy seem immeasurably vast, but to God, it's the corner of a room  
Where He sits, I cannot explain but I know earth is to Him, His stool -  
Through the unlimited universe, everything is under His rule.

There is no way I can define perfection, without comparing it with something wrong.  
The reason I can know what is weakness, is to compare it with what is strong.  
To speak of the power and greatness of God, I compare the limits and smallness of men -  
The fact of the heaven of heavens not containing Him, goes beyond the descriptions of a pen.

There is so much about the Almighty God, that it defies any real description.  
And God wouldn't really be God if He lay within the realm of man's definition.  
However, there is much to be known of God, when I stop to look around.  
An even greater revelation of Him, is in the pages of the Bible to be found.

His greatness is not only measured by power, or dimension, or size.  
The greatness I can best understand is what in His character lies.

There is no limit to His moral astuteness; moral perfection in Him dwells.  
Righteousness is in His being; because He is holy, holiness His person fills.

Limitless love and mercy are part of God's fullness I know.  
Marvelous and matchless grace through Christ to me God did show.  
Truth in its total perfection, I can, through Him partially grasp -  
Because truth is in the Lord Himself, and that will eternally last.

To consider knowledge with no limit is beyond my capacity.  
But I believe through eternal ages new things will be revealed to me.  
Because God is eternal in His being, things will continually unfold -  
Of dimensions of character, power and ability of which we have yet to be told.

As limited as I am, I would be frustrated if I could really understand God.  
There wouldn't be the joy of learning of Him if there weren't mysteries yet to unfold.  
The way God allows me little by little to learn of Him makes it so real -  
After each new glimpses of understanding, the greater the joy that I feel.

It never ceases to amaze me, that I in His image am made.  
To even write those words on paper, makes me a little afraid.  
For I am treading on holy ground where He wants me to walk with Him.  
Not only does the Father and Son abide with me, but the Holy Spirit lives within.

**"O Gracious, Holy God: I am awed here in Thy presence at Thy greatness. To be able to call Thee, Father, gives me great joy and delight. I praise Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

### **Job 37**

#### **"MY HEART TREMBLES"**

As Elihu's monologue continues and concludes in chapter 37, he is personally affected by what he has already said, and even more opens up to his mind by the Holy Spirit as he continues to look up to God. Light in millions of volts comes from the sky as God directs His creation like a maestro conducts his orchestra. God has even put light in the depths of the sea in certain fish He created. Some in the deep ocean give off flashes of light and others have phosphorescent light the absorbs light. Light in the absolute darkness beneath the surface of the water has to come from the Source of light Himself. He is the One who with His hands directs the lightning. With His voice He speaks with majestic sound that creates trembling in the bravest of men when it breaks beside them.

There is no power even in lightning, thunder and storm that can be compared to the power of the Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth. Even though Elihu said the words, he was afraid of the impact of his own knowledge of God. There is a danger of presuming to speak for God and take Him for granted. We dare not presume to put words in His mouth, and take for granted what we think He says. He is His own interpreter. He makes known to us what He wants us to know. That is why we have the Bible which is the word of God to us. How presumptuous and rude it is for us to think we know what God meant to say but didn't. Elihu is suitably impressed with his own limitations, and his attention goes higher than Job and his friends, and higher than his own impetuous words. He was a youthful thinker who thought, because he was articulate, he was wise.

Finally, he concentrates on God Himself rather than on what he thought he knew about God. In this frame of mind and reference to the voice of God in thunder, lightning and storm, he puts into poetic words the marvels of science. In one little part of the greatness of God's creation, he is awestruck by thoughts of God Himself the Creator. The little speck we know as earth in as compared with the sun, stars and galaxies that form the starry heavens in space seemed very insignificant.

And yet God meticulously arranged in His creative plan, for water to vaporize until it is lighter than air and can rise by multitudes of tons into the atmosphere where it remains unseen until, in God's plan small drops of vapor come together to form drops of rain. As rain it comes back down to earth as gentle rain or as a downpour as He decides is best for the time and place. He makes ice crystals that are a miracle of scientific beauty that defies man's imagination. Those crystals are each different and yet each flake of snow is a form of singular and unique beauty. By the choice of the Designer they come to earth at appropriate times by the millions of tons, released at the appointed season. Animals know when to go into dens and hibernate because the Creator-God placed in them that instinct that comes at certain times of the year.

As Elihu elucidated on some of those things that were observable reflections of the mighty power of God, he is moved to determine that there is more than one reason God does those things. He uses the evidence of

creation both in order and disorder to correct the wrong-doing of sinful people. He also maintains the fruitfulness of the land that has no intelligent response to give God except to give back to Him for our use, the benefits of its fullness. Then because of the awesome display of power, He reveals to us His mercy. He keeps the power He has, in His divine control lest everything be destroyed if such power is unrestrained.

If the clouds were not above us, we would quickly be cooked. If the seasons did not change, the earth would not bring forth the bounty hidden beneath its surface and we would starve to death. If the waters fell from the sky without His control, everything would be smashed to bits under its weight. In this remarkable poem, Elihu calls upon Job, and we hope on himself, to "Stand still... consider... learn."

The use of questions in teaching, is often the best way students learn. They deal with our preconceived notions in the light of reality. They make us face that which we have tried to avoid. Questions make us more aware of what we do not know, rather than what we know or think we know. Against the background of the "wonderful works of God," which are way beyond our comprehension, we face our puny limitations with our own questions, "What is man that Thou art mindful of Him? Who are we anyway and why are we here?" How could we every have the arrogant face to debate God?

Elihu touched on only one small evidence of divine authority and power when he spoke of God's power in the sky. God's order and the infinity of His Person are seen in the unfolding of the universe of the starry heavens. We become very conscious of His unparalleled wisdom in the things that we cannot see but know they are real. Atoms, DNA, the intricacies of the human body, animal life and plant life are so astounding in their symmetry, function and purposeful design that we can only grasp a little of the divine order God put in everything. All that we see around us, above us and beneath us declare the glory of God and testify openly of the One we call "Father." It is reasonable and understandable to believe that there is an Eternal God who is the Father of eternity and has "All power in heaven and in earth." It is unreasonable and illogical to think that all we observe and cannot see but is real, came from nothing.

The more we learn and know about our God and His marvelous works, the more we realize what we do not know. Poetry and science seem to us to be far apart. When we have poetic science like we read in Job, we are amazed to think of all that was known in the ancient past by men guided by the Holy Spirit, that is only recently been "discovered" by present day scientists. The more Elihu had to say about God, the more impacting was his message on himself and others then as well as on us today. When we honor, reverence and give God the respect due to His holy name, we become inclined to say less and think more. It is in such times God is able to reveal to us more than we ever thought of. Consciousness of the presence of God is overwhelming to us and we find ourselves awestruck in worship, adoration, praise and grateful thanks to Him.

Elihu makes a powerful conclusion to his speech by pointing to the great truth that faith is far more important than seeking to understand God and His ways with us. Job wanted an explanation from God, and Elihu came very close to helping him in this before he finished speaking. Too bad he made a final statement that said, "He hath no regard for the wise in heart." We need to think carefully when we speak to God and speak to others about God. Godly fear is important in any communication we have with our gracious Father. To speak to Him carelessly or casually is not right. We should not speak to him even as we speak to our fathers in the flesh. Our heavenly Father is "the Almighty." His greatness surpasses human thought. The impact of His glory makes the earth tremble and heavens roar.

Our intimacy with Him as our Father, is not that of the casualness we are used to in communicating with human beings. We do marvel at the grace of God, and rightly so. We do tremble at the greatness of His power, and rightly so. We are humbled at the mercy of God and rightly so. May we never take anything about God and what He does, for granted. May we never lose the sense of awe that is associated with His name and Person as the Lord God of hosts, our Lord Jesus Christ. May we always be moved to worship when the name and work of divine Persons comes to our minds and hearts. May our awe of Him never be lost.

**Job 37:23.** *"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."*

#### **THE WORKS OF GOD.**

Evidence of power under control disturbs the common man.  
There is no way for him to understand the power that is in God's hand.  
Our limitations in certain times fill men's hearts with fear.  
The sight of lightening, the sound of thunder, are reminders God is near.  
The coming and going of seasons are deliberate yearly events.  
All that we see of God around us awakens in us a sense  
Of our own weakness and limitations, there is a design unable to miss -

By the gentleness of a shower or uncontrolled storms- God is behind all this.

As the cold approaches, in some animals a message God planted in their nature -  
Signals it is time for them to seek a suitable winter shelter  
To stay in a condition of sleep, a state we call hibernation -  
That they may pass the months of cold winter in the way God designed for protection.  
The birds lift off and travel thousands of miles in a remarkable formation -  
Until they reach the place God arranged with astounding uncanny precision.  
His wonderful works making plain to sensible man this conclusion.  
God is in control of His creation - only man is in a state of confusion.

The course of unseen streams coursing their way above us in the sky -  
Move questioning, sincere men and women to stop and wonder why  
The tornadoes and hurricanes come in from the south -  
Uncontrollable, unstoppable - following an unpredictable route -  
Stronger than man's urgent attempts its power to withstand:  
Able to bring to nothing many of the works of man's hands.  
The cold winds with winter snows come rushing from the north -  
And we wonder at the works of God in all their unstoppable force.

All things God worked with the power of His word -  
Functions in the way He chose, just as they should.  
But man, who God formed with His hands from the dust of the ground,  
And placed His image in them that there might be found -  
A response, not just of action and nature, but of choice -  
To love and share fellowship with God and use their voice  
In expressions of praise and genuine joy - but instead -  
Men rebelled, and in conscious decision, is spiritually dead.

**“Sitting here in the darkness, Father, reading and writing with a little flashlight, helps me understand in a little way, what was lost when man sinned. Others around are unconscious of me. There is no connection; no evidence of communication. Use me, O God, I pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

### **Job 38**

#### **GOD REVEALS HIMSELF**

Out of a mighty storm, the Lord spoke to Job specifically in a long series of questions that emphasized to Job how little he understood about God. The fact that He is Lord is a reminder that we do not have the right to approach Him with demands and questions as if He was obligated to us in some way. He is the One in control of everything, and He knows everything we are experiencing. What we know, and what we truly understand are often very different.

Job had wanted an answer from God for a long time, and had demanded a response that did not come. Elihu had made a good point that it wasn't that God didn't know what was happening that withheld the answer, but it was Job himself and his attitude that was the problem. For the Lord to condescend to speak with puny men is an act of grace that is hard to comprehend, let alone describe. The earth itself is but a footstool for His feet. The heavens and earth are a response to the power of His word. The insignificance of the world itself when compared with all that is around it would normally make it seem no more than a piece of lint on a garment of clothes to the Almighty God. And yet, on that piece of lint is one person among the millions who raises his feeble voice and squeaks out in anger making demands of such a lofty Person. How pitiful and ignorant that seems, and yet his voice is heard.

The Lord speaks, "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" The whole scene of a suffering man, pompous friends and a mouthy young man who like to talk, is all of a sudden totally changed by the voice of the Lord out of the whirlwind. Phrases like. "The foundations of the earth... morning stars... proud waves... dayspring... treasures of the snow... overflowing water... lightning of thunder... frozen face of the deep," are used to minimize any thought of self-importance Job might have.

The Lord does not answer Job's complaints. he does not pay attention to the three friends. He does not speak of all the things that had happened nor explain why they happened. He does not comfort Job by telling him how sorry He was for all that had happened to him. He does not answer Job's questions nor does He reprove him. But He does take time to teach him some lessons, give him some insight and give him some hope.

To His "servant Job," who He knew better than Job knew himself, the Lord said, "Prepare yourself like a man!" There were important things for this servant of His to learn about himself and his Lord that he had not taken into consideration while complaining and challenging his Master. The Lord had concern for Job and so the best way for His servant to learn was by being challenged himself. He had accused God of acting arbitrarily and presumed he could even argue with God as he would an equal.

The Lord begins with questions about things that have no life to show Job how little he really knows about God. In one series of questions we learn the earth was created by a design in size with a foundation, measured lines and a starting point. Even though it was brought into being by the Lord's spoken word, it was done with a specific purpose in mind. It was to this small speck in the universe our Lord Jesus Christ came to get for Himself a people for His name and a bride with which to share His existence. The same One who spoke to Job, who is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, is our personal Lord and Savior. No wonder we are called upon to confess with our mouth "Jesus Christ is Lord." What a time of joy it was as all "the sons of God shouted for joy," as they looked ahead to all the blessings in the universe that would come as a result of that creative work of the Lord.

The waters and land we mixed at first until God divided the waters from the land according to His design, separated them and put boundaries around the water. Job first learned that God controls the waters in spite of the power of the great waves. Then the Lord challenged Job by asking if he could make a new day dawn. Could he take the edge of darkness and gradually pull it back like a blanket until the wicked who love the darkness would be exposed like the Lord does. Each new day the darkness is removed by the power of light from the Lord and by the Lord.

Job had made his complaint to God, and then God took him by the power of His words to the bottom of the ocean, then to the breadth of the world, and then to the expanse of the sky above where "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." There was no answer as Job was likely as astounded as I am at the God of wonders. The Lord questioned Job about his lack of knowledge even about the weather and the "treasures of the snow." Snow brings to earth the nutrients needed to produce the plants and food we eat, and it all comes from the design of the Lord in the cycle of life He made to supply all of our physical needs from His own fullness. Even today, older farmers remember when they used to like to have some snow they could plow in the ground because they considered it "God's fertilizer."

Job had never seriously considered the functions of snow, hail, wind or why there is light and darkness. He was like us. We take most things for granted and never consider the fact that everything depends on the hand of God on the controls of each part of the universe. God sends water into brooks and rivers, and rain on places where no one lives to bless mankind where we do live. He even has arranged in His own design the best way to move what we need to where we are. The Lord describes ice on the surface of the water, not on the bottom. To people who observe and think, all of these things we do not understand, makes us consider that none of this was done by accident, but by specific design for specific purposes by and all-powerful, all-knowing Designer.

The next place the Lord directed Job to think about is the heavens above. The order of the stars, the fact that names have been given to them is made plain here. "The ordinances of heaven" places them all in assigned positions which have even helped men on earth to know where they are as they move about earth needing points to locate themselves. Every shape of the clouds and the position they have in the sky is known, arranged for, and used by God for His own purposes. When He chooses to send rain that has been "bottled up," the hard ground is softened allowing the seeds in the ground to respond to water, temperature and light, and then produce what God intends.

Behind all of these questions the Lord asked Job, is the response of God to Job's questioning attitude. If Job couldn't understand the way inanimate things in creation work, how could he expect to understand the works of the Lord who made them and who is infinite in every way. His mind is without limitation. His character is that of impeccable integrity and holiness. His wisdom and His ways are past finding out.

At the conclusion of this chapter, the Lord then uses His care over the animal creation that moves about on their own God-given instinct. That part of His creation is subject to Him which is developed more in the next chapter. When we reread this chapter, we are made to consider again the fact that God has all of nature and the forces of nature under His control. He alone knows the limits of the powers of nature. He alone understands how everything works because He created it all. If Job (or we) cannot explain nature, the physiology of the animal creation and the stellar heavens above us, how can we possibly explain or describe God. How can we ever question what He does or does not do? If common things are beyond our grasp of

understanding, it certainly is impossible to understand the moral depths of the sovereign works of God and what He chooses to allow to happen to us.

Things on the earth, things in the seas, things in the heavens all declare visibly His ordered design of our universe. Who are we to question what is in the mind of God? In ourselves, human beings are totally dependent on God in "whom we live and move and have our being." How much more than our dependence on God for wisdom and understanding - and life itself.

**Job 38:2-4.** *"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."*

#### **WORDS WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE.**

It is often we speak without carefully considering what we say.  
We may think we have all the answers to the problems come what may.  
But when we get into the presence of God, then there is a change -  
For when we consider all the works of God around us, we feel a strange  
Humbling of our pride, our knowledge is so limited and we are so weak  
That the silence of our lips and thoughts are very becoming, and we think.  
As God unveils to our astonished eyes things that long were hidden -  
And we have no smart answers to give, and from God, none was bidden.

In the presence of Almighty God our mouths are finally shut.  
As opening line upon line, and vision upon vision is revealed so much.  
Expressionless because of hearing His voice we bow our heads in awe  
As the Great Eternal God explains His works and all we thought we saw  
Is now considered one by one: sun, moon, stars and seas  
Are spoken of as God in words of divine wisdom explains to me -  
His ways, His works, His wonders in land and sea and sky -  
And now it is useless for me to speculate or even wonder why.

The boundaries of the seasons, the unseen control of the waves,  
The form and reasons for the clouds and how the waters God saves  
In the sky above withholding it in its place until the time and place is right -  
And God releases the needed water in the day or night  
To where He chooses to nurture, bring blessing or correct -  
And it is up to me to watch and listen and finally connect  
With God and instead of willful rebellion or personal independence,  
Submit to God Almighty and appreciate all the blessings He sent.

**"O Great and Mighty God: with the sense to say little, I wait here before Thee for Thy guidance and control over me to be made clear for the needs of this day. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

#### **Job 39**

#### **LESSONS FROM ANIMALS**

It is normal for us when speaking and wanting to illustrate a point, to research, study, write and rewrite, and try to find some common objects to direct the thoughts of the listeners to the message we are hoping to get across. In a very concise series of illustrations, the Lord directs Job's attention to the animal kingdom, and points to some of the largest and well-known to get His point across.

Lions are well known world wide because of their regal appearance, their strength and cunning and their loud voice. Who makes them hunt for their food and able to overcome their prey? Who is it that satisfies their hunger? It is the Lord God who created them and even changed their vegetarian appetite to carnivorous after the first man's and woman's sin had polluted the whole world.

Ravens are scavengers with a dark appearance, a foreboding aspect toward the approach of death in weak creatures, and a voracious appetite when devouring dead bodies. Who provided for them? It is God who made them to do what they do. The wonder of conception, birth and growth the Lord chose to illustrate through wild goats. That would have made Job realize, as do all the people of the world, how limited we are in our understanding of the basics of life. We cannot produce life. We can only watch in amazement at the miracle of the cycle of life, and look with awe when we see new life delivered. Do we arrange the time when conception and birth take place? Obviously not! God has arranged the time of gestation, development and birth in a way suited to every creature He made.

Some animals are able to be domesticated and used by mankind for our purposes. Others cannot really be tamed. The wild goat, the wild donkey and the wild ox all have resisted being controlled by humans to serve humans. The wild goat flees to high ground. The wild donkey runs and if caught is so stubborn that they can be beaten within an inch of its life and still resists. The wild ox of the past was an aggressive mean animal with horns pointing forward that could kill any animal or person who attempted to control it. To try to tame those animals is to endanger a person's life. Even if the man who tries to domesticate these creatures thinks he has done it, because of the aggressive nature they have in them, he is always in danger of being turned on and killed by it.

The Lord again directed Job's attention to the birds and spoke of the largest, the ostrich. The egg of an ostrich is nearly the size of a loaf of bread and is laid in the dirt, not a nest. The ostrich seems to lack sense by laying its egg where it can be walked on. It uses its wings and feathers only to attract attention of other ostriches or to intimidate potential enemies. In God's wisdom, even though ostriches don't fly, He made them to run as fast or faster than a horse, and its feet can be used as sharp weapons.

Job is then called upon to consider one of the most domesticated of animals all over the world, the horse. It is strong, it is fast, it can be trained quite easily for peaceful purposes or for warfare. When it is trained for battle, it can be a mighty weapon under the control of a skilled warrior, particularly for offensive purposes. Using this illustration, the Lord again drives home His message to Job. "Have you given the horse strength?... Can you frighten him?" The obvious answer is only God can endow this animal with such strength, and yet give it the instinct by which it can be controlled.

The next section of the chapter deals with two powerful birds of prey. The hawk is able to migrate great distances each year. It has the God-given ability to find its way across water and land to a specific place in a different continent. Eagles are one of the largest birds able to fly, and are able to reach to great heights. Birds do not have lungs but air pockets in them that enable them to go high and low without puffing and blowing. They can see great distances and can go from an incredible speed to a full stop in a moment in order that catch its prey. From there it has the wing span and strength to carry what it caught, high up to a point of safety where its nest is far removed from any predators. There on a pinnacle of rock it supplies its young with food.

Job, and all of us, need to consider the greatness of God in what He does, and the wonders of His Person in designing such remarkable creatures. He made each one "after His kind," and gives each one life and the food to sustain each one with food unique to its need. Humans look at what God has created and try to copy it. In some ways, humans have learned from God's designs, but with all the wisdom of humanity put together, people cannot produce life, or create any living creature. Plant life can be observed, but why the roots go down and the stems go up cannot be copied or made to happen with divine power. The solar panels of leaves which are necessary to sustain life on earth have been observed right from the time of creation, but the solar panels made by humans does not compare with the intricacies and functions of a simple leaf or blade of grass.

It is to these evidences of divine power and wisdom that the Lord directed the attention of Job and all who read the book of Job. There is a God who far exceeds all of humanity put together in power, knowledge and presence, and yet He deigns to make a connection with us. His love, grace and mercy we can understand and experience to a limited degree, and we rejoice because of that. His power, dominion and authority go so far beyond our understanding that it is foolish for us to make mindless attempt to describe them.

The point the Lord was making to Job and all who pay attention to what He said, is that you don't complain, argue or get angry with God about things you don't know. Give God the credit for knowing what He is doing, no matter what we might think about events going on around us. The things that happen to us, whether they are good or bad, come from our Lord who is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Nothing catches Him unawares. "Our times are in Thy hands." How important it is for us to pay attention to, and learn from, the lessons our Lord taught Job.

**Job 39:1.** *"Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? Or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?"*

**GOD IS SOVEREIGN.**

From the largest to the smallest they carry out God's will  
In the animal kingdoms of the world the evidence is still  
There for each man to see that he may come to the decision -  
There is a God in the universe who rules over earth and heaven.

Look at each creature and analyze them each one by one -  
And it is not very long until I see that each of them  
Has been created by God to suit a special place and role.  
They act according to the Sovereign God's plan without a willful soul.

Some are made with instincts that seem to me amazing.  
Some are made to fly and soar, others are made for grazing.  
But each created animal is doing what was intended  
By the Sovereign God of the universe when His creative work was ended.

What then has gone wrong with mankind made in God's own image?  
Man was made to use these creatures to his own personal advantage.  
There is in us that is not in them, three things that make us different.  
Each of these God has shared with us and for fellowship is sufficient.

We have a mind that develops and stores limitless information -  
So, we can learn what God intends that we might have salvation.  
The mind can be controlled to think that we might do what we know is right.  
When our mind is aligned with God's, we walk with Him in the light.

The will of man and the will of God should always be the same.  
But that changed drastically when into man's mind sin came  
The choices the will makes now, often reflects the world's, not God's.  
The only way the will really works right is when Jesus is truly Lord.

A third part of humanity that is not in the animal kingdom -  
Is the ability to initiate love, unlike beasts who respond to what love brings them.  
When man is in fellowship with God and appreciating eternal life -  
The love of a Sovereign God and us makes this present life so right.

**“Father God, and Creator of all things: I wonder greatly at the marvelous way Thou hast made every animal to suit the environment chosen for them. And here am I, able to adapt in some degree to changing environments and to function in each one. Surely mankind is a unique being created for Thee. May I serve Thee today gladly in mind and will and love. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”**

#### **Job 40**

#### **IT'S HARD TO SURRENDER**

After asking Job a large number of questions regarding nature, apparently the Lord paused and waited for a comment from Job. The Lord's first questions were about weather, storms and elemental forces that are extremely powerful, far exceeding anything humans can produce. The second series of questions were about animals which have the strength and power suited to the nature God gave them. All of these creatures are unique, and yet all were the result of God's creative power. It is God alone who can control the nature of animals and the actions of lightning, wind, rain and weather.

Job had nothing to say at first until the Lord frankly put him on the spot. "Can you correct God?" The complaints that Job had been making had all been heard by God. His demands that God answer him, implied that God needed to be corrected. Now the Lord responded to his challenge. Give an answer or lose your claim to innocence.

There are lessons for us to learn here when things don't go the way we had hoped. To whom do we turn when we lose our health, wealth, job or family? When something unexpected happens in the nation, government or in the assembly, how do we react and respond? Whether we like to admit it or not, we are inclined to wonder if God knows what is going on and why He doesn't do something about it. But that was Job's attitude - and may be ours. We have a frame of reference in which we live and it is usually within the bounds of our past experience or what we have observed in others.

It is up to us to stop and consider the whole matter with real faith in God, even though things that happen are beyond our understanding. It is important for us to learn to wait in silence with trust in our Lord and what He chooses to do. That kind of submission is not being brought down kicking and screaming, but in humility and obedience. Our Lord God knows, cares and has a reason behind all He does and allows to happen. "Here I can rest without a fear."

In response to the Lord's insistence for an answer, Job covers his mouth in a gesture that indicates he has no more to complain about. Now instead of being all consumed with himself and his problems, he has been made conscious of the Lord, His power and authority, His wisdom and infinite intelligence. But yet, he has not given up his position of innocence that he has stated once and again. As far as innocence, he is right. In his attitude toward the Lord he is wrong. So, to deal with this last vestige of Job's complaint, the Lord speaks again.

The great whirlwind and storm continued as a reminder to Job of the Person with whom he is dealing. He had tried to confront God with his loud cries and complaints. Now God confronts him again. We can picture Job with a fearful countenance, waiting without further comment for the Lord to speak. He had learned that frail, mortal men have no right nor ability to judge God. God had created every part of the earth, the stellar heavens, the plant and animal life - and mankind to bring evidence of His infinite being to humans who are intelligent, moral, but created beings. Everything there is, is a reflection of God: His power, His authority, His character and His glory. What He chooses to do or not do in no way depends on our demands. He knows what is best and will do what is right, not what we think is fair. But that being said, God does care for and loves His people. Love does not always make us comfortable.

In another series of questions designed to make Job stop condemning God for not answering his demands, the Lord begins by saying in essence, "Are you really wanting to nullify what I decide is right? Would you really want to condemn Me to justify yourself?" Lest we become too arrogant ourselves by condemning Job, we need to remember who we are, our limitations, our ignorance and inability to even create an anxious thought about eternity when we speak to others about the truths of the Gospel. In ourselves as Christians we are totally dependent on the Lord. Like Job, we need to be reminded of the power of God. His voice may be as loud as thunder or "a still small voice," but it is always greater and more authoritative than anything we might have to say. The splendor and majesty of God seen in creation and the large and small things God has created that defy human description, declare His glory. That surpasses all the pomp and ceremony of the greatest leaders the world has devised to exalt themselves or be exalted by others.

The righteous anger of God against sin is very different than the anger of human beings. God's anger is just and has a serious purpose behind it. How different this is from peevish human anger. God uses His deliberate anger against sin to let us know how seriously He looks upon the wickedness of man. Pride in man gives a wrong perspective of God, events and ourselves. The majesty and glory of God makes all the glory of man seem cheap and insignificant. The Lord challenges Job to see if he can control the proud and wicked. He can't even save himself with his right hand, or he wouldn't have been calling on God.

To every question the Lord asked Job if he could have said a word, it would have to be "No." He is incapable of doing any of the things that God does, and he couldn't deliver himself from all that was against him. The unmistakable point being made is, "Who do you think you are to demand Me to explain all I do and allow." Deliverance is from the Lord alone. The wise person will learn from the words of God, and words echoed by Fredrick Faber, "I bow me to Thy will, O God, And all Thy ways adore, And every day I live I'd seek, To please Thee more and more."

In an effort to make Job understand his Lord more than he ever had, the Lord takes the place of a wise benevolent teacher who has a stubborn servant-student. The last part of His lesson in zoology is to describe first, in detail the largest and strongest of land animals. Nothing can withstand the strength and size of behemoth. But God created this huge creature and only God can control it. If He can control the forces of nature, the animals He created, and the largest of them all, then give God credit that which is surely due Him. He controls such great things; surely, he is in control of what seems to be injustice and confusion to our finite minds.

**Job 40:1.** *"Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said, 'Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it.'"*

### **INSTRUCT GOD? NEVER!**

What would I say, if He asked of me;  
An answer to my every complaint?  
What would I say that wouldn't seem like;  
I do not like all that He has sent;  
I would not nor could not, say I don't like,  
The color of sky or of sea;  
I surely would lie if I said I would change,  
The taste of the food He gave me.

The seasons of years or even life itself,  
Wouldn't work if He turned them around.  
And the way that we speak and we laugh or we cry,  
Would seem bad if we changed all the sounds.  
It would throw all things off, if He quickly did change,  
The things that make night and day.  
How would we sleep or even awake;  
If God had done it some other way?

I am positively sure that God knew what is best;  
And it would be a serious mistake;  
If I went ahead, and chose my own way,  
Because He knows the way that I take.  
So like Job, I've no answer that I'd dare to give;  
The Almighty has power alone:  
To give as He wants and then take away  
All He gave, 'cause I'm His and all that I own.

The good and the bad, I really must take,  
Although I may never know why  
He allows the bad that can make us so sad;  
And our purpose in life it may try.  
And the good that we like and we fully enjoy,  
May not stay as long as we'd wish.  
But He knows what to give, that we fully employ  
Our will, that it truly is His.

The power of God, so great and so awesome,  
Can be seen and experienced by me.  
There is no other answer can be found by all men,  
"God's the Almighty, the Source of all is He!"  
My role is to conform, to fit in the plan,  
To be all He wants me to be.  
And the results and the way, that He brings it about;  
In the future, we clearly will see.

**"O Almighty God, who knows the end from the beginning: I know all is under control. But there are times when I look around too much at all I see happening and wonder, and think wrong questions. So, I remember my frailness and who I am, and my limitations - and practice trust again. 'I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice,' and I am called to say, 'Thy will be done.' Amen."**

**Job 40:4-5.** *"Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further."*

#### **A LESSON LEARNED.**

God does have purposes that are not found on an easy road.  
The most important lessons in life are often learned under a heavy load.  
Our complaints to God when the difficulties appear  
Doesn't mean He does not care for us, or our prayer He does not hear.  
Difficulties are opportunities in disguise that we might learn to trust  
And rely on God in reality, knowing this has come to us  
For a reason presently unknown and maybe never will be -  
But the thing to remember in these hard times; we are part of God's family.

When tempted to complain to God, remember you are one of His own.  
Like any father with his children, some lessons are best learned at home;  
And they are not all pleasant; we voice our complaint because we do not understand  
Why He allows this to come upon us; instead of removing it with His powerful hand.  
Some things have to be learned by us in the crucible of suffering and pain.  
Things learned there usually are well-learned, and don't have to be taught again.  
So, the wise learner bows low and takes what is allowed, knowing God is near  
And when it's appropriate the load will lift and we will be stronger going on from here.

The main lesson to learn is who God is and how I can be like Him.  
If He allows some suffering to come, that's better than I had done some sin  
That would have had bad consequences that would affect my life, maybe my eternity -  
The trials of testing that came in a hard way, are the best things that could have happened  
to me.

It is well for me to expect God's training time to go on; that is what life is for.  
He will send or allow to come, just what He knows is needed, and no more.  
If I really do trust Him when all around seems dark, maybe this lesson I'll learn -  
God is near and has an objective in view, may I never from these lessons turn.

By His grace I have learned to keep my calm even in a stormy time.  
The quiet reply to accusations is the best way to respond I find.

When there come problems with no seeming reason at all, I will be silent and wait.  
What seems like a brick wall rising before me, will actually lead me to the right gate.  
When there is darkness all around, instead of complaining and bemoaning my fate -  
I have found that darkness around makes it easier to see the specific light.  
The Lord lets His lessons continue to train until I have learned what He teaches.  
And the resulting changes the lessons bring, deep into my consciousness reaches.

**“O Lord God, each day that passes brings teaching times to one degree or another. I learned a few things yesterday, and some things I reviewed. Today is another day of training. Help me to learn today's lesson. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”**

## **Job 41**

### **LEVIATHAN!**

In the lengthy and very graphic description of creation, the animal kingdom and then the two untamable creatures - the Lord uses the same kind of language as Job and his friends. Whether men involved in the discourse spoke in a poetical form because it was cultural at that time and place as the actual way of expression, or whether it was to impress each other, the Holy Spirit guided their words for our benefit. In the words of the Lord to Job, He uses the same poetic way of speaking, but even the written words surpass any of the words of the men in description, verbal impressions and force. The words used to describe leviathan make the reader to see in the mind's eye, that which goes way beyond our normal imagination.

In the Lord's description of behemoth in the chapter before, we are made to look at a huge land creature that could never be tamed or used by men for anything, let alone a useful purpose. Men have made huge machines that can move great tonnage of material, and sometimes the word "behemoth" is used to describe them. The difference obviously is machines have no life. The behemoth the Lord describes was a great land creature with a life of its own, and could only be controlled by God because he was the One who created it.

In the description of leviathan, the Lord first speaks not only of its inability to be controlled by humans, but of the ferocity of its nature. It was one mean animal! It resisted any attempt to be tamed. This sea creature was a monster that was not able to be caught in any way, nor to be killed by the weapons humans used. It had no pacific nature, and if a person put a hand on it, they would never do it again. The passage reads like someone had tried to control it and the battle that resulted was of such a nature that no one else should ever try.

A number of weapons are mentioned that were used by people to kill or capture fish, whales and other sea creatures. Hooks, ropes, harpoons and long handled spears that have been used to catch other sea creatures were useless against leviathan. Its size, ferocity and the physiology of the animal made it impervious to capture. After the descriptions of nature and animals, the Lord makes His point to Job.

There is no one who is able to overcome the power and nature of leviathan except the One who created the creature. That Person was the One who was talking to Job. That was the same Person of whom Job had been making demands. he had been complaining, seeking to argue with and he came very close to sinning against in his anger. The audacity of Job was confronted directly, dramatically and unforgettably by the One who had created and controlled leviathan - and Job.

How small and insignificant we feel in just reading the words the Lord spoke to Job. How terrifying and impacting they must have been when they were spoken to him personally by our Lord Himself. The Lord made plain to Job that He is not under obligation to anyone. What He speaks is truth. What is done is by the omnipotence and omniscience of Him who is omnipresent. Job's ignorance showed because he was absent when the Lord created all things by the word of His power. Job could not explain the forces of nature. He could not overrule what God does nor control the forces of nature. Frail mortal men are entirely dependent on God for everything whether we like to admit it or not.

Our explanations of things we observe come far short of the reality that is beyond the scope of human intellect. How much more do the things which we cannot see defy our "scientific investigations" into what they really are. Our limitations of time, space and matter keep us from going to further dimensions of existence that are known to God, but not revealed to us. In order to explain the unexplainable, we humans fall into the trap of speculation. If we are not careful, we will do as so many other people do, make our "vain imaginations" into "scientific proofs." all over this world one man's speculations have become the basis of evolution and atheism. Evolution is taught to our children as truth and is supported by the governments of many nations. Darwin admitted his theory was only a speculative attempt to verbalize what he considered observable "evidence."

Following the point of this whole message to Job when the Lord said, "Who hath preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine," the Lord gives a physical description of leviathan. From its jaws to its tail, the Lord describes its invulnerability to man's attempt to defeat or control it. The power found in creation is an evidence of the supreme power found in the Lord alone. "All power in heaven and in earth" is His. Every form of power and supremacy to man finds its source in God. Skeptics and atheists try to avoid the unexplainable by saying "There is not God," or as written in the Psalms, "No God for me." To deny what we cannot explain is foolish, arrogant, unscientific, audacious and just plain dumb. But it is so surprising that seemingly intelligent people simply think, "I am God," or "God is who I say He is."

In these chapters where God speaks, we learn how important it is for us to submit to the authority of God, even when we cannot explain very much of what is around us, then to experience His wrath because of unbelief. Those who do not believe on Him, "The wrath of God abideth on him." When we have the truths of God who is all-powerful, the Creator and Sustainer of everything, impressed on our minds and hearts, then we will approach Him in a way that is appropriate in our own spirit. "They that worship the Father, must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

We submit to truth revealed in the Bible and then act upon the truth we have learned. When we do that, we can experience the reality of life that is "life indeed," "abundant life." That kind of life goes way beyond the limits of "scientific evidence" to the life of faith that pleases God. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were not made of things which do appear." The works of God in the creation of this one creature are such an evidence of power, prowess and the impact this gives, are a reminder that the creature is subject to the Creator, not the other way around.

We cannot comprehend God or His ways, nor can we control that which He has created without His permission. He knows that which we need and has allowed for that. There are many things we do not know now, nor do we need to know. There are creatures that can be used by men because God has allowed that to be so. It is enough when we have learned what God wants for us, whether it be good or bad, that we accept the fact He has that right. He can do what He wants and we do not have the inherent right to know why. If He chooses to let us know His reasons in some way, so be it. If He does not so choose, we rest in the knowledge of His wisdom and sovereignty, by faith. We simply have to put out unreserved faith in Him who created and maintains us by His compassionate benevolence and grace.

**Job 41:8.** *"Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more."*

#### **FEARSOME CREATURE.**

The strongest and most uncontrollable of beasts  
Is weak compared to God.

Men who are so powerful at their very best  
Have no control over it by deed or word.  
How much more in power and might,

Is Almighty God, who can move the stars -  
To Him even the stars are not pure in His sight -  
He is limitless and eternal in His power.

The God who has revealed Himself to me  
In grace and in matchless love -  
Gives examples in the animal creation that I might see  
The authority that He does have  
Over even the most fearsome creatures known to man  
Lest I begin to take God for granted -  
And for some foolish reason think I can  
Let the knowledge of Him to be slanted.

God is not subject to man's definitions.  
He is above and beyond such a thing.  
Fearsome creatures can be described with the best of intentions -  
But as for God, there is no description of Him.  
Learn a lesson from fearsome creatures if you lay a hand upon them;  
You will be in a battle that is impossible to win.  
The struggle will be worse at the end than when it began -  
And you may end up under the control of him.

If ever the mistake is made to strive against God -  
You are in a battle you are sure to lose.

God is gracious and kind to give wisdom ahead  
So that only the right battles we choose.  
It is right to fight a good fight against sin -  
And the forces of darkness and evil.  
To try and fight against God - you won't win  
And even against fearsome creatures - you're not an equal.

**“O Lord God, Creator and Maintainer of all things: I pray I will never ever think of going against what I know is Thy will. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **Job 42**

### **"I SURRENDER ALL!"**

In the last line of the many descriptions the Lord made to Job of leviathan, an uncontrollable beast of the deep, He states, "He is king over all the children of pride." In his response to all the Lord said, Job is truly humbled. His friends had accused him of pride and insisted he had sinned. They repeatedly told him to admit he had sinned and to ask forgiveness for his secret sins. But after listening to what the Lord had said at the beginning, "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" Job confesses, "I have uttered what I did not understand." He openly faced God and admitted his foolish accusations. When he became aware of his wrong attitude toward God, he humbled himself and honestly admitted his questioning of God's sovereignty and justice was wrong. He did not confess to having secret sins as his friends had insisted on, because that would have been wrong.

Job made a statement of deep conviction by saying, "I know that Thou canst do everything." God is the One who is in control of all creation, including what happens to us. To try to make God tell us why He does things or to let us understand everything, is very foolish on our part. We are very limited into our time and space at this moment, and we do not have the ability in ourselves to see beyond where we are, or to know the reason for everything that happens. In His grace, He has given us some prophetic messages that does let us see into the future at some of the plans He has for earth, for Israel and for His people. But even then, we see through "a glass darkly."

Job's awakening to who God is, not just what He does, led him to worship. In his awareness of the Person of God who was personally involved in his life, he acknowledged his ignorance, foolishness and presumption. He was ashamed of himself and asked for mercy and guidance to be able to please God. He had heard of God through what had been taught and by tradition, but now he had seen and heard his Redeemer. Now all his complaints had vanished and were forgotten. Now his longing for God had been satisfied.

He did truly repent, but not of made-up sins like his three friends had insisted on. His repentance was for making demands on God to justify why He had allowed Job to suffer. That kind of arrogance brings our conception of God down to where He is not much higher or important than we are. Job had learned a lot more about himself than he knew before his time of suffering and calamity. He also learned a lot more about God which made him "abhor himself and repent in dust and ashes." Now he knows God, has heard Him speak, has had his understanding opened in a way it never had been before. One has well said that in prosperity God is heard, in adversity God is seen.

When repentance is real, we are made very conscious of the holiness of God, and of our sinfulness and guilt. This very godly man, Job, had learned much more of himself and his Lord than he had ever known before. He had "feared God and eschewed evil." Now that he had been brought low until all was gone but his God, he learned that the Lord is still near unto all who call upon Him out of a pure heart.

If the Lord was still speaking out of the whirlwind when He spoke to Eliphaz, that old man and the other two friends must have been terrified. They learned also, that whatever we say, and how we say it, is known to God. There was no mention in the words of God to Job about specific sins as the three had charged Job with as the cause of his suffering." We have not spoken of Me, the thing that is right as My servant Job has." Those words left no room for argument. They were wrong in trying to make Job guilty of something he had not done.

How blind we can sometimes be! But how powerful are the words of the Lord, "My servant Job shall pray for you." Four times in one short conversation, the Lord refers to Job as, "My servant Job." Twice when speaking to Satan the Lord called him, "My servant Job." After the trials of suffering and adversity, and the confession of Job to the Lord of his wrong attitude toward God, the Lord doubles the affirmation of Job's position before Him.

The Lord does not allow for bitterness to continue even though one may be unfairly accused, or even condemned by others. It is His intention that we "do good to those who despitefully use you." The prayers of intercession the Lord's people make, benefit both those being prayed for and those who are praying intercessors. When we express the needs of others to our heavenly Father, we are reminded that we are often the answer to our own prayers. We are warned ourselves when expressing the needs of others, that we are vulnerable to the challenges of adversity when they come to us. The prayers of intercession for those who are against us, can bring about genuine forgiveness on our part that we may have been unwilling to give before speaking openly to God about the matter.

The costly burnt offering was given and Job's prayer was made. One wonders if the young man Elihu was standing by as an observer to all of this. Likely he was learning for himself what to avoid and what to do when adversity comes. Adversity will come on us in one way or another. Elihu was neither censured nor commended. Much of what he said to Job was a preparatory message that opened the way for the Lord to speak to Job. A faithful witness is not the final object of attention. In this case, his words opened the door for the Lord to speak. John the Baptist opened the door for the Lord Jesus to step into public view. In the case of witnesses today, it is our responsibility to give the needed information in the Gospel, so people will take heed to the word of God themselves and put their trust in Christ.

Whether Job had double restored to him of all his possession or not, and if his honor had never been restored to him, or even if he had no more children, the message of Job would not be different. Our sovereign God is always in control. Restoration of all that is lost of health, life, possessions or hopes may never come in this life. But we do know that "God is no man's debtor." He is just. Our faith in Him is in a strong secure Person who does not fail. What He chooses is His own right. How we respond to what He gives or withholds is up to us. Under no circumstances should we allow our faith in Him to waver.

Job got double of everything. He even had twenty sons and six daughters. But let us not think that is the only way blessing can be reckoned. How many godly people there have been, and are today, who will never get the kind of blessings Job did, but are blessed in their own souls and spirits, and are a blessing to many other people because they are strong in faith.

If we lose everything in this life because of the ungodly world in which we live, and the increasing antagonism against Christians, that does not mean God doesn't care about what is happening. Nor does it mean God is powerless or unfair. We live in a sinful world in which "evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse." The end times are upon us and "lovers of pleasures" who have a "form of godliness," without power are going to increasingly oppose believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Godliness and persecution which go together, has been the portion of many of God's people in various parts of the world. It is spreading constantly across the globe and is rampant now in North America as well. God allows evil for a time and can actually use it sometimes for our ultimate good. We do not know why that is, but in God's own time if He so chooses, He may let us know. We will turn to Him in our uncertainties, and we will trust Him to use them for His glory.

An important lesson for us to learn from the book of Job, among many other lessons, is that we can trust our God in pain, suffering of every kind, uncertainty and loneliness when we feel forsaken. In every situation in which we are found, God is for us. "And if God be for us, who can be against us." Satan tried with Job, and had to retreat without a word. His bitter attacks, all ultimately failed to make "My servant Job," to curse God. When our faith is solidly founded upon our God and upon His word which is personal to us, we will not be moved. We will never be separated from the love of God.

**Job 42:5-6.** *"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."*

**IT IS FINALLY OVER.**

It is finally over; the suffering and testing time is past.  
God had His reasons to allow these troubles to last.  
We may never know the reason for each and every thing,  
But faith and unwavering trust, testing times did bring.

The difficulties that come we often don't understand.  
Some come for a specific reason; others are just common to man.  
No matter which one is the cause, it is important that I  
Never accuse God even though I may never know why.

Some parts of human character will never be seen

Until in the heat of a testing time, comes out what's within.  
The hidden man of the heart under trials come to the surface -  
And it may be God allows them for that very purpose.

Steps I can follow to respond to trials in the right way:  
Confess all known sin and from wrong habits turn away.  
In my weakness and frustration, I must call on God for strength -  
And trust His grace with truth and faith though testing continues at length.

There may be a work ahead God is preparing me to do.  
The way I accept His testing will determine if I am true.  
To resist self-pity and consider this an opportunity instead -  
Will prepare me for in the field I am called to for the years that lie ahead.

God may have chosen me specifically for reasons known only to Him.  
He has some character corrections or something known that then  
Will draw out faith from me and help me to walk aright.  
God may have picked out this simple man to be a spot of light.

Some things that seem like we are being picked on come from natural causes.  
The same may happen to unbelievers; our humanity brings these pauses  
In what we consider the course of life, and it may be with us to life's end.  
For whatever the reason, I will trust the Lord, and seek His grace for what He sends.

**“Heavenly Father, I step into this day with plans I believe You have directed, but I do not know the course or the results. If it please Thee, use my feeble efforts to glorify Thee and bring lasting honor to the Savior. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”.**