

Dickson Old Testament Commentary

JOB

This is the primary book in the Bible that deals with the problem of human suffering, specifically the suffering of the righteous. Though introduced and concluded with prose writing, the book was written as a poetical story with Job as the leading character. God and Satan stand as opposing figures between good and evil, with God being accused by Satan of not allowing His children to suffer the full extent of what he can inflict upon them. In answer to Satan's accusation, he is subsequently given a chance by God to unleash calamity in the life of Job. The suffering that Satan subsequently brought into the life of Job was for the purpose of convincing us that the righteous, as Job, can remain faithful in the presence of great personal suffering.

Because the theme of the book focuses on the suffering of the righteous, we conclude that God wanted it to be a part of the Old Testament canon in order to aid His people to remain faithful during suffering. Since the meeting between God and Satan seems unique, and Job a unique character of history in whose life the drama of the story was played out, then we assume that this book was an addition to the Scriptures for the purpose of dealing with the suffering of the saints.

In order to teach the theme of the book, the book introduces four other characters. The three friends, Eliphaz of Teman, Bildad of Shuah, and Zophar of Na'amah, come forth in order to convince Job that he has done some sin in his life that would justify God's bringing calamity upon him. Their world view of life is that misfortune comes as a direct result of sin, and thus there must be some sin in Job's life for God to cause such great calamity in his life. They thus connected sin and suffering in order to motivate Job to confess the supposed sin that was in his life, and then repent before God.

A fourth character in the narrative is young Elihu. Elihu remained silent throughout the three friends' discussions with Job, and Job's subsequent responses. However, in his outrage he could no longer hold his peace. He thus unleashed his judgments upon Job because the three friends failed to convince him of his sin. Elihu was not answered by Job, for he offered no new arguments than what the friends had already stated.

In the final chapters of Job's speeches, he complained to God about his suffering. In response, God answered Job out of a storm. In His answer God did not give Job a specific reason for his suffering. He answered Job indirectly by pointing out His awesome power and majesty that was displayed in the created universe. He humbled Job by reassuring him that He had all things under control. God reminded

Job that he would be presumptuous to think that he could in any way as a man be qualified to offer better judgments than God. The final conclusion of God's answer to Job was that if He could create and sustain such a great universe, then certainly He was in control of all things. Job, as well as we, must thus maintain our silence in times of suffering and trust in God who is in control of the universe.

Throughout all the drama that took place in Job's life, he did not sin with his lips (Jb 2:10). As a reward for his faithfulness throughout the calamity of his life, God gave him an additional 140 years of life, plus restitution in double of his possessions that he had lost, with more sons and daughters.

WRITER

Both Ezekiel and James mention Job as a historical character (Ez 14:20; Js 5:11). However, there is no identification of the writer of the book within the text. Suggestions of authorship have included Job and Moses. But it is unlikely that either is the author. Because the writer used the covenant word for God, *Yahweh*, the book could have been written after the captivity of Israel in Egypt. However, the events of the book probably occurred before the history of national Israel.

The nationality of Job is not certain. We are not told if he was a Jew or a Gentile. Some have asserted that he was an Israelite, though this assumption is questioned. Except for the prologue and epilogue that were written in prose, the covenant Hebrew word for God, *Yahweh*, is used only a few times. References that are used to refer to Deity are the common terms that were used by other religious people prior to the existence of national Israel. Job could have been a Gentile, for he lived in Uz (Edom) which was a land of the East (1:3). However, because the book was included in the Old Testament canon of Scriptures, it is argued that Job was of Abrahamic descent, though not necessarily a character who lived during the time of Israel's existence when the Israelites were in the land of Palestine.

DATE

There is no way we can determine the date of writing for this book. Bible students have suggested dates anywhere from the 18th century to the 3rd century B.C. It is assumed that Job lived prior to the development of the nation of Israel in Egyptian captivity, which would be sometime during the age of the patriarchs. This time is proposed because of the age of Job. In addition to his age at the time of his trials, God added another 140 years, making his life far greater than many of his contemporaries. He could have been close to 200 years old when he died. There is no evidence of people living this long after the time of Abraham.

Job's practices concerning the sacrifices also places his existence before the giving of the law to Israel at Mt. Sinai after the Egyptian captivity. He offered sacrifices for his family as was characteristic with the patriarchs. There is no men-

tion of sacrifices being made according to the law that was given to Israel. Though Job may have lived during the time of the patriarchs, the writing could have been later, though the date of writing cannot be determined in reference to the nation of Israel, or the writing of other sacred literature.

BOOK

Regardless of our knowledge of who the author is of this book, his literary work in writing the book has been his legacy. It is one of the greatest poetic compositions of literature of ancient times. Of all literary treasures that have survived time, Job has to be at the top of the list for poetic excellence and content.

The unique nature of this book has led some to question the existence of a man named Job. But reference to him in Ezekiel 14:14 and James 5:11 is the Holy Spirit's testimony of his existence. The author was given special revelation concerning the discourse between God and Satan in the heavenly realm (See chs 1,2). Since the book was written primarily in Hebrew poetry, we would assume that the historical events occurred in the life of a man named Job, but were written as a poetical narrative for the sake of the readers who were Israelites.

Since the theme of the book deals with the problem of the suffering of the righteous, the unknown writer sought to use a real life case in order to teach this theme. Because it is written in Hebrew poetry, therefore, we must not assume that the characters are factitious, or that the book is not inspired. Job and the events that surrounded his life may have been orally passed down to the Israelites, with the eventual inscription of the narrative taking place during the history of Israel during or prior to the reign of Solomon.

One of the difficulties in translating the book is the ancient nature and condition of the existing manuscripts. The manuscripts that exist are often difficult to read, and thus translators have had to add some conjectural assumptions to the meaning of various words of the text. Added to the challenge of translation is the fact that some Hebrew words in the book are found nowhere else in the Bible. It is for this reason that different translations will have different readings in some areas. Archaeological discoveries of artifacts that contain writing of sister languages of the times has helped in this matter. But the fact remains that translators must resort to some conjectural interpretations when translating various words of the text.

Prologue

(1:1 – 3:26)

Outline: (1) The fame of Job (1:1-5), (2) Satan tries Job (1:6 – 2:10), (3) Job's friends (2:11-13), (4) Job laments his birth (3:1-26)

THE FAME OF JOB

1:1-5 Job: Though difficult to de-

termine, the possible meaning of this name is "to return" or "to repent." **Uz:** This land was possibly in Aram and bordered Edom and Arabia (Compare Gn

10:23; Jr 25:23). **Perfect and upright:** Though he admitted the fallibility that is common with all men, Job did not live hypocritically before God (Mt 6:22; At 2:46; see Ps 12:2). He desired to focus on God throughout his life (2:9,10; 27:5). **His substance:** During these times a great family and many possessions were viewed as an indication of God's favor of a person. If the family and possessions were taken away, then it was concluded that God was displeased with the person because of some sin. **Each one on his day:** This could refer to a special birthday feast for each family member, or it could refer to each family member hosting a feast in rotation with the other families. **Offered burnt offerings:** Burnt offerings were a command of God since the time of the sin of Adam and Eve. We would not assume, therefore, that these offerings were an indication that Job was an Israelite who was living under the Old Testament law. In this case he offered burnt offerings just in case sinful statements inadvertently slipped from the lips of his family.

SATAN TRIES JOB

1:6-12 This convening of heavenly beings in the presence of God was the opportunity for the cynical Satan to propose his scheme to the One who had all power. Satan is the adversary of humanity, and thus the one who seeks to destroy all that is good. **Sons of God:** These are the created angels of God (See Cl 1:16; compare Jb 5:1; 15:15). They are His messengers who carry out His will of ministry among His people on

earth (33:23). As created beings by Jesus (Cl 1:16), they were present when the universe was created (38:7). **Satan came:** The meaning of the word "satan" means "adversary" (See Mt 12:24; 1 Pt 5:8). The text reads "the satan," thus indicating that he also was in the heavenly court as a heavenly being. The use of the word "also" seems to indicate that he took this occasion to bring his challenge before God in order to test Job. The testing of Job must be considered a unique event in that God allowed Satan to specifically bring calamity into the life of Job. The righteous needed a testimony to the faithfulness of one who remained faithful before God in the midst of great suffering. They needed a testimony that no amount of suffering in this life is a valid reason to turn from God (See comments Rm 8:18). **From where do you come:** God knew what Satan was doing, and from where he had come. This question was only a means of introduction to receive the challenge that God knew he would propose concerning Job. **To and fro on the earth:** This statement would assume that Satan went from one place to another, and thus he is not omnipresent as God who is at all places at all times. Satan goes to places in order to generate degradation in humanity. Once he has started the process of social degradation, he moves on to other places. Once Satan has started the process of social degeneration, it is man who continues to carry out the work of Satan. **My servant Job:** Job was singled out because of his prominent righteous leadership among men. This would emphasize the importance of

leaders to maintain a reputation for good among the people. If they stand firm, then the people are encouraged to remain righteous before God. ***Does Job fear God for nothing:*** This presents the proposition that has to be tested in the discussions that take place between Job and his friends. The friends will assume that serving God pays off in material blessings. And if the blessings do not come, or are taken away, then it is assumed that one is not righteous before God. The conclusion to Job's argument will be that material blessings are not the direct payment by God for service to Him, though in the case of Job, God restored what he had lost, plus more. But the three friends' argument that material blessings are given directly by God to those who serve Him is not a biblical truth. Millions of saints of the world live in great poverty. They are poor, as the Macedonian saints, though they serve with faithfulness (2 Co 8:1-4). God does not buy the loyalty of His saints with material things. ***In your power:*** It must be noted in the text that God relinquishes supernatural power to Satan. Satan could not function against God's saints in a miraculous manner without being granted power from God. This significant point is brought out in the second encounter between God and Satan when God said that Satan had moved Him against Job (2:3). God gives Satan power to work against Job, but this power is still limited by God. Satan could not take Job's life.

1:13-22 In his initial challenge of the integrity of Job, Satan took away his personal possessions. If Job thought that

his possessions had been given to him directly by God, then Satan assumed that Job would complain against God. The Sabeans were an Arabian people who lived in the southwestern part of Arabia, the area of modern day Yemen. The Chaldeans were evidently traders who were marauders. In conducting trade between their homeland east of Arabia and Egypt to the south, they raided people along the way. ***Your sons and your daughters:*** The last calamity that was inflicted on Job was the destruction of his posterity. No heir was left to carry on his name, or his material prosperity. Thus Satan's attack against Job was complete. Job had lost all his possessions and family, except for his wife. ***Tore ... shaved ... worshiped:*** The reaction of Job manifested remorse, humility and submission to the will of God (See Is 15:2; Jr 7:29; Ez 7:18; Am 8:10). ***Blessed be the name:*** Job did not associate that which he possessed as a reward for his faithfulness to God. The greatness of his faith was manifested by his separation between possessions and his faith in God. He thus blessed God and did not curse Him for the calamity that had befallen him. In times of great trial, therefore, the true nature of one's faith is manifested. ***Nor blamed God foolishly:*** This statement must be remembered throughout the book. No foolish attack against God came from the mouth of Job throughout his trials. Job did complain to God when his friends came to him with erroneous arguments that were based on the theology of the day. But Job did not follow the advice of his wife that he curse God and die.

Chapter 2

2:1-10 *Perfect and an upright man:*

This second scene of a heavenly encounter between God and Satan repeats the content of the previous discussion. Satan's challenge in this second discussion with God was founded on the fact that Job passed the first test. He remained faithful regardless of the removal of his possessions and family. Satan now sought to focus on the physical body of Job. ***You moved Me against him:*** Satan has no supernatural power. All supernatural power rests with God, for God created all things, including Satan (Cl 1:16). The statement that Satan moved God against Job clearly manifests this proposition that is maintained throughout the Bible. Only God has power over the supernatural. Only He can work miraculous happenings. And in this case, it was the power of God that was given to Satan on this particular occasion in order that Satan do his deed against Job. Satan was a created angel of God who fell. That which was created cannot have the power of the One who creates. All supernatural beings were created by God, and thus do not have the power of the Creator. All supernatural power originates from God, and thus is controlled by God. If God had not delegated power to Satan he could have done nothing in reference to taking away Job's possessions, family, and inflicting his body. ***Skin for skin:*** This is an ancient proverbial saying that cannot be determined. However, the meaning could possibly be understood to refer to Satan's statement, "*All that a man has he will give for his*

life." And true this is. Men will give all their possessions in order to retain their health. The desire of men to continue life is stronger than the desire to maintain wealth. ***Boils:*** This term that is commonly used by interpreters probably does not fully define the Hebrew word *shehim*. Deuteronomy 28:35 seems to indicate that this was a malady that affected the skin. It could have been leprosy, though it is difficult to determine exactly what the ailment was. The ailment caused intense itching and suffering on the part of Job. It seems that the ailment disfigured him to the point that his approaching three friends did not initially recognize him (2:12; compare 7:4,5,14; 30:17,30). ***Curse God and die:*** Job's wife had also lost everything, and thus her security in life. Her statement here could be an indication of her frustration that she unleashed on her husband. And then, the statement could have been made in the desperation of the moment that there was nothing for which Job could now live, and thus death would be a merciful relief of his present suffering. ***Foolish:*** Whatever the motive behind the statement of the wife, Job considered it foolish. He would not so sin by his mouth, regardless of the calamity into which he had fallen. ***Will we not receive evil:*** It is often the foolishness of men to praise God in good times, but curse Him in bad times. Such was deemed foolishness by Job. As a believer, Job knew that he had to accept the bad with the good in reference to having faith in God. Life was not all good for the believer.

JOB'S FRIENDS

2:11-13 Eliphaz came from Teman, an area that is generally referred to as Edom (See Gn 36:4,10-12; Jr 49:7). Bildad came from Shuah, an area that is commonly believed to be southeast of Palestine (Gn 25:1-6). Zophar came from Na'amah, an area in the northwest of Arabia. *Seven days:* The friends did not first recognize Job. His ailment had disfigured his appearance. They were so overcome by his ailment that they tore their clothes and sprinkled dust on their heads. In sympathy with his situation, they said nothing for seven days.

Chapter 3

JOB LAMENTS HIS BIRTH

3:1-10 After seven days, and in despair because of his situation, Job broke the silence by cursing the day he was born. He wished that God would forget his birthday, and that his existence be forgotten. He wished that everything that caused darkness would conceal his birth, and thus it not be known to man. He even wished that the night of his conception would have had no joy, for he would not have come to his suffering if he had not been conceived and born. *Let those who curse:* Job even calls on the mythology of his day to come forth and curse all that pertained to his existence.

3:11-19 Continuing from the time of his birth, Job lamented his birth, thinking it would have been better to have been stillborn, than to survive birth. In his misery he believed it would have been better if he were stillborn, or he had died

from malnutrition than to survive for the misery he endured. In death, kings, counsellors and princes lie in rest from their burdens of leadership. If he could suffer death, he too would be at rest from his burdens. Even prisoners are free in prison from those who oppressed them outside prison. In death the slave is free from the demands of his master. What is significant during his calamity is the fact that Job never thought about suicide, for he understood that it was God who gives and takes.

3:20-26 Job wondered why life would be given to one who would suffer as much as he did. He asked why the righteous should suffer. This proposition is to be answered by the experience of Job. At the end of Job's ordeal, God never gave him a direct answer for the cause of his suffering. In the conclusion of the drama of his life, God stated that in His majesty He has everything in control. Though the righteous have to endure the greatest of sufferings, they must realize that God is working His purpose for the existence of the world. In the final words of God in this majestic poem He would call on our faith in the fact that He is in control. Though Satan is introduced as an adversary in the life of the saint, the saint must never forget that it is God who is controlling our existence and the existence of the universe. Since nothing that exists is outside the control of God, then God must be trusted to care for that which is in existence. This fact, Job and ourselves as the readers, will understand by the conclusion of the book.

Debate Over Suffering

(4:1 – 31:40)

Outline: (1) First cycle of speeches (4:1 – 14:22), (2) Second cycle of speeches (15:1 – 21:34), (3) Third cycle of speeches (22:1 – 31:40)

Chapter 4

FIRST CYCLE OF SPEECHES

4:1-6 *Eliphaz:* Since Eliphaz was the first to speak, it is assumed that he was the oldest of the three friends, or possibly considered to be the wisest. He began his response to Job in a gentle and respectful manner. Nevertheless, he felt that Job's outburst of complaint could not go unanswered. He thus chided Job for being impatient. He reminded Job that he had given comfort to others by strengthening the feeble knees. Now that Job had feeble knees, Eliphaz accused Job that he had forgotten his own advice to others. ***Your fear:*** The fear of God was the beginning of wisdom (1:9; Ex 14:31; Lv 19:14,32; 25:17; Ec 12:13). Job revered God, and thus this should be his confidence before God.

4:7-11 *Who, being innocent, has perished:* This is the premise upon which the three friends based their arguments. The premise was based on the belief in the religious culture that God materially rewarded the righteous, but withheld from the unrighteous. Those who lived in an evil manner would reap evil. Their conclusion, therefore, was that there was sin in the life of Job because of all the evil that had come upon him. The wicked here were thus compared to the lion. Though the lion had a great roar and was

fierce, when his teeth were broken, he starved to death. The whelps then scatter and starve because they had no provider of food. It is in this way that the wicked are destroyed. The application is that Job, the lion, has been broken and is facing destruction.

4:12-21 *Secretly brought to me:* It was not that a spirit revealed something to him. The language here is not as prophets who were inspired by God through visions (See Jr 1:4; 2:1,4). What is stated here indicates that Eliphaz had an inspiring thought in the night. Eliphaz argued that Job was a good man, but in his argument to God, Job must not consider himself righteous before God because of his good deeds. He argued that even the angels cannot be compared to the righteousness of God, and thus are charged with folly in comparison to the purity of God. If angels are not considered perfect before God, then certainly mortal man who is the product of clay should not be considered perfect before God. As a moth, man's life on earth is crushed and he passes away. He perishes into obscurity. ***Tent cord:*** In death man is plucked up as a tent peg. That which he has acquired in life is torn from him by death.

Chapter 5

5:1-7 *Call now:* The challenge is that there is no one who will hear Job's complaint against God. Everyone had turned away from Job. ***Holy ones:*** Or, angels. Job could not even turn to those who were commissioned by God to aid the righteous on earth. Eliphaz chided

Job that there was no one to help him. The indication is that the three friends believed that God was distant from man, and thus could not be approached. **Taking root:** If Job continued to fret concerning his condition, then certainly he would make it worse. **Crushed in the gate:** Judgments were sought from the elders who were at the gates of the cities. Thus the children of the wicked had no security from the elders, for the elders would make judgments against them. **Hunger ... thorns ... schemer:** The hungry steal the crops of the wicked, which crops struggled to survive among the thorns. Deceivers scheme to relieve the wicked of their possessions. **Man is born for trouble:** It is not the physical environment in which man lives that produces the trouble. It is man himself who must take responsibility for the trouble that he creates for himself. The fact that man lives in an environment where he is free to make choices makes him responsible for the choices that he makes.

5:8-16 Since Eliphaz concluded that Job's suffering was the direct result of some sin in his life, he proposed the cure. Job must now seek God in order to be relieved of his suffering. Since the Lord lifts up those who are fallen, and providentially works in the lives of those who seek Him, then the solution for Job's problems was that he turn to the Lord. At that same time, Eliphaz argued, God would work against the wicked in order to bring calamity into their lives.

5:17-27 *Binds up ... makes whole:* God must be trusted in affliction because He strengthens the righteous and heals

their affliction. From this premise, Eliphaz listed several things that God does for the righteous. **Six ... seven:** These numbers are symbolic. The number six is a large number, but must be perfected by seven. In the text Eliphaz listed several trying situations that could come upon the righteous. If the righteous endured, then they would be in peace and have a great number of children in their old age. His conclusion was that Job should listen to this tried and tested advice in order to deliver himself from his affliction. The irony of Eliphaz's argument is that he argued from an erroneous proposition against Job whom he thought was wrong. But in the end, Job was blessed with many children and rewarded with double possessions because he was right, but Eliphaz was wrong.

Chapter 6

6:1-7 It is at this time in the narrative which Job justified his complaint. In justifying his complaints about his existence, he defended himself against the accusations of his friends that he had no cause for complaint other than the possibility of some sin in his life. He asserted that his friends saw only the calamity of his life, and thus accused him unjustly. If the friends could only see the totality of his suffering, Job argued, then they would conclude that he was not complaining without cause. **Arrows of the Almighty:** Job felt that God had launched this attack against him, but he could not understand why. In his misery, Job did not recognize that in the case of the suffering of His people, God too

feels for their misfortune. God is not mean in that He personally brings calamity on His people. In the case of Job, it was Satan who was personally bringing calamity into the life of Job. Job, as well as all God's people, must realize that they live in a fallen world that is marred by sin. It was the consequence of sin that we must live in a fallen world (Compare Rm 5:12). It is the consequence of man's sin in general that causes us to reap the fruits of a world controlled by sin. **Bray ... low:** Job justified his right to complain. As braying and lowing are the results of dissatisfaction in the life of an animal, so he claimed the right to voice his dissatisfaction in reference to his predicament. **Soul:** Job used this word to refer to that which desires or has an appetite for what is beyond the physical world. He said he had a right to desire happiness in his existence in life. When denied happiness in life, he felt he had a right to complain to God.

6:8-13 After justifying his right to complain, Job continued with his plea for death to bring him peace. Since his flesh was not as rocks or bronze, then he wondered how much longer he could endure his present physical state. Since he had no more hope in life and no purpose, then he concluded that there was no reason for life to continue. Hope is that which brings purpose to life (Compare Rm 8:24,25).

6:14-23 Job thought his friends came to console. But he discovered that they came to be critics of his life. They kicked him while he was down. It seems that

his predicament in life had been the opportunity for them to unleash their jealousy concerning his former prosperity. **Deceitfully:** Because his friends came as critics, instead of comforters, they had worked deceitfully as friends, for true friends would not say against a friend that which the three were saying against Job. **Caravans:** His disappointment in his friends was portrayed as those in trading caravans who followed a path that was to lead to water. But the path led to despair, for there was no water awaiting thirsty souls.

6:24-30 Job did not seek financial help from his friends. Nor did he seek deliverance from an enemy. Thus he expected that his friends who came to him would bring words of comfort and exhortation. With such words he could have better endured his suffering. So because his friends brought only words of judgment, he too had resorted to such words in order to counter the accusations that were made against him. **My cause is righteous:** Job asked his friends to reconsider his right to complain about his calamity. He asked for their consideration of his position that his calamity was not the direct result of some sin in his life. Wicked men do reap what they sow (Gl 6:7,8). But in the case of Job, Job was not reaping from what he had sown in wickedness. Though he did not understand the reason for his plight, he knew that as a righteous man before God he was reaping beyond the normal amount of suffering that befell the righteous.

Chapter 7

7:1-10 As Job continued his discourse into this chapter, he still felt that death was an option in order to be delivered from his suffering. **Days of a hireling:** Job bemoaned his existence, comparing it to the hard labor of a slave. His life was empty and without hope. As a cloud, it was vanishing away and headed for the grave. The dead do not return to the living, he said, and thus the dead are forgotten by the living. When one dies, he is soon forgotten, not even being remembered by grandchildren and great grandchildren.

7:11-21 Because of the futility of the existence of life, Job justified his speaking out in the anguish of his despair. He turned in his complaint from speaking to his friends to bring his case directly before God. He asked if he were some monster of the sea that must be controlled in order not to bring destruction. He found no comfort in sleep, for he was plagued with nightmares. He felt that death was his only hope of relief. He questioned why God would allow him to live since his plight was so miserable in life. He felt that God was constantly afflicting him, and thus questioned why he was tormented every moment. **Have I sinned:** Job wondered why such great affliction would come from any sin that he might have committed. If his calamity were the result of some sin, then the sin would have had to be great and thus known by him. But if he had sinned, Job questioned why God had not forgiven him of his sin. **You will seek me:** Job still saw God as a God of love. He pled

that God seek him out urgently before he died. **No longer be:** Job seems to believe that if he did die, he would be beyond the reach of God. While at the point of death, therefore, in his despair he begged for God to come for him lest he pass away from God in death.

Chapter 8

8:1-7 Bildad: Bildad now reacts to the discourse of Job. As a traditionalist, he felt that Job was being irreverent toward God. Thus in his anger, he rebuked Job for what he said in the last speech. Since Job had assumed that he was right (6:29,30), Bildad argued that Job had wrongly assumed that God was unjust by afflicting him. Bildad's argument was based on the premise that the calamity of Job's life came as a result of sin on the part of Job. Since Job had argued that man is shaped in life by unbearable trials that are brought on him by God (7:1-7,17,18), Bildad affirmed that God was just in whatever He did in the life of man. His assumptions were based on the general belief of all three friends, that God rewards the righteous, but brings calamity on the wicked. And in the case of Job, he assumed that there was still some sin in Job's life that warranted the calamity that he was experiencing. **Does God pervert judgment:** This was the premise upon which Bildad based his argument against Job. Since God is the Almighty, then everything that comes from Him is just. Man has no right to question his plight since God would not deal unjustly with man. In Job's case, God's judgment was just because he assumed there was

some sin in the life of Job that deserved the just judgment of God. ***If your children have sinned against Him:*** Though hypothetical in the statement, Bildad was saying that the death of Job's children had to be the result of some sin that was in their lives. The severity of the sin was determined by the severity of the punishment. In making this assertion, therefore, Bildad was harsh with Job in that he turned to prove his proposition by using the death of Job's children. ***If you would diligently seek God:*** Bildad called for Job's repentance. If he would repent, Bildad concluded, then God would restore Job's blessings beyond what he had. We must not forget that Bildad's premise for these statements was wrong. Blessings do not come directly in life from God according to the righteousness of man. God does not reward faithfulness with riches. Though God restored family and possessions to Job after his suffering (42:10-17), they were not restored as a result of repentance on the part of Job. Job never understood, as we, that his suffering was the direct result of Satan's specific request to God that he try Job. Therefore, he was not given an answer as to why God blessed him double after the time of suffering. Believers must not assume that they will be blessed in riches after they go through great suffering. The existence of the great number of poor believers in the world who suffer greatly is an illustration of this truth.

8:8-10 Past generations: Bildad challenged Job to consider the past experiences of man that would confirm his exhortations that he was giving to Job.

Bildad asserted that he was right simply because the advice he was giving was found in the traditional teachings of the society in which they all lived. However, his assumption was wrong because the antiquity of teaching does not prove that a particular teaching is right. He was wrong in assuming that the life experiences of one man could be trusted, and thus established as truth. He was thus wrong in accusing Job that his personal life experiences could not be trusted because of his present suffering. Job, therefore, must rely on the accumulation of traditional life experiences that had been handed down from the fathers.

8:11-22 Papyrus: This plant grows while in the presence of water. But when the water is taken away, it withers. Bildad's application was that men wither and die when they take themselves from the presence of God. So is the life of the profane person whose house is as weak as a spider's web. ***Green before the sun:*** Man's life is as a green plant. While alive the plant spreads its roots or vines among the rocks in order to survive. But when dead, it is no longer remembered and another plant takes its place. In his application to the circumstances of Job, Bildad found hope. At least Job had not yet died for some sin he may have committed that brought on his calamity. If he repented, then God would reward him with things over which he could rejoice and a family that would restore laughter to his life. ***Those who hate you:*** Bildad was unknowingly prophetic in this statement. He did not realize that in the end of the drama of Job's ordeal, he himself

would be one of those who was clothed in shame.

Chapter 9

9:1-13 *I know that it is so:* Job knew that the wicked suffer as a result of their sinful actions. There was some truth in the argument of Eliphaz and Bildad, but the punishment for sinful actions is not directly from God. Sinful actions generally reap the whirlwind of consequences as men violate physical and moral laws of the environment in which they live (See comments G1 6:7-10). ***How should a man be just before God:*** This was Job's question to the friends. Since no one is free from committing sin, then no man can stand just before God (Rm 3:23). No man can present himself innocent before God. If men would plead their case before God on the premise of innocence, there is no possible way to win in such a legal contention. No one can harden himself against God and prosper. It is impossible to reason from the viewpoint of the fallibility of man in order to win in a contest against Him who has created and controls all things. ***Bear, Orion and the Pleiades:*** God is the creator of these constellations of stars. ***Chambers:*** These would possibly be constellations of stars in the southern sky. ***He goes by:*** Because we are limited by our five senses, and to the physical world, we cannot perceive the presence of God who is spirit. With our five senses it is impossible to reach into the supernatural world. Job's conclusion was that God's goings were beyond the perception of man. God's omnipotence and omnipres-

ence make it impossible for man in any way to be in contention with God. God is the final moral standard, and thus man's moral standards are not to be compared with God. Our standards are to be established by God. ***Not turn back His anger:*** No one can change the final destination that God has established for the end of the history of man. If God works specifically in the case of one as Job, then individuals cannot terminate His plan. If the allies of the proud have no hope of determining the will of God, then Job reasons that there is no possible way for him to do so.

9:14-16 ***How much less will I answer Him:*** In other words, Job says he could not refute God if God had a charge against him. If one were to make a defense before God he would certainly choose his words carefully. If one were legally righteous before God, he would still be overpowered by the awesome nature of God. If one would have a discussion with God, he could only approach God with humble supplications. Even then Job said he would be surprised if God would even consider this plea. Job's point is that God is so great in comparison to man that we wonder why He would consider the plight of any one individual.

9:17-22 If one were in a discussion with God, Job here expressed hopelessness trying to win any debate. If one approached God with strength, he would be crushed. If one sought to justify himself before God, he would be legally condemned because no man is without sin before God (Rm 3:23). Job's point was

that though man would approach unto God with perfection, he would still be only as a breath of wind that quickly vanishes away. Though the Greeks invented gods after their own imaginations, gods with whom they could devise schemes, the true God is not manipulated by the whims of man. The Greeks manipulated their gods with their minds. The one true and living God establishes ways to which the minds of man must conform.

9:23-26 God is indiscriminate in reference to His destruction of men. His wrath can be poured out on both the righteous and wicked. Job asserted that the world had been given over to the wicked. He then affirmed that since God was in control of the world, He was responsible for the condition of the world. If this were not the case, reasoned Job, then who is responsible? Though God would assume responsibility for the world, we must not forget that it was man through sin who brought the world to its state of degradation. But we must keep in mind that the theology of Job's day was different from our thinking which is based on more revelation from God. The general concept of evil and suffering in Job's day was based on the belief that all consequences came directly from God, because God was in control of all things. We must keep in mind that Job's theology was not inspired. He reflected much of the thinking of the day, though not in agreement with his three friends. The words of Job were written by inspiration. But we need not think that his speeches in the cycles of discussion with the friends were revelation that was not already believed by

those of his day. We now understand the whole scheme of God's work to bring the Savior into the world, which things were not known by Job. We now understand the purpose of the world, which purpose was not revealed in the days of Job. Job, therefore, could not express in his time that which we now know as a result of the full revelation of God. When he was speaking, he did not know that Satan had previously had a meeting with God specifically about his case. *My days are swifter than a runner:* At this point in the discussions, Job turned to the brevity of his life. He used three figures to portray this brevity. His life was fleeing away faster than a courier, swifter than the fastest ship, and quicker than the eagle that swoops down upon its prey.

9:27-35 Job knew that if he stopped his complaining he would still be held accountable for his behavior. If his attitude was changed to joy, this would not help his presentation before God. Even if he cleansed himself with pure snow, he still would not be innocent. If he were to cleanse himself, God would still plunge him into the filth of the ditch. Job remained true to his conviction that he was innocent before God, and thus he could not understand why God was dealing with him in such a manner. And because he knew that he would not stand innocent before God, he remained fearful when considering his complaints. So he was frustrated with the displeasure of God that had been poured out upon him. When the book ends, Job will not be told of the heavenly meeting where Satan asked to unleash trials on him. God's

only answer will be that man's faith in God's control of all things must stand as the answer to the problem of suffering. God has created the best of all possible environments for the habitation of a truly free moral individual. In this environment suffering will be encountered. We must trust that God created the best environment for the molding of individuals who will be prepared for heavenly dwelling.

Chapter 10

10:1-12 In chapter 9 Job affirmed his innocence regardless of the fact that it seemed that God was holding him accountable for something he did not know. In this chapter he seeks to find meaning for his life regardless of the calamity that had befallen him. Though his understanding of God was limited, he reasoned from his limited understanding in order to determine the reason for his suffering. **My soul is weary:** He had nothing else to lose. Since death would bring relief, he encouraged himself to bring his charge before God. Since Job had by this time reasoned that he was guilty of something, and with nothing else to lose, he was emboldened to bring his case before God. **Is it good to ... oppress ... despise:** In his despair, Job reasoned with God through the question of verse 3. He asserted that it was not logical for God to oppress that which He created, and at the same time shine with favor on the wicked. **Have You eyes of flesh:** God is spirit (Jn 4:24). He has no physical form, and thus He is not afflicted as a man. "Eyes" is a metaphor that refers to God's knowledge of

Job's predicament. What puzzled Job was that he knew that God knew he was innocent, but at the same time He afflicted him with great suffering. **No one can deliver:** If God chooses to inflict suffering, then all are hopeless and cannot be delivered. **Yet You destroy me:** Job's frustration was that he could not understand why the righteous suffer as he did. If God is the creator and omnipotent over all things, then he wondered why the righteous had to suffer. If God seeks good for his saints, and at the same time is all-powerful, then could He be benevolent if He does not take away the suffering? If He does not take away the suffering because He cannot, then He is not all-powerful. In this supposed contradiction, Job did not question the existence of an all-powerful and benevolent God. Out of his frustration, he only sought to understand the scheme of God in reference to our existence and suffering. The answer to Job's supposed dilemma is in the fact that God can do all that can be done. He cannot create a truly free-moral being without allowing that being to live in an environment where choices can be made. And in order for that being to be truly free to make choices, he cannot be hedged in or programmed as a robot. The wicked exist, therefore, because they have made choices of evil, which choices cause untold suffering and evil in the environment of the righteous. The conclusion is that God created the best of all possible environments for the existence of a truly free moral being. **Bring me unto dust again:** Even without the existence of written revelation, the creation

of man out of dust was commonly known by Job's generation. In view of the origin of man from the dust of the earth, Job questioned why God would have created man in the first place. The answer is in the fact that God is a God of love. And in order for God to be loved by His creation, His creation must be truly free to say to God, "I love you, too." It is better to have lived in the presence of a loving God than never to have lived. "I-love-you-too" will eventually bring the righteous into eternal dwelling in the presence of God.

9:13-22 *Hidden in Your heart:* Job now seeks to understand the hidden purposes of God. What confuses him was that regardless of his righteous living, he had to suffer such great calamity in his life. He was full of confusion because he sought to live righteously, but God seemed to hunt him down in order to afflict him. And when he was found, Job felt that God showed His presence with him through the suffering that He inflicted upon him. Job thus began to conclude that God's infliction in his life was His judgment that he was in some way guilty. If God had inflicted him because of some guilt, then he questioned why God created him in the first place. If the righteous suffer, then why was man even created by God? Paul gives the answer. "*For I consider that the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed to us*" (Rm 8:18). We see eternity only from the side of time on earth. God sees it from the side of eternal existence. Though we cannot earn heaven through

perfect living or atoning good works, the sufferings of a life of fifty or sixty years is little to pay for an eternal heaven in the presence of God. Unfortunately, Job viewed all things from the shadow side of the cross, whereas we are privileged to understand all things through the offering of Jesus. Because Job did not have knowledge of the cross, and yet remained faithful to God through all his sufferings, exemplifies his faith. His faithfulness brings judgment on those this side of the cross who fall from faith because of suffering, for we now have knowledge of all spiritual blessings that are in Christ (Ep 1:3).

Chapter 11

11:1-6 *Zophar:* As both Eliphaz and Bildad, Zophar also came forth to defend the justice of God. In chapters 9 & 10 Job made strong claims of innocence. In doing so he motivated the three friends, specifically Zophar, to launch his verbal onslaught against Job. Zophar thought Job was full of talk because of his supposed ranting in his previous discourse. He believed that Job's words were full of lies and mockery of God. ***My doctrine is pure:*** It was against this claim that Zophar launched his disagreement with Job. Zophar reasoned that if only Job could see his sin, then he would understand that he was not only deserving of his present afflictions, but also grace from God. Zophar was a dogmatist. He had no proof of any sin in the life of Job, but still asserted his accusations against him.

11:7-12 It frustrated Zophar that Job

had sought to investigate the nature of God. He believed that God was past finding out, and thus anyone who would seek to understand God was acting arrogantly as Job. Since God knew everything throughout the world, then it would be presumptuous on the part of man to understand God. **He knows vain men:** Job had claimed that God did not distinguish between the righteous and wicked when He inflicted suffering. Zophar disagreed with this. **Empty-headed man:** Zophar quoted this old proverb in verse 12. He applied it to Job because of Job's supposed arrogance in trying to understand God.

11:13-20 Zophar was direct, if not harsh, in his attack against Job. However, he felt that there was hope for Job, if only Job would repent and turn to God. He should turn from his wrong and humble himself before God. If Job would only stretch out his hands in prostrate submission to God, he would be healed. If Job would so submit to God, then he would have hope. Many would then return to him for favor. On the other hand, the wicked will be swallowed up in death because they fail to repent.

Chapter 12

12:1-3 In his response to Zophar, Job resorted to sarcasm. His friends had claimed a special understanding and knowledge of God, but failed to point out the sin that would justify his suffering. In this speech of Job, therefore, he was more fierce in his words toward his friends. He was also emboldened to lay his plea before God. Since God did not

answer his inquiry, he sank further into despair. **Wisdom will die with you:** This supposed compliment of his friends was a sarcasm concerning their supposed greater knowledge of the ways of God. The irony of Job's encounter with his three friends was that they actually did not know God, or else they would have been merciful to him in his plight. They understood God only from the accepted view of the society in which they lived. Job knew God according to the circumstances of his life. The story of Job's life, therefore, was an encounter between the views of God that men had created after their own experiences and the true God who is revealed from heaven.

12:4-6 Mocked by his neighbor: Job had become a laughingstock by others because of his ordeal. Before his suffering, he had presented a life of righteousness before his neighbors. But because of his suffering he had been cast into a pit of despair. **A lamp despised:** If righteous Job would suffer so, then his neighbors concluded that there was no gain in living righteously before God. If the wicked prosper, then Job reasoned that there was no gain in living righteously before God. His neighbors laughed, therefore, because they saw the supposed uselessness of his righteous living.

12:7-25 Job's friends gained their knowledge of God by observing the wonders of the physical world in which they lived (See comments Ps 8; Rm 1:20). The existence of the physical world and behavior of all organic life testifies to the existence of God. The good that is in the

world is indiscriminately given by God to all men because they live in God's created world. Both the righteous and wicked thus partake of the blessings of the world. But the logic of the friends of Job was flawed. It is true that all men partake of the good that is offered by the world, but it is not true that those who are righteous are dealt a greater amount of blessing than the wicked. God's rain falls on the field of both the righteous and wicked. If the righteous prospered above the wicked, then one would think that judges, kings, princes and elders would prosper more than the wicked. But even these officials are stripped and made fools by God.

Chapter 13

13:1-12 *I also know:* The three friends had no advantage over Job in reference to their knowledge of God. Because they had offered nothing new, Job felt that it was more profitable that he speak to God and not them. Since they were inventors of lies, and as physicians who are of no value to the sick, it would be profitable if he would address his complaints directly to God. The friends had spoken falsely because they claimed to be speaking on behalf of God. Job had thought that they would function as objective arbitrators between himself and God. But they took the side of the accuser. Without any evidence of Job's supposed sin, they cast their judgment upon him. *If He should search you out:* Job now believed that his friends were in danger before God. If God would hold them accountable for their speeches, he

was convinced that they would stand guilty. At the end of the drama, this proved to be true because God called on Job to pray for his friends, and the friends themselves had to offer sacrifices for forgiveness concerning their sinful treatment of Job.

13:13-19 Job now turned to address God. *Put my life in my hand:* Since Job's answer to his misery was death, then without losing anything but his life, he turned to address God with his complaints. *He will slay me:* Since Job had lost all hope of surviving his ordeal, he was emboldened to speak his mind. What is significant here is that he maintained his faith regardless of possible death as a result of God's hand upon him. Job was determined to maintain his faithfulness regardless of the loss of his life. *This also will be my salvation:* No hypocrite or wicked person would dare to state his case before God. But Job's salvation was in the fact that he could state his case before God with a clear conscience. *I know I will be justified:* In the midst of such great despair, Job had hope that God would restore him to his former state. He trusted in a God of grace, though he had to endure at His hand. And for this reason he was willing to take his case directly to God. He was so passionate about taking his case directly to God that he thought he would die if he did not.

13:20-28 In taking his case before God, Job first asked that God not terrify him to the point that he could not speak (See 9:34,35). Second, Job asked for a response from God in order to reaffirm that He heard his plea. *Make known to*

me my transgression ... why hide Your face: Job was willing to die without changing his behavior before God because he was confident in his righteous behavior before God. If he died, he first wanted to know the sin that caused so much suffering to come into his life. If his friends were correct – that suffering is the direct result of God’s punishment for our sins – then Job wanted to know the sin that caused him such great grief.

Will You pursue: As a human, Job knew he was insignificant in comparison to God. And thus he wondered why God would pursue him, for such pursuit was like a man running after dry stubble.

Iniquities of my youth: Job considered the fact that he may have committed some sin in his youth that he had forgotten, but at this time was being held accountable for by God. Job now felt that he was in stocks, guarded by God who would not release him from either his misery or life.

Decaying: His life was rotting away. He felt that God had brought him into the bondage of his sufferings, and thus he was as worthless as a moth-eaten garment.

Chapter 14

14:1-12 Born of a woman: Job continued the thought of the preceding chapter in that he wondered why man in his lowly state would be considered for special attention by God. Since man’s life is so short, Job questioned why God would be so concerned with individuals who were as a blooming flower that soon passes away. Job reasoned that it would be beneath God to even consider signifi-

cant any individual. He thus questioned why God would take any special notice of him. One important point that does come from the book of Job is the fact that God considers the importance of individuals.

Clean ... or of an unclean: There is no one who stands righteous before God, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rm 3:23). Why would God, Job questioned, even consider a man worth all the effort that He was putting into his life.

So that he may rest: If God’s attention means suffering, then Job asked that God turn away from man in order that man enjoy some rest during his brief life.

Hope for a tree: If a tree is cut down, it can grow again from its remaining roots. However, if a man is cut down in death, he will not come forth again.

Until the heavens are no more: Ancient beliefs concerning life after death were vague. Job’s statement here seems to indicate that those who rest in death will not rise out of their sleep until the heavens are no more (Compare 2 Pt 3:10-13). In the book of Job there is a vague understanding of death (See 3:12-19; 10:21,22; 14:20-22). However, later revelation in the Old Testament reveals that God’s people will overcome death (See Ps 16:10; 49:15; 73:23-26).

14:13-22 If a man die will he live again: Job’s belief in an eternal God would assume that he believed that after death man does not cease to exist. The fact that Job made this statement indicates that a concept of resurrection was a part of his theology.

You sew up my iniquity: It could be that Job also believed that there would be a final account-

ing of the sins of man. The figure here indicates a final accounting of the acts of man. Regardless of any hope that might be expressed in these words, Job continued to portray the despair of life, and specifically the hopelessness of his life. The sufferings of this present world destroy the hope of man.

Chapter 15

SECOND CYCLE OF SPEECHES

15:1-16 Eliphaz: This discourse of Eliphaz takes the narrative into the second cycle of discussions between the three friends and Job. In the first cycle the friends thought that Job's problems were the cause of some sin in his life. They urged him to repent in order that his former blessings be restored by God. Job's insistence on his innocence led them to believe that he was being arrogant, if not blasphemous against God. In this second cycle of speeches the friends have come to believe that Job is stubborn and arrogant, for he will not follow their advice to repent. In order to move him to confess his sin, they use strong language. In this leading speech of Eliphaz, Eliphaz is convinced that Job is being stubborn in his refusal to respect their advice that he repent. **Vain knowledge:** Eliphaz was convinced that Job's defenses were signs of his arrogance and unwillingness to repent. He accused Job of thinking that his wisdom was superior to that which he and the friends had, for the friends stood behind the wisdom that had come from the old men. **East wind:** Eliphaz accused that Job had filled him-

self with the hot east winds. He accused him of unprofitable talk that would lead to no good. Eliphaz believed, therefore, that Job had condemned himself with his own words. **Consolations of God:** In an earlier speech, Eliphaz claimed to have received some revelation from God on this matter (4:12-17). And thus in this speech Eliphaz accused Job of rejecting the counsel of God that he had given. **Eyes flash:** Eliphaz judged Job's character. Because of the blinking of Job's eyes, he assumed that Job was being angry with God. He argued that if God did not consider His holy ones or creation clean, then certainly Job would be presumptuous to consider himself innocent. The point is that no man is innocent of sin (Rm 3:23). However, if the proposition of the friends was correct, then they too should be suffering the same fate as Job, if indeed God directly renders physical suffering in time for sin.

15:17-35 A dreadful sound is in his ears: The wicked man lives in a constant state of anxiety. Though prosperous, the destroyer will steal all his goods. The wicked man lives a sensual life without respect for God. But in his prosperity, his rebellion against God will lead to his ruin. Darkness and destruction will overtake him. He will die before his time. The life of the wicked man is cut off before his time. The illustrations that Eliphaz used were directed toward Job, for he assumed that Job had sinned. He compared him with the wicked man whose end is before its time. Thus Job should repent before his end comes.

Chapter 16

16:1-5 As in his other addresses to his friends, Job responded first to his friends before turning with his complaints to God. Job had previously addressed God (13:20-28). That address was not answered. It was as if Job were waiting on God to reveal Himself to him in order to confirm his position before the three friends. The response that Job did receive was from his friends, not God. They thought that he was being arrogant to address God in the way that he did (15:5,6). In the preceding discourse, Eliphaz thought that Job was being presumptuous. In Job's speech in this chapter he feels hurt by Eliphaz, and thus administers a direct rebuttal. **Miserable comforters:** And so they were. Instead of bringing comfort to an afflicted man, they brought judgment and rebuke. They judged themselves by the hardness of their heart and by taking the opportunity to preach to Job about a supposed sin that was in his life. Instead of bringing comfort in a time of affliction, they added to Job's affliction with their harsh words.

16:6-17 Job once again anguished over his situation. He was exhausted with his condition. Except for the three friends who were in his presence, all his other friends had forsaken him. The three friends who were in his presence revealed that they truly were not his friends. At this time in his suffering, the results of his ailments had become visible in his body. He described his body as one on which wild beast had chewed. **Gaped on me:** Job's community considered him a scourge. They looked upon him with

derision. He had become repulsive in the community. He felt that he had been forsaken by God and given over to the wicked. He lamented that he had been made a target to which God directed his archers to shoot arrows. **Gall:** Though we would use the figure of blood, those of Job's day used the figure of gall being poured out. **Warrior:** The metaphors that Job used reflects the extent to which his sufferings had progressed. It seems that no greater affliction could be cast on him without bringing death. Since Satan could not take his life, then we conclude that he was taking Job to the brink of death, and yet not letting his body die. **Horn into the dust:** Or, his pride (horn) was bowed to the ground. **Foul with weeping:** His face was red and distorted because of so much crying. Amidst all the agony of his predicament, Job still maintained his innocence. He was not compelled by his friends to acknowledge any injustice that he had done.

16:18-22 **Do not cover my blood:** If blood was spilled, vengeance was to be rendered to the one who spilled the blood (Gn 4:10,11; see Ez 24:7,8). Job was not being murdered, but he believed that if his ailments came to death, he was being unjustifiably killed. He wants his cry for justice to be made known. **My witness:** If he did die, he knew that he had a record in heaven of his righteousness. His record would show that he was innocent of all accusations. **Tears to God:** He knew that he could not turn to his friends for vindication. Therefore, he focused on God to be the final judge of his righteousness. His faith moved him

to trust in God to vindicate him.

Chapter 17

17:1-5 It was at this time that Job felt he was at the point of death. **Mockers:** Though he was suffering even unto death, his three friends were mocking him because they had joined those who looked on him with derision. Their counsel was a judgment of his character, and thus they were a council of mockers as those who also did not understand Job. **Pledge:** Though at a low in his suffering, he asked God to guarantee his future. He thus maintained a hope past death. He trusted in God to provide something better than what he was enduring. **Flattery ... for a spoil:** The friends had boasted before the people of their consultations with Job. They had used Job as a spoil for their own social benefit.

17:6-9 Byword: Not only did the friends use the situation of Job as an occasion for their own exaltation in the community. By doing so, Job became a mockery in the community. Nevertheless, Job believed that truly upright people would understand that his predicament was not brought on because of any sin. He affirmed that those who were truly righteous would not be turned from their beliefs and behavior when they considered the calamity into which he had fallen. **Stronger and stronger:** Though he felt he was near death, Job became more confident that his life of righteousness was the right way. His confidence at this time in his suffering grew. Though he was suffering, he knew that his moral

standards were the best for living for they were based on God's will.

17:10-16 Come now again: Because of his confidence in living after God's moral standards, Job gave an invitation to his friends to repent. He knew that they too would eventually join him in death. This was his appeal to them to repent before they were swallowed up by death. **Pit ... worm:** The grave (Sheol) was now to be his home. In death his relatives would be the worms of decay. At this time in his suffering, Job had given up hope of restoration to his former way of life, and thus he saw only death to be that which would bring him comfort.

Chapter 18

18:1-4 Bildad: What frustrated Bildad was that his traditional answers for Job were not accepted. His answers had been based on the traditional theology of the day that the wicked were directly afflicted by God, and thus Job's afflictions were evidence that he had sinned. Job did not accept this theology. Because he did not accept this theology of the friends, they became more harsh toward him. Job likewise has responded with direct statements about their arrogant approach to his problems. Because Job did not repent from his supposed sin, Bildad felt that he was the true example of an unrepentant and rebellious sinner. **Will the earth be shaken for you:** Bildad accused Job of arrogantly thinking that the moral world should be changed in order to accommodate him. He was accusing Job of feeling that he should not

be punished for his sin. Bildad felt that Job was past repentance, and thus this position on the part of Job had proved his guilt.

18:5-21 Bildad described the way of the wicked, which way he assumed Job was behaving. He first pronounced that darkness initially overtakes the wicked (vss 5,6). Snares are then laid for his feet (vss 7-11). Once snared in his own devices, the wicked are given over to the king of terror (vss 12-15). The living then forget the wicked (vss 16-19) and they become an illustration of wickedness (vss 20,21). **Light of the wicked:** The existence of the wicked will be extinguished. **His own counsel:** The wicked will stumble over their own beliefs. **Strength will be famished:** When caught in their own snares and famished by their own wrongdoing, the wicked will come to an end. **King of terrors:** Death will eventually take control of the wicked man. Once death has taken control of the wicked man, others will take control of all the possessions that he has acquired in life. **His roots:** Wicked people will be forgotten because men desire to forget them. As people seek to remember only the good, the wicked will be forgotten because of the little good that they did in life. **Branch will be cut off:** There will be no descendants who will carry on with the family name of the wicked. Bildad obviously inferred the death of Job's family in this verse. This would have been a curse to Job's heritage, but in the end, God gave him more sons and daughters when he was restored.

Chapter 19

19:1-12 The speeches of the three friends had by this time digressed from teaching the theology of sin and suffering to an attack on the character of Job. Bildad's speech, therefore, called for a stern rebuke by Job. Though completely distressed by his afflictions, he was able in this discourse to rebuke those who troubled his soul with words of judgment. The friends had lost all shame in what they said to Job. As a consequence, Job was broken in pieces by their words. **These ten times:** There is probably some metaphorical meaning in the number ten, possibly meaning that the entirety of their discourses have been a harsh attack against Job. It seems that before Job was afflicted he was envied by his three friends because of his prosperity. Now that he was down, they took advantage of the situation in order to unleash their jealousy. Such is common of those who envy the accomplishments of others. **My error remains with myself:** The supposed sin that the friends assumed Job had committed was of no consequence in the sense that it was not worth mentioning. If the theology of the friends were correct, the extent of Job's sufferings would assume that he had committed a very great transgression. But since the friends could not identify the transgression, Job said that whatever he might have done to warrant such great punishment was between him and God. **I cry out of wrong:** Though Job did not understand the reason why God had afflicted him, he believed that God had unjustly brought punishment upon him.

Net: Job felt that God had caught him in a trap and he could not escape. When he cried out for help, there was no answer. This only added to his frustration. **Stripped me of my glory:** His shining example of living righteously had been taken away. Since the scoffers believed that suffering was the direct result of sin, then Job's life no longer became an example of righteousness. Because of his great affliction everyone assumed that he had sinned. **Removed my hope:** In 14:7 there was hope in that the tree was only cut down, leaving the roots to produce another tree. But here the tree is plucked up with its roots. There was no hope of another tree. **Troops ... against me:** Job complained that God's army had been set against him. He did not know how much longer he could hold out, though he was not fearful of death because it would bring him relief.

19:13-20 One of the greatest sufferings Job endured was to lose his friends. Not only were the three friends detached from him with their judgmental discourses, all others had also forsaken him. He was alone in his suffering, which loneliness brought great despair. No one was there for him. And yet, he remained faithful to God. Not one word of cursing came out of his mouth.

19:21-29 *Have spit on me:* The shallowness of the friendship of the kinsmen and friends was manifested in the fact that they gave up on Job in his time of need. It may be that all envied him in his former wealth, and thus manifested their true feelings of him when he had lost everything. True friends are discov-

ered when one has nothing or is in a time of great need. It may have been that these supposed friends were hanging around only when Job could reward their friendship with material blessings. When the blessings were gone, so were they. **Iron stylus on a rock:** Job would have the testimony of his innocence recorded for generations in the future, which thing the Spirit did in this book as a testimony to the faithfulness of Job. **My Redeemer lives:** The redeemer was a close relative who would claim and raise up the posterity of a deceased brother. The levirate law was meant to guarantee the legacy of a brother who had no heirs that would carry on with his posterity (See Ex 6:6; 15:13). In this case, God was Job's redeemer. Job trusted that God would restore his legacy before humanity. Job trusted that he would be found innocent in the end, and thus be vindicated. **In my flesh I will see God:** We would assume that Job did believe in a bodily resurrection, which resurrection was revealed in Scripture many years later (See comments 1 Co 15). **Be afraid of the sword:** Because his friends had judged him so harshly, Job warned them that judgment would surely come upon them from God. If their theology of sin and suffering were true, then because of their sinful treatment of him, they should expect suffering to come. This admonition surely shocked them. Even if they were right that suffering is the direct result of sin, they knew their sinful assault on Job. Thus they knew that they were due the same suffering as Job for their sinful behavior and words they had spoken to Job.

Chapter 20

20:1-29 Zophar: This speech by Zophar was an emotional explosion because Job has exhorted the friends to beware of similar judgment that may come upon them because of their sinful attacks against him. Zophar continued to insist that Job should be aligned with the wicked. And because he was supposedly unrighteous as a result of some sin, he should suffer the same fate as the wicked. His speech, therefore, was a portrayal of the end of the wicked. ***I am greatly disturbed:*** Zophar felt the sting of Job's rebuttal. He did not like being called an ignorant beast (12:7) or one who spoke with vain words (16:3). He thus could keep silent no more. He unleashed a vehement onslaught of words by consigning Job to the fate of the wicked. ***Though his excellency mounts up to the heavens:*** Zophar reminded Job that even though the wicked exalt themselves, they are eventually brought low. They are terminated in the minds of the living as if they did not exist. The more they exalt themselves, the harder they fall. The wicked soon pass from the memory of the living. They pass away and their wealth is returned to the rightful owners. When they die, they take nothing with them. They partake of the delicacies of food, but it becomes as venom to their bodies. ***Oppressed ... the poor:*** The wealthy man will acquire great wealth, but he cannot enjoy it because he knows that he acquired it through the hard work of the poor, or even by taking advantage of the poor. ***Flee from the iron weapon:*** Zophar turns from the consequences of

emotional punishment for unrighteous wealth to physical flight from the sword. The wicked man may oppress to the point that people take up arms against him. ***Darkness ... unfanned fire:*** At this time in his discourse, Zophar may have now taken the wicked man into his existence after death. The wicked person is cast into outer darkness and consumed in a fire that is not made by man (See comments Mt 25:41; Rv 20:11-15). ***Heritage appointed to him by God:*** We must assume that much of what Zophar said concerning the end of the wicked was believed by those of his day. And we must also assume that much was revealed to his generation and previous generations through the prophets of God (See Hb 1:1,2). This being the case, we must conclude that Zophar was preaching the punishment that was levied against the wicked by the living, as well as the punishment of God of the wicked after death. Zophar was wrong in applying his statements to Job. The irony of the drama of the book of Job is that Job represents the righteous before God and the friends of Job represent the character of the wicked. With every word of condemnation that came from the friends' mouths concerning the fate of the wicked, therefore, they were making judgments against themselves. At the end of the narrative, God instructed Job to pray for the friends lest they suffer the punishment that came from their own mouths.

Chapter 21

21:1-16 The wicked live: Job disagreed with the conclusions that Zophar

reached concerning the wicked. Job stated that the wicked often live, prosper and become very powerful. Their children are established. Their houses are safe and God does not punish them. Their herds grow in number and their children dance with joy. They lavish their wealth upon themselves, and then die suddenly without anguish. And on top of all this, they reject any direction from God. Though all the friends of Job gave a picture of the wicked suffering the consequences of wealth in their lives, Job spoke of reality. The wicked enjoyed a great life. They were at ease in life, enjoying the comfort of their riches. Because they are rich and without God in their lives did not assume that they would have a hard life. In fact, Job reasoned that because they were wealthy they did not have to suffer the anxiety of life that was often experienced by the poor. The friends' argument that the wicked are punished in life with suffering, therefore, was not true. The wicked who are enjoying life contradicted the sin and suffering proposition of the three friends. ***What profit should we have if we pray:*** Too much prayer today is focused on what we request that God should give us or do for us. If the poor pray for profit, and yet remain poor, then we assume that God did not answer the prayer. When the rich prosper, but do not pray, then we must assume that God is not blessing them.

21:17-21 *How often is the candle ... put out:* Job asked this question concerning the wicked. The answer is not often. ***Iniquity for his children:*** Job

assumed that the friends will reaffirm that God punishes the wicked by punishing their children (See Ex 20:5; Jr 31:29,30). But he says that this is not direct punishment of the wicked. The wicked cares little for those who come after him, and thus punishment of the children of the wicked will have little consequence in reference to punishing the wicked.

21:22-26 Death would be the judgment as to whether one lived wickedly or righteously. Job's observation, however, is that there is no difference between the death of the righteous and the wicked. Some die of old age and some die in mid-life. The death of the rich and the poor are the same. Therefore, by observing the way in which one dies one cannot determine whether he is either wicked or righteous. The friends assumed that God was responsible for the death of both the rich and the poor, wicked and righteous. Job argued that since all die without discrimination concerning either wealth or moral behavior, then God is not responsible for one's death.

21:27-34 *I know your thoughts:* Job knew what the friends were thinking. They asserted that the wicked die without leaving any remembrance in the minds of the living (18:14-18; 20:26-28). However, there is evidence of the existence of the wicked in the minds of men. Society remembers wicked men who have sought to establish themselves at the sake of others. ***In your answers there remains falsehood:*** Reality answered the arguments of the friends. What they said was fundamentally not true. Since their arguments contained some truth did

not mean that the conclusions of their arguments were true. Because their arguments were based on both truth and lies, their arguments were false. Job had thus answered all their arguments because he had directed his answers to their conclusions, which conclusions were erroneous.

Chapter 22

THIRD CYCLE OF SPEECHES

22:1-5 Eliphaz: Eliphaz introduced the third cycle of discussions between Job and the three friends. In the first cycle they discussed the nature of God in relation to the predicament of Job. In the second they discussed the providence of God in relation to the destiny of the wicked. The friends associated the nature of the wicked with Job. Job answered all the arguments of the friends in the previous discussions. Therefore, the friends in this cycle of speeches focus on what they think are the sins of Job. **Can a man be profitable to God:** Eliphaz assumed that man could not presume to be righteous before God, and thus man's righteousness was only good for man himself. Since man's deeds are of no consequence to God, Eliphaz reasoned that God's judgment was for the good of the individual. He continued his reasoning that Job was suffering because of his sin.

22:6-11 In these verses Eliphaz launched into accusations concerning things that he felt Job had not done. But considering the fact that Job was considered righteous before God because he did these good works, we would conclude that Eliphaz was grasping for anything

by which he might accuse Job of some sin. It may be that he felt that Job did not perform according to his standards in accomplishing the good works that he did. The fallacy of his argument, however, was in the fact that all righteous men perform in these areas of good works.

22:12-20 Height of heaven: God is transcendent. Though He dwells in a heavenly environment, He involves Himself in the affairs of man. **He does not see:** Job did not state that God is distant from the righteous. He stated that God deals justly with both the righteous and wicked. God does know the situation of the righteous, as well as the wicked, though He chooses not to be a respecter of persons. Both the righteous and wicked receive the natural blessings of living in the physical environment of the world. **Washed away with a flood:** Reference here is undoubtedly to the flood of Noah's day that had been orally handed down from one generation to another. God brought judgment down on the wicked generation of Noah, even though they enjoyed the goodness of His creation. **Laugh them to scorn:** When the righteous see God's vindication on the wicked, the righteous rejoice.

22:21-30 Return to the Almighty: Though Eliphaz did not condemn Job in his speech, he called on him to return to what he believed was the will of God. What is significant concerning the twisted view of the friends is that they did not know the true way of God to which they exhorted Job to return. They had created religious beliefs after their own desires, or at least after the society

in which they lived. Since they did not know where Job had violated any law of their religious beliefs, they did know the religious beliefs to which they called on Job to turn. Job's stand for his right behavior according to the will of God was not arrogance. His stand was based on knowing truth, and thus refusing the social intimidation that was presented by the friends. The friends' theology had been formed by the culture in which they live. Job's had been patterned after the will of God. The lesson was that those who come calling for repentance must know the law of God. They must be able to separate their traditions from the law of God. There is no reason why anyone should be intimidated to repent to a system of religious traditions.

Chapter 23

23:1-17 Job did not reply directly to Eliphaz. At this stage of development in the cycles of discussion, Job began to reflect on his physical condition and tried to discover the meaning for his misery. **Even today:** Some have suggested that the discussion with the friends took place over a period of several days or weeks. **Oh that I knew where I might find Him:** It is at this time that Job seems to discount the presence of his friends and carry on with a personal discussion with himself. Because God had not responded to his pleas, he complained that God was distant from his calamity. If he were able to speak directly to God concerning his situation, he wondered what God would do. He wondered if God would overwhelm him with His power. **He hides**

Himself: Job's suffering is a testimony of how God works with His saints. They suffer in an environment where it seems that they are alone. But He is working behind the scenes for their case (Rm 8:28). Suffering, therefore, draws faith out of God's people. And faith must grow to the point of being able to count it with all joy when one is suffering (Js 1:2-4). **He knows:** Job concluded that whether or not he could find God, God knew where he was. And thus faith is the assurance of those who believe (Hb 11:1). Knowing that God knows our calamity reassures us that He is working all things for our case. **Who can turn Him:** Because God was not responding to his pleas, Job concluded that God was not concerned about the situation of the righteous. Nevertheless, he was confident that when God had tried him, He would come forth as gold (1 Pt 1:6-9). **Presence of the darkness:** God did not hide His dark mystery from Job. So Job was bewildered concerning its presence in his life. He could not understand the extent of his sufferings that God had unleashed upon him. And so it is with those who trust in God. They do not always understand why they suffer, but they must understand that God is there through their suffering (See comments Js 1:12).

Chapter 24

24:1-12 **See His days:** These are days in a legal court to determine when God should render judgment. In Job's opinion, God should make it known when He sits in judgment in court in order to hand down judgments. **God does not pay**

attention to folly: This statement in verse 12 is Job's conclusion to the work of evil doers in verses 2-11. To Job, God does not give attention to these works of the wicked. It seems to Job that God is sitting idly by while the wicked carry on with their evil deeds.

24:13-21 Job recognized that evil existed throughout the world. He felt that God had allowed the world to be overcome with evil men who oppressed the righteous. Job's friends had said that the wicked come to an early death because of the judgment of God. However, the existence of evil men who seem to have taken over the world proves that this argument was completely wrong. There are more wicked people in the world than righteous believers.

24:22-25 Job affirmed that some people seem to be singled out by God. He prolongs the life of those individuals for a period, but eventually they too are consumed by death. However, Job viewed these people only as exceptions to the rule. God allows life to go on and men to endure the natural calamity of suffering and death in a world that has gone wrong because of sin. At this time in the discussions Job had answered the argument of the friends who affirmed that God singles out the wicked in order to bring them to suffering and death. The fact was that the wicked continue in life. They prosper and often live a good life. Their prosperity in life did not prove that they were righteous. In the same argument, Job's suffering did not prove that he was unrighteous.

Chapter 25

25:1-6 Bildad: Bildad ignored in his brief reply the previous argument of Job. In this speech he introduced no new arguments, indicating that at this time in their exchange of speeches, Bildad realized the futility of the friends' arguments against Job. Thus in this speech he focused on magnifying God, while staying away from the reasoning of Job lest he again suffer a rebuke by Job. In this speech Bildad gave praise to the power of God who makes peace in His high places by bringing all things under control (See Hb 1:3). **His armies:** Reference here is to celestial bodies that are personified. These were the heavenly bodies over which God has control (Dt 4:19; 17:3). If the celestial bodies are not pure, then certainly man is not pure. In comparison to the celestial bodies, man is as a worm. He is nothing. Since man is nothing, then Bildad was assuming that Job would understand that man cannot exalt himself in reference to his own righteousness.

Chapter 26

26:1-11 Everything that Bildad had just said in chapter 25 had been said before. It was as if Bildad had been speaking to someone else, for what Job needed was power, strength and wisdom. Job already knew everything that Bildad said. He knew the majesty and power of God. What Job wanted to know was how God used His power in reference to His saints. **Whose spirit came from you:** Job asked who it was who inspired Bildad. **Under**

the waters: It was thought by some that Sheol, the place of the dead, was in the depths of the sea (See Is 14:9). Job's point is that the dead are not beyond the power of God. In death, therefore, one does not escape God. God's majesty and authority are extended throughout the universe. It is thus extended to where the dead reside. **North over the empty space:** As far as the naked human eye can see in the northern night one sees an empty space. The earth is not held in place by another material object. What Job described in these words was the cosmology of his day. His description of the world and universe far exceeded that which had previously been given by any of the friends. His point was to emphasize the fact that God was in control of all things, though at this time in his sufferings he was still wondering why God did not intervene in order to bring him relief.

26:12-14 The background of what Job described here may be based on Babylonian myths concerning creation. With His power God is able to subdue the sea though it may rage. He can clear away storm clouds and dismiss any supposed monsters of the sea. Because of His greatness, man is unable to understand fully the nature of God. God is incomprehensible. In comparison to His power, we can hear only a whisper from Him.

Chapter 27

27:1-6 In verses 1-6 Job continued his response to Bildad by reaffirming his innocence. **As God lives:** This is in the

form of an oath. Job called on God as a witness to his innocence. He affirmed that though God afflicted his soul, he would continue to maintain his integrity. He stated that he would maintain his position because he was confident that he had not committed any sin that warranted the suffering that he was enduring. The result of his belief in his innocence was his self-confidence.

27:7-23 Because of the nature of these verses, they seem to be the words of one of the friends. According to the Mesoretic Hebrew text, Zophar is not given a third discourse. Bildad's discourse in 25:1-6 was short, and thus we could conclude that he had no further arguments to sustain the position of the friends. In this text, Zophar seems to give a final brief rebuttal, but introduces no new arguments. If verses 7-23 are the words of Zophar, they are his last words of rebuttal. He introduces no new arguments, but simply expresses in a dogmatic manner former beliefs of the friends. **Be as the wicked:** The nature of this statement indicates the nature of the speeches of the friends. This particular statement is a desire that is expressed in the form of a curse that the enemies have the same condemnation as the wicked. **Will God hear his cry:** Would the hypocrite even call on God? If he did, then the answer would be that God would not hear. **Portion of a wicked man with God:** The calamities that are discussed in verses 13-23 are the judgments of God upon the wicked. The wicked man will have children, but they will be killed. Those who associate with the

wicked person will die, but have no one to mourn their death. Once dead, the possessions of the wicked will be consumed by others. The house of the wicked will dilapidate away as a spider's web. The wicked will be consumed with death with no one to deliver them. ***Clap their hands:*** When the wicked die, the living are happy. They are happy to be relieved from the anguish that the wicked brought on them while they were alive.

Chapter 28

If 27:7-23 was the last speech of Zophar, then the speech of this chapter is Job's final reply to Zophar. In these words, Job reaffirmed his position. This speech was not an argument against Zophar, for Zophar presented no new arguments. Bible students have found it difficult to place chapter 28 in the context of the discussions. The content seems to be an answer of Job to the claim of the friends that wisdom had been granted to them because of their assessment of Job's predicament. In the contents of chapters 29-31, Job ignored his friends, having answered their arguments. At this time he possibly moved on with a monologue to explain before God his calamity. In chapter 29 Job reflected on his former life when God blessed him with friends in his good life. In chapter 30 Job described the calamity that had come into his life as a result of God's working against him. In chapter 31 he defended his innocence, and thus was not deserving of the calamities that often befell the wicked.

28:1-11 These verses describe the

mining processes of man. By their resolve, men refine ore for silver and gold. They go into the darkness of mines in order to extract ore for refinement in order to acquire gold and silver. In the process they dig deep shafts, and with hanging ropes, go into the darkness of their shafts in search of the riches of the earth. Man is also able to conquer great mountains and cut out conduits for water. The point of the writer is to manifest the ingenuity of man in order to conquer the physical world. But in his efforts to succeed in conquering the material world, he fails to find wisdom. In fact, the more man would succeed in this world, the less wisdom he acquires. In this context wisdom is in reference to recognizing God and His will. Thus the more one is involved in the world in search of its treasures, the less he focuses on God.

28:12-14 *It is not found in the land of the living:* This is the pronouncement on all those who would involve themselves so much in the world that they forget the One who created all things. In search of things to satisfy their cravings, men forget their Creator. Wisdom from God is not found in the material world.

28:15-28 Wisdom is not something that is for sale. It cannot be purchased with gold, or measured in a scale to determine its value. One cannot buy it with precious stones. ***God understands its way:*** Only through God can one acquire true wisdom, for there is no true wisdom without the acknowledgment of the existence of God. ***He prepared it:*** Since God is the source of true wisdom, then man cannot find it without first finding

God. **The fear of the Lord:** This is the source of true wisdom. When one brings his life into conformity with the will of the Lord, he has established the foundation upon which one discovers the wisdom of God. Thus only those who love the word of God and study it, will be able to acquire the wisdom that comes from above. James exhorted, “*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God . . .*” (Jas 1:5; see comments Jas 1:5; 3:17).

Chapter 29

29:1-20 In this chapter Job reflects on his former life when he enjoyed prosperity. In his reflection on those days, he yearned for them. He saw them as days when God preserved him. They were days when he clearly saw the presence of God as one would see the light of a candle in darkness. Light is here used to refer to the presence of God, whereas darkness is used to refer to being separated from God (Compare Mt 18:12; 25:30; Jd 13). **Days of my youth:** Job reflected on his youth when he lived in a carefree world close to God. It was a world where the struggles of life were worked out by the older generation. **Children:** The presence of children brought joy. Children were the guarantee of the continuation of one’s heritage past his death. **Butter:** The presence of milk and cream were indications of wealth and prosperity. **Rock:** This was probably the location of olive groves from which olive oil was derived. **In the street:** In his former years Job was shown great respect. The aged men respected him, as well as princes and nobles. Even

the younger showed great respect by hiding themselves when he approached. **Delivered the poor:** Contrary to the former accusation of his friends, Job did care for the poor. He did care for orphans and widows. He corrected the wicked who would take advantage of the people. He delivered the oppressed out of the mouth of the oppressor. He was a true example of righteousness before his community. He lived a life that was to be envied. It was a life of a righteous man with all the blessings that came from being a good person. But when all this was taken from him, he became the scourge of the community. He became such because of the false theology of the community at the time, that a man’s calamity is the direct result of sin in his life. The dilemma of the community at the time, which was expressed by the three friends, was that they could not discover any fault in Job. This fact surely caused some frustration on the part of the community, but specifically for the three friends. We might conclude that the book of Job was written in order to dispel this false concept of how God relates to the righteous. It brings no pleasure to God to see His children suffering.

29:21-25 Job’s reflection on his honor that he once received from people brought sadness. He was one to whom people gave great attention for they respected what he had to say. His smile encouraged them. They believed what he had to say. They accepted him as a leader in the community. They followed his direction. From all this Job felt disgraced, for it had all been taken from him.

And yet, he did not utter one word of disbelief in God. He offered his complaints to God, but he never questioned the existence of God.

Chapter 30

30:1-15 *But now:* In this chapter Job lamented the fact that everything that he mentioned in the preceding chapter was gone. He once held a position that was envied by all, but now he was in a situation that was despised by all. ***With the dogs:*** Now the sons of the fathers whom Job formerly considered unfit to be shepherds of his sheep now mock him. The group of people who mock him were those who had no position in society. Job had suffered such a great calamity that those who were considered the lowest of society now mocked him. ***I am their song ... byword:*** Job was at one time given a position of high estate in society. But now he was considered lower than the outcast of society. He was continually abused verbally by those whom society had cast out. What seems to be the case in reference to the poor he helped in chapter 29, is that the same poor and outcast whom he had formerly helped had now turned against him with mockery. ***Spit in my face:*** Their abhorrence of him had progressed to the point of spitting in his face. It seems that the jealousy that many had of him in his former life of prosperity was now being unleashed on him. The fact that they showed no pity on the fall of such a great person indicates that they were people of little character. We would conclude that Job knew this when he helped them, and thus the

righteous character of Job was in the fact that he helped people whom he knew were not appreciative of his help. The manifestation of true righteousness is that the righteous give, not expecting anything in return. Their giving manifests their unprejudiced compassion for humanity. ***Terrors are turned on me:*** His oppressors not only ignored him, they afflicted him. They came upon him as waters from a burst dam. They were relentless in their mockery and assaults. If people would have ignored him, he would have better endured his calamity. But they seem to launch attacks against him in his presence. As interpreters of his situation, therefore, we view the confrontation with the three friends as the voice of the community against him. He answered all the theological arguments of the community. And because he had, they turned to mockery, the natural reaction of those who cannot answer the arguments of their opposition.

30:16-31 *My bones are pierced:* Job now explained the agony of his ailments. It seems that his physical appearance was altered by the ailments that he endured. This agony was so severe that he felt that God forsook him even though he prayed for relief. God had not forsaken him, but such is the natural reaction of those who are enduring great suffering. ***You have become cruel to me:*** Because he knew that God could relieve him of his suffering, but did not, he concluded that God was being cruel. The atheist uses a similar argument to deny the existence of God. The Christian affirms that God is all good and all powerful. But the athe-

ist argues that if God is all good, but does not relieve His people of suffering because He cannot, then He is not all powerful. If He is all powerful and can relieve suffering, but does not, then He is not all good. Therefore, the atheist concludes that the Christian's all-good and all-powerful God does not exist. The answer to this argument lies in the fact that God is a God of love. He created man from whom He seeks love. In order for the love of man to be sincere, he must live in an environment that allows a free-moral individual the opportunity to choose to love God with sincerity. In order for this to happen, the free-moral individual must have the ability to love and be in an environment that allows the individual to make choices to love. The freedom to make these choices has allowed man to make many evil choices, which choices have brought on mankind great suffering. The point is that God could not create an environment that did not present opportunities for choice, and at the same time hold man accountable for sinful decisions and actions. If man was in an environment that allowed choices of good and evil, but was not a true free moral individual who could make such choices, then God would be unjust to condemn anyone who made bad choices. Therefore, for God to stand just in judgment, a truly free moral person must be in an environment that allows both good and bad choices to be made.

Chapter 31

31:1-23 In this chapter Job reaffirmed his innocence. In listing various

sins in which he could have been involved, he upholds his integrity while pronouncing certain consequences on himself if his claims are not true. ***Imade a covenant with my eyes:*** This is a covenant that all should make, that they not look on a woman to lust after her (See comments Mt 5:29-32). ***What portion:*** If Job sinned, then he asked what blessing should he expect from God because of his sin. If one sins, he should expect only punishment and destruction in reaping that which he has sown. ***See my ways:*** God knows our behavior. If measured by objective judges, Job was confident of his innocence. If he was found guilty, then he was willing to give up everything, including his wife. She could be given to another husband to grind his grain. ***Heinous crime:*** Job had not created behavior after his own lusts. Adultery was considered by him to be a heinous crime against another person, and thus punishable by severe judgment. ***Fire that consumes:*** This is from the word *abaddon*, indicating the annihilation of the wicked. ***Manservant:*** He treated his servants with dignity because they too were created by God and were deserving of respect. ***When God rises up:*** If he had show disrespect to his servants, then when God called him to give account of his behavior he would have no recourse to escape the punishment that was due him. ***Poor ... widows ... fatherless:*** Job defended the fact that he had carried out his social responsibilities. As a prosperous person of society, he assumed his responsibility of caring for the poor, widows and orphans (Js 1:27). He

did not ignore the needs of others. He was not a hardened man, but a man of compassion. **Destruction from God:** Job knew that God was a God of love and mercy. However, he also recognized that God was a God of just judgment. He knew that God would eventually bring retribution on the wicked and that every man must give account of his deeds (See 2 Co 5:10).

31:24-28 God my hope: Job denied that he was a materialist. He did not covet material things of this world. If he had made gold his god, then he would have abused the rights of others in order to acquire it. Therefore, he did not lie in order to accumulate wealth for himself. **Sun ... moon:** He denied that God was the creation of his own mind as were idol gods. He denied that he worshiped the sun or moon. He was not an idolater. **Denied the God who is above:** If he had worshiped other gods, then he would have denied the one true and living God. In the society in which he lived, there were idolaters. He was not one of those who had created God after his own imagination. An idolater seeks to live according to his own standards, and then creates a god after his own imagination who would justify his carnal living. Job's wealth did not come to him because he was subservient to some idol god, for it was not wealth that was the goal of his life (Compare Jr 44:17-19; Ez 8:16).

31:29-34 Destruction of him who hated me: Job did not mistreat his enemies. He did not curse his enemies by calling evil to come on them (See Nm 22:5,6; Pv 24:17,18; 25:21,22). **Job's**

meat: Everyone of Job's house had ample supply of food. No one went hungry. No traveler had to stay in the street, for Job was hospitable to all. **Adam:** Adam hid himself, but he could not hide his sin from God. **Fear a great multitude:** Job was not intimidated into doing that which was evil. Being accepted by society was not greater than his fear of God. He did not allow the culture of society to determine his beliefs or behavior in reference to God.

31:35-40 Job cried out for people to listen to his plea of innocence. But no one would hear. God was silent, and his friends accused him. If his behavior were written down, then he would be found to be innocent. If his behavior were recorded, he could approach God with the confidence of a prince. **If my land cries against me:** Job even calls on the owners of land to be a witness to him. If he had taken their produce without paying for it, then he assumed responsibility for such actions. Job even treated his own land fairly. If he had not, then he asked that wild weeds take over his land and consume his crops. **Words ... ended:** The preceding were the final protests of Job. He had finished his arguments, both to his friends and to God.

Speeches Of Elihu

(32:1 – 37:24)

Outline: (1) Introduction of Elihu (32:1-5), (2) First speech of Elihu (32:6 – 33:33), (3) Second speech of Elihu (34:1-37), (4) Third speech of Elihu (35:1-16), (5) Fourth speech of Elihu (36:1 – 37:24)

Chapter 32

INTRODUCTION OF ELIHU

Many Bible students consider chapters 32–37 to be the work of another writer. This is believed because Elihu has not been mentioned in the book until now, and thus he was not originally a part of the group of friends that initially came to Job. Also, there is a difference in the style of poetry and language in these chapters. And finally, some portions of these chapters seem to be a response that Elihu made in reference to reading the original statements of Job. The sense is that he was not present with the three friends, but later read the material and made added arguments. However, regardless of the reason why some believe that the speech of Elihu was added later, we can conclude that because he was young, he was not considered with the original three friends. He simply came with them to Job and remained silent. At this time in the series of discourses, and because of his youth, he was motivated to speak out in his frustration.

32:1-5 *Righteous in his own eyes:*

This statement should be understood from the point of view of the three friends. They ceased to speak because they could not convince Job that he had somewhere sinned. In their frustration they ceased to continue with their arguments. ***Son of Barachel:*** Elihu was a relative to Job (See 1:1; Gn 22:21). ***Wrath was kindled:*** Elihu responded because he was angry with what he considered Job's self-righteousness and the failure of the other friends to answer his arguments.

32:6-14 *The Almighty gives them*

understanding: He had not spoken because of his youth, but then reasons that since God gives wisdom, he has the right to speak because God had given him special understanding. ***I waited for your words:*** Such is typical of youth who listen to the statements of the aged, and then make their replies that are based on what they have heard from them. Elihu did not think that Job was all that clever in his response to the friends' arguments. He felt that Job could be answered, and thus he stepped forward to answer him with supposedly new arguments.

32:15-22 It seems that Elihu was exploding in words because he had held his peace for so long. Therefore, he forewarned them that he would not hold back, but would speak forth his mind. He thus offered himself as a fourth party in the discourse. There was originally Job, the three friends and God. Now Elihu comes into the discussions as a self-appointed arbitrator.

Chapter 33

33:1-7 *Uprightness of my heart:*

Elihu was not being a bigot by accusing Job of being arrogant for claiming that he was self-righteous, while he considered himself righteous. According to the culture of the day, he was affirming that he was not speaking without reevaluating his own life. He speaks with the confidence that the Spirit of God created him. Since both he and Job were the products of God, then he had a right to speak just as Job. ***Your spokesman before God:*** It is in this belief that Elihu is arrogant. Job

had desired a conference with God, and here Elihu was presumptuous in saying that he was Job's advocate with God. He would speak for God. **My fear:** Elihu says that Job does not need to fear him as he would fear God. From what Elihu says in his statements concerning himself, we would conclude that he was arrogant in his youth.

33:8-22 I am clean: After hearing all that Job had said, Elihu focused on one specific argument of Job that he offered to the three friends which they could not answer. This was the affirmation of Job that he was innocent before God. But Elihu felt that Job's argument was flawed. Since God is greater than man, then it is wrong to strive against Him by assuming that His actions are wrong. From this premise Elihu argued that God can do what He wants to do in the life of any man. What He does may seem wrong to man, but it is right because it is the action of God. **God speaks once or twice:** One thing that caused frustration on the part of Job was that God would not answer his complaints. Elihu asserted that if man were wise, he would be perceptive to God's speaking. God, therefore, does not need to speak several times in order to communicate His will to man. So when God does speak, He opens the ears of those to whom He speaks. It is the responsibility of man, therefore, to be attentive to God's communication. He speaks in a way to save man from the pit (grave) and to preserve him from death.

33:23-33 A messenger: God also speaks through those who interpret the

will of God for man. **He is gracious:** If the sinner hears and obeys the word of God, then God will forgive and save him. Elihu was assuming, and rightfully so, that no one is predestined to condemnation. Since every sinner has the opportunity to hear and obey, then God does not predetermine that any should perish (2 Pt 3:9). **I have sinned:** Verses 27 & 28 is the testimony of the one who has repented as a result of God's graciousness. **I will teach you:** Job had gone from being a person to whom all in the community came to hear his words, to one to whom a young arrogant person asked him to be silent while he unloaded his frustration on him. The wisdom of Job was manifested in that he kept his silence while this young man exploded with words. Whether someone is right or wrong, it is sometimes best to keep one's silence while others rail.

Chapter 34

34:1-9 You wise men: This was probably a call by Elihu to all those in the community, not just the three friends who were present with Job. Elihu could not accept the fact that Job had claimed innocence. He felt that Job was a person who drank criticism like water, and thus criticism had little effect on Him. He accused Job of walking with wicked men, and thus failing to see the error of his own way.

34:10-20 Elihu asserted that God awarded every person in life with what he deserved. The wicked were thus awarded His judgments because of their sin. Calamity that came into the life of

the wicked, therefore, was just. God cannot be accused of wrong judgments, and thus those who assume to be righteous, and at the same time suffer calamity, are actually unrighteous. Since it is not possible for God to award wrong to the righteous, then the conclusion must be that everyone who claims to be righteous, but is suffering, is actually sinful. It is for this reason that Elihu argued that those in calamity cannot complain against God.

Will even he who hates right govern:

Since being just is a condition for governing, then it is not unthinkable that the unjust should rule. It is for this reason that Elihu felt that Job was presumptuous to think that God was unjust to inflict calamity upon him. God shows no partiality because He created both the rich and poor, and thus has the right to administer judgment as He so chooses. According to Elihu, God does not discriminate in His treatment of all men.

34:21-30 *He sees:* No one can hide from God. He is omnipresent, and thus all men are continually in His presence. He is omniscient in that He knows all the dealings of man. Since God will not lay on man more than what he deserves, it is not right for one to complain, as Job, that God has worked unjustly in his case. God's workings with men and nations is the same. It is thus impossible for God to work hypocritically with any individual. Elihu's conclusion to Job, therefore, was that if God does what is just toward all, then no man can contend with God concerning His judgments.

34:31-37 Elihu asserted that Job should repent of his complaining against

God because of his personal calamity. And since he was suffering, Job should repent of his sin. Instead of complaining, Elihu exhorted, Job should be asking God to teach him. Because Job had spoken in complaint, he was speaking without knowledge. If his behavior of complaint is not answered, then others will be led astray by the actions of Job. It is for this reason that Elihu considered Job's position as rebellious action against God.

Chapter 35

35:1-8 Elihu thought it was necessary to address the claim of Job that his righteousness was more than God's. He felt that this particular claim on the part of Job must have an answer for the sake of the three friends. Elihu agreed with Job concerning the majesty of God who is far above all that man is. Job had stated that God is so great that His actions are not affected by anything that men do on earth. When men sin on earth, it does not affect God in heaven. If man is righteous on earth, it does not profit God.

35:9-16 *Songs in the night:* One of the enduring characteristics that God implanted in the mind of man was the ability to sing in the midst of trouble. Regardless of the amount of calamity that befalls man, there is hope. Job had affirmed that his suffering was not heard by God. Elihu responded that there are many calamities that afflict men. But much of the crying out was heard from wicked oppressors. Elihu affirmed that much of the crying out by man is from pain, not suffering. Since God created

man superior to beasts who do not cry out when in pain, then certainly man should not cry out in pain. Elihu concluded that it was the pride of evil men that moved them to cry out. Or, he also asserted that it was simply man in his vanity that moved him to cry out. **Open his mouth in vain:** Elihu contended that Job had been wrong in thinking that God had not heard his cries to God. God is not indifferent to the pleas of man. He corrected Job in thinking that God did not respond to the pleas of man.

Chapter 36

36:1-4 *Speak on God's behalf:* It seems that Elihu was claiming inspiration from God. He asserted that his knowledge came from afar, and that he was speaking on behalf of God. This was a bold assertion, and one that manifested the arrogance of Elihu.

36:5-12 God is mighty in strength and wisdom according to Elihu. He thus deals justly in giving to man just punishments in life. He shows no favor to the wicked and remembers the poor. Elihu contends that God especially cares for the righteous. He exalts the righteous. If the righteous are disciplined, they are disciplined in order to return them to the way of righteousness. Suffering, therefore, is used by God to encourage repentance. If the disciplined righteous repent, then they are restored to their former prosperity. If they continue in their rebellion while disciplined, according to Elihu, they will suffer the consequences of the wicked. Elihu was accusing Job of becoming an-

gry at God's discipline, and thus, being rebellious against God by not repenting.

36:13-23 *Opens their ears in oppression:* This is Elihu's premise. God gets the attention of the rebellious by means of calamity. Therefore, one should not rebel against suffering that has been brought on the righteous by God. Job, he accuses, has not accepted the direct affliction by God in order to discipline him and cause repentance from his sin. As a result, he cannot receive the blessings of God, but is condemned to suffer the fate of the wicked. **Do not desire the night:** Job had requested death as relief from his calamity. God sometimes cuts off the wicked. But in the case of Job, according to Elihu, Job's request for death instead of repentance was an indication of his rebellion. Job should seek repentance, not death. Instead of receiving instruction from God through discipline, Elihu affirmed that Job had a rebellious spirit by seeking to teach God rather than learning submission from his suffering.

36:24-33 As has already been said by the friends and Job, Elihu exalted the majesty of God. He exalted God in this manner as a rebuke against Job, for he had accused Job of not submitting to the omnipotence of God to inflict whom He desires in order to encourage repentance. Job's supposed rebellion, therefore, was an attack against the majesty of God. **The cattle also:** The behavior of cattle in the field changes when a storm approaches, and thus their behavior is a warning concerning an approaching storm.

Chapter 37

37:1-13 Elihu continued his praise of the power of God in these first verses of chapter 37. His point was that Job not question the One who is able to control the physical universe. Elihu concluded that if God is so powerful, then certainly it is not the place of Job to question Him. Since the suffering of Job had come directly from God because of some sin that Job had committed, then Job must submit to the chastisement of God. The thunder announces the presence of God. Cattle feel warned by the sound of the storm. In dealing with ice and snow, Elihu emphasizes the helplessness of man. When God breathes, ice is formed and lakes are frozen over. The clouds obey the will of God and scatter throughout the heavens at His command. Man should do the same in response to the will of God.

37:14-24 *Consider the wondrous works of Him:* When considering the wondrous works of God, Elihu felt that Job should respond with repentance. **Do you know:** Since God works directly in the life of man, Elihu questioned why Job should think that he can question God concerning His work. His suffering, therefore, should be accepted as the will of God. Job, therefore, should not rebel, but repent. *Around God is awesome majesty:* Since God is so majestic, He cannot be comprehended. It is impossible, therefore, for man to find out how He works. And since men cannot fully comprehend the work of God, then they must not question His work among men, but submit to all that happens in the life

of every individual. Elihu's argument appeared to be correct, but it must be considered in the context of the erroneous theology of his day. Unjust suffering for sin as a direct work of God against man was questioned by Job. Elihu felt that Job was thus questioning the omniscience of God. Job was questioning why God would inflict him with such a great calamity for something of which he was not aware. Though the principle of men reaping what they sow is true, Job questioned why one should be directly inflicted by God for sin. Elihu thought that Job should not question God in this manner, but accept his suffering as punishment for sin. In the series of discourses, therefore, Elihu did not present any new arguments. He presented his arguments passionately, but did not add any new material to the thoughts that the friends had presented to Job. As the three friends, he exalted the majesty of God, and thus concluded that man had no right to complain against God's desire to correct man by direct punishment. His speeches, therefore, offer only an interlude in the discourses to bring the reader to the answer of God out of the whirlwind.

God Converses With Job

(38:1 – 42:6)

Outline: (1) God's first answer for Job (38:1 – 40:5), (2) God's second answer for Job (40:6 – 42:6)

Chapter 38

GOD'S FIRST ANSWER FOR JOB

Throughout the discourses of the

book, Job asked for a response from God concerning his specific case. Throughout the time of suffering, Job was not without fault. He had questioned the work of God in his life to the point of inferring that God was unjust in afflicting him. The extent of his sufferings, Job complained, was not justified for any sin of which he was ignorant. And in view of the special occasion by which Job was tried by Satan as a result of an agreement between God and Satan, we can understand why Job would complain to God. It is for this reason that Job sought an audience with God. This request was answered in the following chapters, but not in the way that Job requested. God does not enter into a debate with Job, but answers him by revealing His majesty. It was an answer that manifested the relationship between God and man.

38:1-3 *Yahweh* (the Lord) answered Job out of a great tempest (See Ps 18:8-16; Ez 1:4,28). This was Israel's word to refer to God. Its use here would confirm that the book was written during the history of Israel, though Job and his calamity happened before the forming of national Israel at Mt. Sinai. ***Darkens counsel:*** Job's complaints had obscured his understanding of the work of God among men, specifically in reference to his assumption that God was unjust. ***Gird up now your loins:*** God was going to take Job on a revelation adventure that he did not expect. ***Demand of you:*** Job did not expect this type of response from God, for he was looking for a debate (Compare 40:3-5). Job wanted specific answers for his questions of complaint.

But God did not answer his questions, lest Job and ourselves imply that God enters into debate with man. Men entered into debate with the idolatrous gods that they have created after their own imaginations. But with the one true and living God, there is no debate. By faith we must accept what He does, assuming that He knows what He is doing.

38:4-11 *Where were you:* God's response was overwhelming. It was a comparison between the infinite power of God with the finite ineptness of man. The response of God was given in such a challenging manner that there could be no comparisons made between God and man. ***Declare:*** God began with the creation of all things. If Job considered man able to debate with God, then God calls on him to tell Him how He created the worlds. Even if Job were present during the creation process, he could not comprehend how creation took place. ***Line on it:*** Creation was compared to a builder stretching a plumb line over a building in order to establish the perfection of what was built. ***Morning stars sang ... sons of God:*** The personification of stars expresses that even that which was created, including the angels, rejoiced over the creation. ***Shut up the sea:*** The earth was originally created with no separation between the waters and dry land. The Spirit of God hovered over the waters (Gn 1:1,2). After the initial creation of all things, God then separated the waters from the dry land. ***The cloud its garment:*** The earth was first covered with a canopy of cloud in order to create a greenhouse effect of warmth throughout

the surface of the world. During the flood of Noah's day this canopy of water was condensed and brought to the earth (See comments Gn 1).

38:12-18 *The dawn to know its place:* The order that is evident with the sun, moon, stars and earth is exact, and thus manifests the uniformity of nature that God created among heavenly bodies. *Springs of the sea:* In Job's day people had no idea of the existence of ocean springs and currents. To this day, men have not been able to venture to the deepest part of the sea. *Gates of death:* Though through revelation we are given a glimpse of life after death, no living man knows the nature of the existence of those who have died. *Breadth of the earth:* Job had no idea that the earth was round. If the earth were flat, he had never been to the limits or edge of the earth.

38:19-38 *Light dwells:* Job had no idea of the source of light from space, nor the limits of the darkness of space. His knowledge of these things was limited to his own personal experience, which experience was inadequate when considering the universe. *Treasures of the snow:* Job had no idea of the nitrogen that snow brings to plant life. *Reserved for ... battle:* God uses His natural forces of snow and hail to fight against men (See Ja 10:11). Man cannot control these forces, but God can use them according to his will. Concerning the processes by which nature functions orderly, God asked Job to answer concerning the existence of natural laws. God created the world, and then created natural laws to govern that which was created. He is

not only the creator of the material world, but also the creator of the world of natural laws. *Pleiades:* This is a constellation of seven stars. *Orion:* Man was not the origin of the Pleiades or the Orion system of stars, and thus has no control over them. The existence of the heavenly bodies manifests the ineptness of man.

38:39-41 God created the innate behavior of animals in order that they provide food for themselves. No man can answer why certain animals behave in a particular manner in providing food for both themselves and their offspring. Job is asked to conclude that only God instilled this behavior in animals.

Chapter 39

39:1-30 The examples of animal life that are given in this chapter illustrate the work of God in creation. All organic life did not evolve into the behavior and beauty that is portrayed in this chapter. From the very beginning that started with their creation, God instilled within all animal life behavior that would be necessary for life to exist on the face of the earth. All animals were created to be able to exist in the wild, and thus without the caring hand of man. But in order for wild animals to continue their existence, they had to be instilled with behavioral characteristics that would allow them to continue their existence as the animal community. A circle of life was established by God, therefore, that would result in the preservation of life. *Ostrich ... unmindful that the foot may crush them:* God illustrates the marvels of His cre-

ation by the seemingly foolish actions of the ostrich who would leave her eggs unprotected on the ground. But even though seemingly foolish by man, the ostrich has survived throughout history. Therefore, before man would consider something in nature as wrong behavior, man should think again, for that which seemingly behaves foolishly has survived for thousands of years. **The horse:** Man is not as strong as the horse, for the horse's strength is manifested in his courage in the midst of the battle. He does not turn from the battle because of fear. At the sound of the trumpet call for battle, he rushes with speed into the defenses of the enemy. **Toward the south:** Who can understand bird migration? God challenges Job to determine why birds migrate to the south and why the eagle makes her nest in the high rocks.

Chapter 40

40:1,2 God's challenge to those of His creation is that the created, including man, cannot enter into a debate with the Creator. The fact that God is the creator answers the argument that man cannot fully comprehend the nature of God. And since man cannot fully comprehend the Creator, man cannot understand all the ways of the Creator.

40:3-5 *I am vile:* Job was certainly impressed with God's creation. But he was more impressed with the Creator who stood behind His work and made it possible to continue. He was so impressed that he stood in silence before God. And thus is revealed the means by which God sought to answer Job. God

gave no specific answers for Job's questions. He only asked Job to trust Him in His work among men because He was working behind the scenes of His creation.

40:6-24 *Will you also annul My judgment:* Job had been presumptuous in assuming that he could carry on with a debate with God. God's focus on the wonders of creation put Job in his place as a man. In the revelation that follows, God again put Job in his place for charging Him with unrighteousness in His control of the world. God rebuked Job for his criticisms. He then asked Job to sit and take His place in ruling the world. **Judgment:** Though the word "judgment" refers to many things, in this context it probably refers to how God determines how to control His creation. Since this is what Job questioned, we would assume that God was addressing Job's complaints. In this context, therefore, God challenged Job. Job had complained to God concerning His administration of the world, in which challenge Job was assuming that he could do better. Job's questioning was based on his extreme suffering as a righteous person. Therefore, God asked Job to put himself in the position of God and assume the administration of the physical world. If he could administer the affairs of the creation, then he would have a right to make judgments concerning the suffering of man. **Behemoth:** This word is a transliteration of the Hebrew word that is used in this verse. There has been much dispute over the nature and description of the animal to which reference is here

made. The same is true of the word Leviathan that is later used to refer to some animal (41:1). Some have assumed that these were actual animals. Others have been more metaphorical in interpreting the words. However, if the words are metaphorically used, then the metaphor came from actual animals. The beasts are here metaphorically used to picture the power of God over the physical world. Behemoth was created at the same time as man. Contrary to the weak physique of man, the strength of the Behemoth was immense. His tail was like a cedar tree and his muscles like stones, with bones like bars of iron. He was so large that the Jordan during flood season did not slow him down. Bible students have made their comments on this animal while assuming that dinosaurs did not in ancient times coexist with man. Since no animal exists today that would fit the description of this animal, we would assume that one of the dinosaurs that existed either previous to or at the time of Job, would fit the description of both Behemoth and Leviathan. Whatever the case, Job was familiar with the animal.

Chapter 41

41:1-5 *Leviathan*: This is a transliteration of a Hebrew word that is used in the text. Since it has been proved from archaeological discoveries that men in ancient times coexisted with dinosaurs, we would assume that the description of this animal fits one of the dinosaurs that is now extinct, but was known by Job. In this chapter this animal was used to

metaphorically describe the force of God that is far greater than that of man. By using a living creature that was known by Job, God's point was that man is insignificant in comparison to the great beasts that God created. Job had assumed that he was eligible to contend with God. But as a man, Job could not in strength even compete with the large animals of creation. ***Draw ... with a hook:*** God somewhat chided Job with the greatness of the Leviathan. He could never be tamed as a pet by men and led about by a rope. If man could never tame the Leviathan, then certainly man cannot control the creation.

41:6-11 The Leviathan was some type of sea monster. He was so big that he could never be captured and used by man for food. The point is that no man can stand against the Leviathan. The symbolism is that no man can stand before and against God. If any man would dare to bridle the strength of God, he would be overcome.

41:12-34 The description of this animal was not complete. It is thus difficult to identify him from either living animals or from the fossil records. How he is described, however, indicates that no weapon of man of the time of his existence could subdue him. And thus the point is clear for God using this animal as an illustration of His power that is beyond the understanding of man. No matter how powerful a man was, he could not capture or control either the Behemoth or Leviathan. Job was presumptuous, therefore, to even consider that he as a man could be in a position to debate

with God concerning issues that affected him.

Chapter 42

42:1-6 *You can do everything:* By this time in the narrative, Job had learned his lesson. He knew that he had become arrogant and challenging in his attempts to question God. His suffering had driven him to complain, and in his complaining he was driven to feelings that he had by this time realized were arrogant in reference to his faith in God. God's answer to him convinced him of the omnipotence of God. God is omniscient, and thus knows all things. Even though he did not understand all the implications of his suffering, Job was convinced by God's response that He had all things under control. If we blame God for suffering in our lives, then we do not understand the purpose for which the world was created. The world is only a temporary dwelling for God's children. It is an environment wherein sin has been introduced, and thus we must not expect that the world would be free of suffering. Only those who see this world as the final existence of man feel that they have a right complain. But when one discovers the eternal life that God provides for those who believe, then he understands that this world was created only for the purpose of bringing the righteous into eternity. Job did not have the knowledge of salvation in Jesus. We do, and thus, Christians have little justification for any complaining against God who is working all things together for His purpose (See Rm 8:28). *I have heard of You:*

Job now understood that his knowledge of God was greatly limited. At the time these events took place in the life of Job, there was little revelation concerning God. All knowledge of God came from the creation (Rm 1:20), and His revelation of Himself through the fathers of families (Hb 1:1,2). But now that we have the privilege of a greater revelation from God through His word, then we find comfort in knowing that God has all things under control. We are also encouraged by men as Job who remained faithful to God, though he did not have all the revelation that we have concerning the eternal purpose of God. If we fall because of suffering and calamity in our lives, therefore, we have little excuse before God. We thank God for the great histories of men of faith that are provided in His word. *My eye sees You:* The knowledge of God among the people of Job's day was limited. Even Job had a limited knowledge of God before God's revelation to Him through his suffering. The Bible interpreter must always keep in mind that the book of Job must not be interpreted through our knowledge of God that is revealed through the entire revelation of the Bible which we have the privilege of possessing. Those who first read the narrative of the book of Job possibly had only the book of Job and God's revelation through the fathers of the families. The reason why God allowed Job to suffer was to add further revelation for man to give a better understanding of his situation in this world in reference to the work of God. We know of no other occasion when God al-

lowed Satan to try specific individuals as he did Job. God's purpose for allowing Job to suffer was for our benefit. If God allowed such suffering to come upon Job in this manner, then the limited suffering that we endure in life is not significant enough that we should complain against God (See comments Rm 8:18). ***I abhor myself:*** God chastised Job for thinking too much of himself. But at this time God's answer had humbled Job to repentance. When Job realized his insignificance in comparison to the greatness of God, his faith in the power of God increased (Is 6:5). Every man must be reminded that he is as nothing compared to the greatness of God. However, when one becomes a child of God, he must remember that God knows everyone one of His children.

Epilogue (42:7-17)

Outline: (1) Job intercedes for friends (42:7,8), (2) Restoration of health and wealth (42:9-17)

JOB INTERCEDES FOR FRIENDS

42:7,8 After the drama of Job's suffering, and with his new understanding of God, Job responded in a positive manner by recognizing his humble nature in comparison to God. The friends of Job, on the other hand, had behaved themselves without mercy toward Job. They had sinned. Eliphaz, possibly the older of the friends, was commanded to ask Job to pray for their forgiveness. The prayer would be beneficial for Job in his personal forgiveness of the friends. The fact

that Eliphaz had to request Job to pray for him and the friends would motivate humility on the part of the friends and their understanding that God was pleased with Job. What is manifested in the integrity of Job was his forgiveness of his friends. In the depths of his calamity he was accused and verbally abused by his friends. Nevertheless, when his ordeal was over, he forgave them. Forgiveness was for himself, for without it his lack of forgiveness would turn to bitterness. He remembered to forgive because God forgave him.

RESTORATION OF HEALTH & WEALTH

42:9-17 *When he prayed:* Evidently, the condition for returning the fortunes of Job was based on Job's forgiveness of his friends. His forgiveness was manifested when he prayed for them. As a result of his forgiveness of his friends, Job's wealth was doubled (See 1:3). He again had children (Se 1:2). His daughters were the most beautiful in the land. Evidently, Job became so prosperous after his suffering that he gave the daughters an inheritance as he did their brothers. **140 years:** We do not know how old Job was at the time of his suffering. We would assume that he was an older person because of the position that he held among the people. If we add the 140 years to his age at the time of suffering, we would estimated that he was possibly close to 200 years old when he died. At least he died in the fourth generation of the sons and daughters who were born to him after his suffering.