

Bible Study # 84
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Mr. John Ogwyn

The Writings Series—Job

We are getting into the book of Job this evening. Job is a very interesting book. There are an awful lot of things that are in there, a lot of insight that is given.

Before we get into the details of the book, we might look briefly at the setting of the book of Job. There isn't a specific date that is assigned to Job. Clearly, Job was written during the patriarchal period. We would date it after the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and prior to the time of Moses. How do we get a date like that? Let me show you a couple of ways that we do that. The clearest way is the identity of Job's friends.

Job 2:11, we find Job's friends mentioned, "Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite...."

Eliphaz the Temanite is fairly easily identified. If you go back to Genesis 36:10, it gives you the names of Esau's sons, and one of his sons was Eliphaz. We find that the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz. Teman was the grandson of Esau and the son of Eliphaz. So this would tie in here.

Bildad the Shuhite—by the way, that does not mean that he was the shortest man in the Bible, as is the joke. The Shuhites were descendants of Shuah who was a son of Abraham by the way of Keturah. Keturah was the wife that Abraham married after Sarah's death. In Genesis 25:1, it talks about Abraham marrying Keturah.

Genesis 25:2, the sons of Abraham by Keturah were mentioned, "...Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah."

You've heard that Job was the greatest man in the land of Uz (Job 1:1). Abraham had two nephews. They were the sons of his brother, Nahor. Two of his nephews were Huz (Uz) and Buz.

Genesis 22:20-21, "...Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: Huz [Uz] his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram." So who was Uz? He was the brother of Buz. If you ever have twins, here are a couple of good names. They would be sort of original. There are not a whole lot of Uz's and Buz's running around.

The point is that while we can't identify right down to the exact one, it's pretty clear whom we are talking about. When we look at Job and his friends, we are talking about the extended family of Abraham. We're talking about either descendants through Abraham's grandson, Esau, or we are looking at descendants through Abraham's second wife, Keturah, or some nephews of Abraham and their families.

We are looking at the extended family of Abraham who dwelt in that general area of the old land of Edom and down in what would be the border area between modern Israel-Jordan-Saudi Arabia. If you look at a map and look where those areas begin to converge, that is the general area where these events took place—the old area of Edomia. We can pretty well deduce these things directly from the book. There are some Jewish translations that also confirm this.

The Septuagint translation was a Greek translation of the Old Testament made a couple of hundred years prior to Christ. As an overall translation, it's not very accurate or reliable; some of it is a little better than others. But there are two things that it does. One, it gives us a record of some traditions. It gives us some traditional understandings or interpretations that were available prior to the time of Christ in the Jewish community because some parts of the Septuagint are almost a parallel rather than direct translation. It gives you a way that they understood it or a way that some segments of the Jewish community understood it.

The other thing is, in some cases, there are scribal additions and things like that added to it. The book of Job actually has a couple of extra verses added in the original inspired text. They give you the idea of what, at least a section of the Jewish community a couple of hundred years prior to Christ, was believed about it. Those two additional verses make reference to the fact of Job being connected with the family of Esau.

Moses, according to Jewish tradition, is responsible for the book of Job, in the sense that it became a part of the Hebrew canon. Where did Moses come across the book? The events that transpired, undoubtedly, took place during the time of Israel's captivity in Egypt or perhaps during the early part of the period Israel was in Egypt.

How did Moses come to have it and how did it come to be a part of the Bible? Well, I think the logical explanation would be that he received a copy of the book from his father-in-law. You remember Jethro (Reuel), his father-in-law, was the priest of Midian. The Midianites were

descendants of Abraham through Keturah, so they were of the same general people as the Israelites. They also preserved the knowledge, at least for a time, of the true God. The title “Reuel” literally means “the friend of God.” The “el” ending, of course, is the name that is used to refer to God in the Hebrew language. It would certainly indicate that he continued the worship that was practiced in the family of Abraham.

We find a little mention of Jethro in the book of Exodus. There aren’t any indications whatsoever that he was an idolater or, in any way, not in harmony with what God was doing through Moses.

The individuals involved in the book of Job would probably have been a part of that extended family of Abraham. Job was, undoubtedly, dead by the time Moses was there in the desert. The book that he wrote of his experiences in this account was something that was known and preserved in that portion of the family of Abraham. I think both the logic and what we can deduce directly from Scripture, together with the tradition that the Jews have preserved, would lead us to see or to understand that explanation of it.

There was a direct succession to the birthright. God worked only peripherally through some of the other families descended from Abraham. It shows us that even though some were not in the direct line of promise, in the sense of what God was doing directly through the lineal descendants of Abraham, nevertheless, there were individuals in the family who availed themselves of the knowledge of God and sought God. God was very much involved with them in that context.

Job 1:1, “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright and one who feared God and shunned evil.” Job was in the land of Uz. Now, we have already seen who Uz was. He was the brother of Buz. Job was in this area that bordered the Sinai portion of the old area of Edomia, the land of Edom.

Verses 2-3, “And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East.”

We’re told that he was a man of great wealth and influence, a man of note in this area. He was the most noted and remarkable man in this entire area. He was a man who feared God. He stood in absolute reverence and awe of God. He was a

person who hated evil and sought to avoid it. He had a sizable family of seven sons and three daughters. He was wealthy and possessed quite a number of sheep, camels, oxen and donkeys. He was the greatest of all the men of the East. The term “people [or the sons] of the East” refers to the area from east of Jerusalem over toward the Tigris-Euphrates Valley. Job was one of the wealthiest and most noted men in this whole area.

Verse 6, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.”

We find that Satan came before God. We are given little bits of insight into certain things including a little bit of insight into the workings of God in heaven. There was a time when the angels were to appear before God, and Satan came among them.

The angels are referred to as the “sons of God.” The term “sons of God” is used in several contexts: (1) it is used to refer to angels, (2) in Genesis 4:26 it is a title that the descendants of Cain applied to themselves, (3) it is a title that is applied in a spiritual sense to Christians and (4) it is a term that is applied in a physical sense to Adam in the genealogy given in Luke.

Luke 3:38, “...Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.” –In the sense, the only parent Adam had was God. There are various uses of the term, and we have to discern the use of it from the context. This is one of the contexts, and it uses the term to refer to angels in the sense that angels, by creation, are sons of God—though not in the spiritual sense that Christians are, either now or at the time when we are changed into spirit in the resurrection.

Job 1:6, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.” Satan came among them.

Verse 7, “And the Lord said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.’”

God, at this point, called his attention to something. Note that God is the one who called the devil’s attention to Job. Satan didn’t bring up the topic of Job; God did.

Verse 8, “Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?’” God said, ‘Have you noticed what a remarkable individual he is? There is no one like him.’ Satan was quick to have a comeback.

Verse 9, “So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing?’” Satan said, ‘Does he fear you for nothing?’

Verse 10, ‘Well, I guess he does. You pay him well enough. Yeah, sure he fears you. You pay him well enough. You’ve made a hedge about him, about his house and everything that he has. Of course it’s in his best interest.’

Satan operated under the theory that the only reason a person does something is because of what they stand to gain out of it. The fact that you could do something on the basis of love and loyalty or that you can have a commitment on the basis of love and loyalty never entered into the mind of Satan. The only reason he could see that you would be loyal and give allegiance to someone or something was because you stood to gain something out of it.

Satan said, ‘Well, yeah, you protect him. Of course he fears You. You have him on the payroll. You have everything hedged about; nothing happens to him. Of course he does. It is in his economic self-interest to fear You. He has all the motives in the world to do it. That’s why he does it.’

The devil’s attitude is that the only reason people do something is because of what they are going to get out of it. The idea that you would do something out of a sense of loyalty, allegiance and love—no, he couldn’t relate to those motives. It had to be a selfish motive. It had to be a motive of self-interest—not the fact that your interests could rise above yourself and you could do something not because of what you were getting out of it. This is one aspect that we often have not focused on in the book of Job.

There were lessons that Job had to learn, but there are also lessons for us to learn in the book of Job. That was something for the devil to learn. There was a point that God was proving to the devil. The devil was convinced that nobody, no being, would ever have complete loyalty and allegiance to God based on love.

Verse 11, “But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!”

God told him, ‘You think the only reason Job does what he does is because I protect him because he’s blessed and all his property is protected. I don’t believe that, Satan. I don’t think that’s why Job serves me. You think it is? I’ll tell you what; I will remove the hedge. You’re right; I have protected Job. I’ve watched over him. But that’s not why Job is serving Me, and I will prove it to you. I’ll just remove the hedge and you do what you will to him.’

Verse 12, “So the Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.’ Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.” ‘I will not restrain your power except that you can’t touch him.’

We are told that Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord. We get the impression that when the devil has something bad to do, he doesn’t waste time doing it.

You read the story and Job is out here.

Verses 14-15, “and a messenger came to Job and said, ‘The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, when the Sabeans raided them and took them away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’”

Verse 16, “While he was still speaking....” You get the time flow here? We are not talking about something that drags out over weeks, but we are talking about a matter of about 15 minutes time. He gets the news from several different messengers that everything he has is gone, including his family.

And in each case you find, “While he was still speaking,” another one showed up. You’d have to say that the devil did not waste time. When he had something bad to do, he was so happy to do it that he just didn’t lose a moment.

Verse 16, “While he was still speaking....”

Verse 17, “While he was still speaking....”

Verse 18, “While he was still speaking....”

Verses 20-22, when this was finished, “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’ In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.” The KJV margin renders it, “nor attributed folly to God.” He did not blame God foolishly or charge God foolishly. His loyalty or allegiance to God didn’t waver.

Job 2:1, “Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.”

We are not told how often the angels come to present themselves before God. Some commentators have speculated that this may have been once a year. In this case, this situation of Job having lost his property and everything may have dragged on for a year before the events of chapter 2 happened. Maybe it wasn’t that long. I don’t know; there isn’t any particular evidence.

To my knowledge, this is the only area of Scripture that clearly shows that there are designated times when all the angels are summoned to appear before God. Evidently, there is a regular basis on which all the angels come before God and Satan is compelled to appear. One of the things we understand here is that the devil's power is limited. He can only do as God allows. God places limits and Satan cannot go beyond those limits.

God, again, called his attention to Job.

Verse 3, "Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.'" —"There wasn't any reason for it. But you wanted to do it, so I allowed you to do it. It's been done and have you noticed? Go ahead and admit it Satan—you were wrong. You said that if I took away what he had, he would curse Me to My face. That's not right; it didn't happen, did it?"

Now the devil, never being one to admit an error, didn't say, 'You're right and I was wrong.' No, that's not what he said.

Verse 4, he said, "So Satan answered the Lord and said, 'Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.'" —"No, I'll tell you what; you didn't let me touch him."

Verse 5, "But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" There was no admission that maybe he had miscalculated Job. No, he was convinced. He felt that the only reason someone does something is because of his own self-interest or because of what he is getting out of it.

Verse 6, "So the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.'" —"You can do anything you want except kill him."

Verse 7, "Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head." You get the idea? Again, when Satan has a chance to do something bad to somebody, it isn't a halfway measure. He didn't cause a few of Job's oxen or donkeys to run off or get killed; he didn't cause one of his children to die. When he had a chance to do it, he did it all the way. And when he was given permission to smite Job, he went quickly. Job didn't get just a boil; he was covered with boils from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. So, again, the devil likes to deal out trouble.

Well, Job was pretty miserable with something like that. He wound up sitting in an ash heap. How do you get relief when you are covered with boils all over? Where are you going to sit down and be comfortable?

Verse 8, Job wound up sitting in an ash heap and scraping himself with a piece of broken pottery. It was a pretty miserable sort of existence.

Verse 9, "Then his wife said to him..." You know, it's interesting. Satan killed everybody else connected with Job, but he didn't do anything to Mrs. Job. Verse 9 may explain the reason.

Verse 9, continuing, the only contribution we read from her is, "... 'Do you still hold to your integrity? Curse God and die!'" "Why don't you just go ahead, curse God and get it over with?" Hopefully, she learned her lesson. We aren't given any indication that when Job had his family renewed at the end of the book, he was given a new wife. So perhaps, she learned some lessons out of all this, too. She was not contributing to Job's benefit at this point. She was frustrated and said to just get it over with.

Verse 10, "But he said to her, 'You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?' In all this Job did not sin with his lips." "Job did not sin with his lips" is worded a little differently than Job 1:22.

Job 1:22, he says, "In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong."

Job 2:10, Job may have thought some things. He may have had to wrestle with some thoughts, but he didn't say anything he shouldn't have said. He did not do what the devil said he would do.

The devil, by this point, has already been proven wrong twice. It reiterates at the end of each of these incidents that Job did not sin with his lips. He did not charge God with wrong, which was exactly what the devil said he would do. So God makes it plain that the devil was wrong—that he totally misread Job.

Now, Job had three friends that heard of this, and it mentions them. I've mentioned already that we can identify them with the extended family of Abraham. Bildad is probably a descendant of Abraham through Keturah; Eliphaz the Temanite is probably the great grandson of Esau. Some of the generations of Esau's family were fairly close. It is even perhaps the son of Esau who's mentioned there. We don't know where this term "Temanite" comes from, although it became a reference to an area of the country and to some of the descendants of Eliphaz, the son of Esau.

Verses 11-13, these three friends came down. They made an appointment to meet together to comfort Job. They were just overwhelmed when they saw Job and the condition he was in. Job was so filled with his grief and discouragement that he just didn't feel like saying anything. They sat there with him. They sat there a week.

Job 3:1, "After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth." He didn't curse God. What he said was he wished he had never been born. If this was where he was going to end up, he wished that the day he was born would perish from the calendar—that the day didn't exist.

Of course, the book of Job is one of the poetic books, along with Psalms and Proverbs. It is written in poetry. It is not just straight prose. Poetry is written differently than prose. In poetry, there is a repetition for the sake of emphasis. The use of language is different. You can't read the book of Job, just strictly, as you would an account in I Samuel because it is written in an expressive and a poetic fashion. Job describes his frustration and discouragement and wishes he were dead. If that was the state in which he had to come, he was wishing he had never been born.

Verses 25-26, "For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes." One little bit of insight we gain from verse 25 is that Job evidently had been worried; he had been concerned somewhat about the loss of physical things. This was something that had been on his mind; he evidently had spent some time wondering about that and was a little bit worried about something happening. And then, sure enough, it did.

Now the friends begin to speak. Each of these friends has two discourses. Eliphaz the Temanite is the first one who begins to speak. We are told in the book of Jeremiah that the Temanites were noted for their wisdom (Jeremiah 49:7). They were noted in this way. He came to some conclusions. Notice what he said.

Job 4:7, "Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off?"

Verse 8, "Even as I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same." Eliphaz certainly had an "encouraging" way of getting his point across. He said, 'One thing I've seen in life is people always get what they have coming. One thing you can mark down is people get what they have coming to them. They plow iniquity and sow wickedness; they are going to

reap the same.' Eliphaz goes through and makes his point.

There are some interesting things that Eliphaz says.

Job 5:17, "Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty." This part is true because it's quoted later in the book of Proverbs and re-quoted in the book of Hebrews. So there are some points that Eliphaz made that were valid, but the fundamental point that Eliphaz made was, 'Look, you have all these problems and there has to be a reason for it.'

I'll tell you what; I've seen situations where sometimes I wondered if some people in the Church had ever read the book of Job. I've seen people have problems, be in long-term sickness or go through some other really serious trial. Some of their friends showed up and almost quoted Eliphaz verbatim. They would say, 'You know you must have really done something for God to punish you that way.' I just sort of marveled when I heard that. They must have never read the book of Job because God wasn't really happy with Eliphaz and with Eliphaz's conclusion.

God wasn't really happy with that. In fact, when you read the end of the book, you read that God was definitely less than happy with what Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar had to say. They took it upon themselves to speak for God. God hadn't appointed them to do the speaking. They were putting words in God's mouth; that's a serious business.

James 3:1, "...let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment." It's just been incredible to me through the years, how quickly some people in the Church were to come up with some great pronouncement, 'Well, I think you should just leave him. You should just divorce. You should do so-and-so.' Or, 'You must have really done something terrible for that to happen to you.' Off the top of their heads, they came up with some great pronouncement.

It evidently never dawned on them that they were putting themselves in the position of being a teacher of the will of God. Unless God had directly revealed His will to them, that's something they really should be very careful of, realizing that God is going to scrutinize what they say. If we start advising someone, we had better be sure that what we are saying is really what God would say and not something that pops off the top of our heads because that is serious business. That's what Eliphaz was doing.

Well, Job was upset by what Eliphaz had to say because Job knew that there wasn't any great specific sin. Eliphaz sort of took the idea that Job was at the center of the cause. 'You look good on the outside, but there has to be something you're doing that we don't know about. You wouldn't have all these problems if there wasn't something. God is trying to tell you something. Tell us what you have been doing. You've been running around on your wife, right? Been cheating people, right? Whatever it is, tell me.' This was his concept and this was a false concept.

Job is really depressed and frustrated. Here is a situation that has probably hung on for over a year—maybe not the illness part of it, but his total losses of everything of value to him including his family and now the loss of his health. We're looking at events that have dragged on for, probably, over a year since these things started happening. Job is discouraged, in pain and is miserable. He just doesn't understand why. Here, his friend who came to comfort him, ends up accusing him of having done some terrible thing. So Job really gets pretty defensive. He goes through some of that in Job 6.

Job 7:1, "Is there not a time of hard service for man on earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hired man?" In other words, a hired day laborer's days are long and hard. Normally, it was for farm work. You hired a day laborer during times of harvest and threshing—in times when there was a lot of hard work and long hours and you needed some extra hands. He sort of got paid the minimum wage of the day. He was just a day laborer, so his days were long and hard. When Job refers to "the days of a hired man," that is what he means. We have a limited time on earth and our days can, sometimes, also be long and hard.

Verse 2, "Like a servant who earnestly desires the shade, and like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages." In other words, the servant earnestly desires the shade. He is looking forward to seeing quitting time. He's anxious to see the time when the sun sets and it is time to quit working. The hired man is anxious to get what he was working for.

Verse 3, "So I have been allotted months of futility, and wearisome nights have been appointed to me." It just goes on and on and on. Job is depressed. He just wishes it were over.

Verse 17, "What is man, that You should magnify him, that You should set Your heart on him?"

Bildad begins to answer.

Job 8:6, "If you were pure and upright, surely now He would awake for you, and prosper your rightful habitation."

Verse 20, "Behold, God will not cast away the blameless, nor will He uphold the evildoers." Bildad sort of takes the same "tact" Eliphaz did. He said, 'If you were really as good as what you seem to think, God would be stepping in to take care of things. He's not going to cast away someone who's pleasing Him. He's not going to help evildoers and He's not going to cast away someone with whom he's pleased.' Again, a very distorted perspective.

Job's response—like in Job 6:24-25, where he says, "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forceful are right words! But what does your arguing prove?"—Job is saying, 'You are just going around and around and arguing. If I have a problem, show me what it is. Show me where I am wrong.' Now Eliphaz couldn't do that and neither could Bildad. They didn't see the problem, but they assumed that there had to be something.

Job continues to speak. He just doesn't know what to do. Again, he is frustrated.

Job 10:1-2, "My soul loathes my life; I will give free course to my complaint, I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say to God, "Do not condemn me; show me why You contend with me.""

Job wonders why God is doing this to him. Sometimes things happen and we know that it is a matter of cause and effect. Someone is "ripping" down the road, and a policeman comes up behind him with red lights flashing on his car. He doesn't need to ask why God is doing this to him. That's not a matter of God doing something to him. He did it to himself and, generally, he knows that. But there are times things happen that aren't that way. We come through some great trial or situations that just "come out of the blue." It can be financial reverses; it can be sickness. It can be death; it can be some very traumatic situation—and you don't know why it happened. Of course, our desire is to know why. Why? We don't always know why.

Zophar answered. Zophar had a really "encouraging" thought.

Job 11:6 (last part), "...Know therefore that God exacts from you less than your iniquity deserves." Zophar is really an "encouraging" sort. He says, 'You're getting off light. I don't know what you did, but it must have really been bad. God is not hitting you nearly as hard as what you probably deserve.'

Job 13:13-16, “Hold your peace with me, and let me speak, then let come on me what may! Why do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hands? Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. He also shall be my salvation, for a hypocrite could not come before Him.”

Job, in the midst of his grief, trouble, frustration and sorrow, still said, “though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.” He didn’t understand why. He couldn’t fathom what was going on. He wished he could talk to God face to face and see what this was all about. But he knew that God was right and he would trust Him, although He slay him.

It’s easy to go through, sometimes, and say Job didn’t seem in a really good attitude when he said this or that. Well, I tell you what—I think Job set a remarkable example in terms of endurance and faith. Job never did what the devil thought he would do. He never became bitter against God. He was depressed and in the depths of despair some of the times. There were times that he wished he had never been born. But he inevitably kept coming back to the message of faith.

Job 14:1, “Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.” Job said this.

Verse 2, “He comes forth like a flower and fades away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue.” That’s a poetic description, but it’s a very beautiful description of human life. Job understood this. What we have to understand is that this human life is not the ultimate.

The emphasis in recent decades (I think we could certainly trace back for 20 years or slightly over that and, increasingly, in the 70s) was sort of dubbed the “me” decade. That was the emphasis then, and it continued on. As we sort of look back at some of the periods, the 80s was the decade of “greed.” There has been this increasing emphasis of what’s called “self-fulfillment.” It’s based on the idea that everyone is entitled to be happy here and now, and we have a right to that.

Happiness is a blessing and it’s a benefit.

Job understood that, “Man who is born of woman is of a few days and full of trouble. [We are temporary, and there are a lot of problems.] He comes forth like a flower and fades away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue.”

Verses 3-9, “And do You open Your eyes on such a one, and bring me to judgment with Yourself? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one! Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with You; You have

appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass. Look away from him that he may rest, till like a hired man he finishes his day. For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease. Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant.”

You’ve seen that. You cut down a tree and little sprouts begin to come back up.

Verse 10, “But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he?” It doesn’t happen when a person dies. There’s a physical part of the continuing cycle of life. A tree dies and you can still have a little life left in the old root and a new sprout comes up. But that doesn’t happen with a human being. Man dies and he wastes away. He breathes his last and where is he?

Verse 12, “So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep.”

Verses 13-15, “Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands.”

Job understood that there was to be a resurrection. Job looked beyond this life.

I Corinthians 15:19, Paul says, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.” That’s what he says in the resurrection chapter. If your only hope for justice and happiness is here and now, you are in trouble because we live in an unjust world. Oh, there may be certain things—we can certainly have certain benefits and sometimes things work out well—but basically we live in an unjust world.

We live in a world that is the devil’s world. There are inequities that are going to be until the Kingdom of God is established and the will of God is carried out on earth with the same alacrity that the angels carry it out in heaven. God’s will isn’t carried out that way on the earth. God can accomplish His will by intervening. Human beings aren’t anxious to carry out God’s will as the angels are. We live in an unjust world. We live in a world that is filled with pain, sorrow, trouble and difficulty. That’s the world we live in, and we are surrounded by it.

Because of the blessings of Abraham, we live in the area of the world that has had the greatest benefits and blessings. But we tend to take that

for granted. We just do. Some of you can remember back. The things that we have, even on a physical level, there's no comparison. Some of you sitting here remember when you got indoor plumbing, electric lights and some of these things. We are not that far removed. That's not ancient history. Even those among us who don't consider ourselves at all wealthy, live with a level of comfort that some of the wealthiest people didn't have too many years ago.

You know, 100 years ago, I don't care how much money you had, if you lived in Baton Rouge in the summertime, you just sweated. You didn't have any air conditioning. I don't care if you owned the biggest plantation on the Mississippi River; you just sat there and were hot. You could fan yourself or get somebody else to fan you, but you couldn't turn on the air conditioning.

Now, that's a really simple little thing, and there are so many things. We live in an age where we have so much. We have so much more than the vast majority of human beings on the face of this earth. But as a nation we haven't appreciated it. We're not grateful for it, and as a nation we are in the process of losing it. Anybody who thinks God is not breaking the pride of our power and removing the blessings of the birthright from us hasn't read Leviticus and hasn't looked at the news lately because that's reality. I think we understand that.

Job had the message of faith and the message of the resurrection.

Job 19:25-27, “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”

Now, you'd have to say that Job evidenced faith. In the midst of his despair, despondency and grief, he kept coming back to the fact that he knew there's something beyond this. And his hope and confidence rested in his Redeemer. He knew that his Redeemer lived, and in the later days, His feet shall stand upon the earth.

Now, I would also point out to you that the clearest teaching of the resurrection in the Old Testament is in the book of Job and the book of Daniel. The Old Testament really doesn't talk very much about the resurrection and very, very little about the promise of eternal life. You could go through and you'd have to really do a little searching and extrapolating to try to find really clear proof scriptures. Yes, I understand the principle is there in certain things, but when you

start looking for a really clear proof scripture, you are going to find that you are going to be pretty well confined to the book of Job or the book of Daniel. There wouldn't be a whole lot elsewhere.

Job understood that the time of the resurrection was the time when he would stand.

The statement, “in my flesh shall I see God” is really not the literal translation. I will read it out of the Jewish translation. Job says, “As for me I know that my Redeemer lives and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth and when, after my skin this is destroyed, then without my flesh shall I see God.” In other words, he is not going to see God in the flesh. He is going to see God as a spirit-born Son of God in the resurrection. Job clearly understood some things about the resurrection. Some things that are here, we don't find clearly stated elsewhere.

Job expressed how everybody has turned against him.

Verses 16-20, “I call my servant, but he gives no answer; I beg him with my mouth. My breath is offensive to my wife, and I am repulsive to the children of my own body. Even young children despise me; I arise, and they speak against me. All my close friends abhor me, and those whom I love have turned against me. My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh, and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.”

Have you ever wondered where that expression came from? Have you heard about someone escaping by “the skin of his teeth”? The skin of your teeth is pretty thin. You don't have a whole lot of skin on your teeth. That's where that expression comes from. It comes out of the Bible. It's a poetic expression from the book of Job. Job describes that not only had he lost everything, he had lost everybody. “And those whom I love have turned against me.”

Verses 21-23, he says, “Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has struck me! Why do you persecute me as God does, and are not satisfied with my flesh? Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!” That wish got fulfilled. We are reading that.

Job was really feeling pretty miserable. He wanted a little pity and a little sympathy, but all he was getting was his friends “ganging up” on him. Job not only understood about the resurrection to eternal life, but Job 21:30 shows that he understood about the third resurrection to the lake of fire.

Job 21:30, ““For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom; they shall be brought out on the

day of wrath.”” Job understood some things about the resurrection.

As we continue on down, Eliphaz seeks to retort in Job 22.

Job 23:2, Job answers, “Even today my complaint is bitter...”

Verses 11-12, “My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.”

Job says, ‘It’s not because I have departed from the truth. It’s not because I have departed from God’s ways. That’s not why these things are happening to me.’

Job 25:4, well, Bildad answers briefly, “How then can man be righteous before God? Or how can he be pure who is born of a woman?”

Job answers again in Job 26. He describes a little bit about God—about God’s power and God’s creation.

Job 26:6, “Sheol is naked before Him, and Destruction has no covering.” Nothing is hidden from God.

Verse 7, “He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing.” This statement and others like it are among those that demonstrate the authority of the Bible and the scientific accuracy of the Bible. The Bible was a book way ahead of its time.

The Greeks, who were supposed to be the founders of so much of western civilization and noted for their insight and their scientific knowledge—a good 400 or 500 or maybe even 700 years after the time Job wrote these words—the Greeks’ poets Homer and Hesiod were writing that the earth was held up on the shoulders of Atlas. That was the greatest Greek scientific theory of the day, a good 600 or 700 years after Job had written these words, “...He hangs the earth on nothing.” That’s a pretty good description.

The Chinese figured out that it was on the back of a giant turtle. I don’t know what they thought the turtle was standing on. I’ve always wondered. The Greeks thought Atlas was holding the earth on his shoulders. Job, writing hundreds of years earlier said, “God hangs the earth on nothing.”

Isaiah, in Isaiah 40:22, talked about the “circle” or the “sphere” of the earth more than 2,000 years before Columbus proved to the Europeans that the earth was round rather than flat.

The point is that the Bible is a book way ahead of its time. The Bible doesn’t give us all scientific information, but when the Bible speaks

about matters of science, it gives us insight and information that was way, way ahead of any of the theories of any of the cultures of other people around. The Bible is the inspired word of God.

Job did not see his problem.

Job 27:6, “My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live.” He said he didn’t see where he had done anything wrong. Now, Job did have a certain problem that we are going to see a little later. Job did have some problems with self-righteousness. There were some things that he did not see.

But we sometimes focus on that to the exclusion of the fact that Job was a man who was devoted to God. His loyalty, his allegiance, his devotion to God was constant. Job loved God. He was devoted to God. He was prepared to trust God and to trust what God was doing, all the way to the grave. Job looked for fulfillment beyond this life. That didn’t mean that he enjoyed suffering in this life, but Job understood the real answer and the real solution. He understood this life—we’re here and we are gone.

This life can be very difficult, but Job looked on beyond. He had a loyalty, devotion and allegiance to God that the devil never comprehended. Job was not simply motivated by what he stood to get. Job loved God. He was devoted to God and desired to serve God. But Job did not really see himself properly in relationship to God—in terms of how great God was by comparison to Job.

One of the things, in terms of scientific information, that’s sort of interesting—he talks about God and what God does.

Job 28:24-25, “For He looks to the ends of the earth, and sees under the whole heavens, to establish a weight for the wind, and mete out the waters by measure.” The Amplified Bible renders this as, “He gave to the wind the weights [or pressure].” You know, air pressure was not even understood or discovered until the modern era. People didn’t think air had any weight. But, of course, we know that it does. It’s what we call air pressure. Job understood that. God gave him insight and God makes reference here that this was the case.

Verse 26, “When He made a law for the rain, and a path for the thunderbolt.” Job understood that these were connected.

You can go through chapter 29. We get a little bit of insight into some of the power and prestige that Job had. He talks about the contrast between all that he had in chapter 29 and all that he had lost in chapter 30.

In Job 31, he describes how good he had been. Job 31:1, “I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?” He said he just decided that he was not going to look and lust.

Verses 2-11, “For what is the allotment of God from above, and the inheritance of the Almighty from on high? Is it not destruction for the wicked, and disaster for the workers of iniquity? Does He not see my ways, and count all my steps? If I have walked with falsehood, or if my foot has hastened to deceit, let me be weighted in a just balance, that God may know my integrity. If my step has turned from the way, or my heart walked after my eyes, or if any spot adheres to my hands, then let me sow, and another eat; yes, let my harvest be rooted out. If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor’s door, then let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down over her. For that would be wickedness; yes, it would be iniquity worthy of judgment.”

He said this was a heinous crime; it was an iniquity. Job understood the law of God. He said he had not done anything.

Verse 33, “If I have covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom.” Job said, ‘I haven’t covered up my transgressions as Adam had.’

Verse 40, “...The words of Job are ended.” Finally, the words of Job are ended.

Job 32:1, “So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.” See! This was the problem. Job was righteous in his own eyes.

Verse 2, “Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram...” Now, you can go back and find out who Ram was. We already know who Uz was. He was the brother of Buz. So this was who Elihu was. Elihu hadn’t said anything. He evidently showed up later after the other fellows. He was a little younger than the rest of them and had just been sitting there listening.

Verse 2, continuing, he listened to all of this and, “...his wrath was aroused because he [Job] justified himself rather than God.”

Verse 3, “Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.” He was upset at the three friends because they hadn’t found any answer and, yet, had condemned Job. They didn’t know why, but they were sure that it was all Job’s fault. Elihu had a “bone to pick” with both of them. He told them, ‘You don’t know what you are talking about. And as for you, Job,

you’ve put a focus on how good you are and you really haven’t taken note of God. You don’t see yourself in proper relationship with God.’

Verse 8, he talks about the spirit in man.

Job 33:12-13, he goes through and says, “Look, in this you are not righteous. I will answer you, for God is greater than man. Why do you contend with Him? For He does not give an accounting of any of His words.” He said, ‘God doesn’t have to explain to us why He does what He does.’ God doesn’t always have to give us an explanation. There are “whys” we will never know until the resurrection. That’s just the way it is. That’s where a certain amount of trust and faith has to come in. Sometimes we understand; sometimes we don’t.

Job 34:12, he continues, “Surely God will never do wickedly, nor will the Almighty pervert justice.”

Job 35:1-6, Elihu said, “Moreover Elihu answered and said: ‘Do you think this is right? Do you say, “My righteousness is more than God’s?” For you say, “What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?” I will answer you, and your companions with you. Look to the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than you. If you sin, what do you accomplish against Him? Or, if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him?’”

He said to look up there. God is up in heaven. All the things you do, you’re not going to harm God by it. You can’t get up there and cause Him a problem.

Verses 7-8, “If you are righteous, what do you give Him? Or what does He receive from your hand? Your wickedness affects a man such as you, and your righteousness a son of man.” You’re not doing damage to God. You’re not helping God and you’re not hurting God. Elihu tells them God is not moved by the kind of motives that all of them are assigning to Him. God is neither hurt nor helped by what you are doing.

Job 36:3, he continues, “I will fetch my knowledge from afar; I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.”

Job 38:1-4, when Elihu finished, God said, “Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: ‘Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding.’”

Verses 6-7, “To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

God begins to talk to Job. He wanted Job to see the perspective of God’s greatness and man’s insignificance because the cure for self-righteousness is when we ultimately see ourselves in proper relationship with God. We see how great God is and our own comparative insignificance.

There’s an interesting poetic description given in Job 38. It’s written in a poetic fashion, but if you note what’s actually being said, the analogy being drawn is a very interesting one.

Verses 12-14, “Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? It takes on form like clay under a seal, and stands out like a garment.” It’s talking about the morning dawning, the day coming forth and how, as the day spreads across the earth, the wicked are shaken out.

John 3:19, John tells us, “...men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” Most wickedness is going on at night.

You read in the paper about Baton Rouge being the murder capital. When you read the time of day that most of these things happen, more of them happen late at night or in the wee hours of the morning than happen in broad daylight. That’s just part of human nature. People like to do their wickedness late at night.

He says, “Have you commanded the morning since your days began?” Where does the morning come from? Then He talks of how the wicked are shaken out of the earth as the daylight spreads across it.

Verse 14 describes the earth as “taking on form like clay under a seal” when the daylight comes. The analogy is that they had a cylinder seal—a carved stone or engraved metal seal. Generally, an engraved stone seal—a cylinder—is round. What happened is the seal was rolled across the clay and the seal spread from one end to the other as the seal rolled across. It is a poetic description of how the daylight came. The sun is like the seal and, in a sense, the earth is like the clay. It rolls around the seal and as it rolls around the seal, the inscription spreads from one end of the clay to the other. It comes gradually because we are on a round earth rotating around the sun. The daylight starts in one part and it spreads all the way around. You have to think about it a little bit to picture what’s being said. Again, this

is just a little insight in terms of an accurate description.

God talks about all that He had done and the greatness that He had accomplished. Job began to really see himself and to realize his self righteousness. All that he had done, by comparison to God and God’s power and God’s greatness, Job was a lot further down the line than Job had ever seen himself. Job had always felt there wasn’t quite as much difference between God’s righteousness and his own righteousness. Now he begins to see.

Job 42:1-6, “Then Job answered the Lord and said: ‘I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, “Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?” Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, “I will question you, and you shall answer Me.” I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.’” Job really came to see himself.

Job’s problem was not what the devil thought. The devil ascribed wrong motives to Job. The devil ascribed to Job selfish, self-centered motives. He said Job was just simply in it for what he could get, the same as everybody else. God said, ‘That is not why Job is here. Job doesn’t serve Me because of what he’s getting; Job serves Me because his loyalty, allegiance, devotion and love is centered on Me.’ The devil didn’t believe that. But that was right; Job was devoted to God.

But Job also had some lessons to learn. His problems weren’t what his friends thought. There wasn’t any great obvious sin. Job was not some “closet” sinner who was doing all sorts of wicked things that were being covered up. But Job did have a problem. God wanted Job to see himself and his own righteousness and to see that it was God’s righteousness that he needed. Job didn’t really see himself, but now he did see himself.

Verses 7-10, “And so it was, after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, ‘My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me

what is right, as My servant Job has.’ So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the Lord commanded them; for the Lord had accepted Job. And the Lord restored Job’s losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.”

Now, I think a lot of times we read over that and we don’t consider the significance. God dealt with Job, but these events didn’t happen just as quickly as we are reading it. God dealt with Job, and Job really came to a deep personal realization of God and the realization of God’s power and his own powerlessness. But he didn’t instantly get all his camels and sheep back. He continued in the state that he was. Spiritually, he was much better. Physically, he was still in a mess.

A period of time went by. The friends had evidently left. God revealed to them that they had better go down where Job was. They thought Job had had it rough, but when He was through with them, they were going to be in worse shape than Job, so they had better get down there and get right with God.

I suspect they got in a pretty big hurry to get down there. They had to gather up the bullocks and sheep and come down to where Job was. They performed these sacrifices. God said for them to do this, and when Job prayed for them, He would remove their iniquity. Job prayed for his friends. Job had to be willing to forgive. He couldn’t nurse a grudge against these guys, ‘When I was down, you guys kicked me. You just added to my misery.’ Job could not hold resentment.

It’s interesting. When Job prayed for his friends, that’s when God lifted the cloud. I think there is a very important lesson of how important it is that we forgive. Resentment and bitterness are things to which we can’t hold on. Job could not afford to hold a grudge against his friends, and he didn’t. That was the final test.

We read it and it’s easy. But I tell you what. If you’re in a situation where you’re down and going through a real trial that drags on a year or two, and the people you thought were your best friends—all they are doing is adding to your misery—then one of the things you’d probably not instantly feel like doing is praying for God to be merciful to them and really meaning it. It’s easy; we can read through this in an hour and a half Bible study, but Job lived through it for a period of time. I don’t know exactly how long the book of Job covers, perhaps 18 months or so—but I tell you, it’s a long time.

At this point everything turned around for him. God blessed him.

Verse 12, “Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning....”

God doubled the things that He had given him (v. 10) and blessed him with more children (v. 13).

Verses 16-17, “After this Job lived one hundred forty years...So Job died, old and full of days.” He lived a long time after that period. God doubled everything, in terms of Job. This is speculation, but Job may have been 70 at the time this happened. We know God added 140 more years. In terms of wealth, God doubled and gave him twice as much as he had before. He replaced the children. It’s just a matter of speculation, but I think it’s very possible that he may have given him twice as many years ahead as he had behind. Regardless of that comparison, he certainly was old and full of days because he lived for another 140 years. If he had been just one year old, he’d still have been old and full of days. So he was well on up in years.

Again, we would date it to the patriarchal period—perhaps contemporary with the end of Jacob’s life and the sons of Jacob. There is a lot of insight that we are given here in the book of Job. The book of Job has a lot of insight into God’s nature and character. It has insights with God’s dealings with man and our relationship with God. There are lessons that we should learn, even in our dealings with one another. There are lessons in our relationship with God. There is recognition of the importance of loyalty and devotion that Job expressed. There are a lot of expressions of faith.

Job 13:15, ““Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him....””

Job 19:25, ““For I know that my Redeemer lives....””

Job 14:14, ““If a man dies shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait till my change comes.””

There are many very important expressions here in the book of Job. It is a very powerful and very important book. We have just had a chance to skim through it this evening. Hopefully, this can be a steppingstone to further deeper personal study.

Next Bible study we will start into the five Festival Scrolls—the first of which is the Song of Solomon.