

AN AMERICAN PASTOR SERIES

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I REPENT  
*in*  
DUST & ASHES

An Exposition of Job Workbook

*Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.*

*Job 37:24*

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AmericanPastor.com



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# Preface

## Matthew 18:16

***But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.***

**I**T is a biblical standard that for something to be established as the truth, multiple witnesses are needed to ensure its validity. One witness should not be considered enough, especially so in areas where divine judgment is to be the result. *One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established* (Deut. 19:15).

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Deut. 19:15) To secure against injury to life or property through inadequate or false attestation, it is enacted that more than one witness must appear before anything can be established; and that, should a witness be found on trial to have testified falsely against his neighbor, he was to be punished by having done to him what he thought to have done to his neighbor (cf. Deuteronomy 17:6; Numbers 35:30).<sup>1</sup> Verse 15.—The rule in Deuteronomy 17:6, regarding accusations of idolatry, is here

extended to accusations of every kind before a court of justice; a single witness was not to be admitted as sufficient to convict a man of any offence, either civil or criminal.

The reason this principle is important in the preaching of God's Word is that for those who do not believe, divine judgment is promised to come upon them.<sup>2</sup> *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness* (II Thess. 2:12). Because God has decreed that those who believe not must come under judgment, then it is reasonable that sinners should be given the greatest evidence that what has been presented to them has its source in God—that the Word spoken is not simply the word of men<sup>3</sup> but is indeed the true Word of God, which shall also be fully upheld by Him. So that if the Gospel is rejected,<sup>4</sup> then it can neither be claimed nor said that God did not give ample testimony to its truthfulness.

<sup>1</sup> *Deut. 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*

*Num. 35:30 Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.*

<sup>2</sup> *Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

*John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

*Rev. 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

<sup>3</sup> *Gal. 1:11–12 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.*

<sup>12</sup>*For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

*I Thess. 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*

*II Tim. 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

*II Pet. 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

<sup>4</sup> *Matt. 13:58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

*Luke 22:67 Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:*

*John 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*

In Jesus' ministry we see the use of multiple witnesses. Examples include Jesus sending His disciples out two by two so that each disciple would strengthen the testimony of the other regarding Jesus being God's only begotten Son and Israel's Messiah.<sup>5</sup> Three disciples—Peter, James, and John—were present at the transfiguration of Christ, enabling them to testify of the true glory of the Son of God.<sup>6</sup> Christ also proclaimed that it was not just His own witness that gave credence to His being the Son of God but also the Father's witness to Christ's true identity.<sup>7</sup> *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased* (Matt. 3:17). The signs, miracles, and wonders done by Jesus also confirmed His being sent by God. *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know* (Acts 2:22). The same truth can be said concerning the Holy Spirit bearing testimony to the divine and supernatural ministry of Christ. *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father,*

*even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me* (John 15:26). The apostle Paul also, in writing to the Thessalonians, opens his epistles with Silvanus and Timothy,<sup>8</sup> two other gift ministries<sup>9</sup> confirming the revelation he was about to reveal.<sup>10</sup> It is always hoped that if one witness is not sufficient to bring people to belief, then another might. *And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign* (Exod. 4:8). Revelation given twice is established. Like Pharaoh's dream that was doubled by the Lord, revelation repeated will be certainly fulfilled. *And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass* (Gen. 41:32).

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Gen. 41:32) *doubled ... twice*] This is a literal rendering. The repetition of the dream shewed emphatically that the thing was "established," i.e. made fixed and sure, by the decree of God. Cf. Psalm 93:2, "Thy throne is established"; Hosea 6:3, "sure as the morning.

<sup>5</sup> Luke 10:1 *After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.*

<sup>6</sup> Luke 9:28–36 *And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.* <sup>29</sup>*And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.* <sup>30</sup>*And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias.* <sup>31</sup>*Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.* <sup>32</sup>*But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.* <sup>33</sup>*And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.* <sup>34</sup>*While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.* <sup>35</sup>*And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.* <sup>36</sup>*And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.*

<sup>7</sup> John 8:18 *I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.*  
Acts 17:31 *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

<sup>8</sup> I John 5:9 *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.*

<sup>9</sup> I Thess. 1:1 *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

<sup>10</sup> II Thess. 1:1 *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

<sup>9</sup> Eph. 4:11 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

<sup>10</sup> I Thess. 4:15–17 *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.* <sup>16</sup>*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:* <sup>17</sup>*Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

will shortly bring it to pass] Lit. "hasteneth to do it." Hence there is urgent need to take measures in good time to meet the crisis which is bound to come.

By these examples and others it is hoped that in the preaching of God's Word, when multiple witnesses join together testifying to the validity of a truth, there can be a great degree of spiritual confidence that what is agreed upon is the truth. Hence, when truly spiritual men speak independently (sometimes even hundreds of years apart) yet draw the same conclusions, then it is clearly evident that the same Spirit of Christ<sup>11</sup> is leading them. This is essential when

entering such topics as Christ's return<sup>12</sup> and what it takes to be truly saved by God.<sup>13</sup> Thankfully, all that genuinely has its source in God and is sent by God is sure to manifest profit to those who believe it.<sup>14</sup> Thus, when God sends His Word, whether by letter,<sup>15</sup> Spirit,<sup>16</sup> or prophet,<sup>17</sup> because God is its true Author, it shall prosper where it is sent.<sup>18</sup> This teaches us that if it is truly the Word of God that is both heard and believed, then God will do all that He has proclaimed He would.<sup>19</sup> *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it (Isa. 55:11).*

<sup>11</sup> *I Pet. 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*

<sup>12</sup> *I Thess. 4:16-17 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: <sup>17</sup>Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

<sup>13</sup> *II Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

<sup>14</sup> *Rev. 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

<sup>15</sup> *John 3:3-6 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

<sup>16</sup> *Rom. 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. <sup>10</sup>For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

<sup>17</sup> *I Cor. 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

<sup>18</sup> *Gal. 6:11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.*

<sup>19</sup> *Heb. 13:22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.*

<sup>20</sup> *I John 2:14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*

<sup>21</sup> *II Sam. 23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*

<sup>22</sup> *Matt. 10:20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

<sup>23</sup> *I Cor. 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ezek. 38:17 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them? <sup>18</sup>Luke 1:70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:*

<sup>25</sup> *Acts 3:18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ps. 33:9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*

<sup>27</sup> *Hos. 6:5 Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.*

<sup>28</sup> *Eph. 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

<sup>29</sup> *Josh. 23:14 And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.*

<sup>30</sup> *I Kgs. 8:56 Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.*

Lastly, readers will find a significant number of Scripture references added to the text. This is to illustrate that not only do the author and other esteemed men of God agree on the interpretation and revelation presented, but also the scripture itself is the third and final witness confirming the truth revealed. If men still do not believe when even three witnesses confirm the truth, then there is little more that can be done. At this point, though rejectors of Christ may remain religious, the truth is that they

will just seek out false teachers who will enable them to continue living in their own sinful and harmful lusts. Hence, if a man will not hear Christ's words or allow himself to be first convicted and then governed by God's Spirit, then all that is left for him to follow is an evil and corrupt world, which is purposed to satisfy the sinful nature within himself. *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears* (II Tim. 4:3).

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*Rom. 4:21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

# *Commentators*

## *Notes on the Old and New Testaments*

by Albert Barnes

Albert Barnes, known as the most prolific American commentator of his generation, was born December 1, 1798, in Rome, New York. Although he wanted to study law, he instead entered the Presbyterian ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary. There he was a dedicated student, rising early in the morning and studying by lamplight at night, almost driving himself blind. Upon graduation, his first pastorate was at Morristown, New Jersey. Barnes later accepted a call to be the minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, where he served for forty years and was granted the title of pastor emeritus. He later became president of the Pennsylvania Bible Society, a position he held until he died in 1870. While in Philadelphia, Barnes wrote multiple commentaries, making him a household name. His works include *Notes Explanatory and Practical on the Gospels* (1832), designed for Sunday school teachers and Bible classes, and *Notes on the New Testament* (11 vols.). He published commentaries on Job (2 vols.), Isaiah (2 vols.), Daniel, and Psalms (1870, 3 vols.). Over a million of *Notes on the New Testament* were sold by 1870, and they are still being printed today. Charles Spurgeon said concerning this commentary, “No minister can afford to be without it.”<sup>i</sup>

## *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*

by Matthew Poole

Matthew Poole, a renowned theologian and Bible scholar, was born in York, England, in 1624. Little is known of his early life until his admittance to Emmanuel College in Cambridge on July 2, 1645. Poole served as minister of St. Michael-le-Querne in London for a time but later worked almost solely on his biblical studies. After earning his MA at Cambridge and Oxford University, Poole wrote the *Synopsis Criticorum Biblicum*, which condenses the views of 150 biblical critics into five volumes. Another of his works, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*, was greatly valued by both Charles Spurgeon and Jonathan Edwards. Spurgeon said of Poole, “He is a very prudent and judicious commentator, less a commentator, and more an expositor.” Spurgeon found Poole’s synopsis “a marvelous collection of all the wisdom and folly of the critics.” Poole’s other published works include *The Nullity of the Romish Faith*, *A Blow at the Root*, and *Dialogues between a Popish Priest and an English Protestant*. Before Poole finished his commentary, he died in October 1679. His friends completed the work and published it in 1685. Today, he is still considered one of the eminent Puritans of Great Britain’s biblical scholarship.<sup>ii</sup>

***Commentary of the Old and New Testaments***

by Joseph Benson

Prominent theologian and minister Joseph Benson was born January 26, 1749, in Melmerby, England. At an early age, Benson became proficient in Greek and Latin. At sixteen, he joined John Wesley, a leader of the Methodist Church. Later, in 1766 at Kingswood School, Benson was appointed as a master of classics, in which he dedicated himself to studying theology and philosophy under the guidance of Wesley. Three years later he was made headmaster of Trevecca College in Wales, which he later left due to conflicting beliefs as the school became Calvinistic. Though Benson had many shifts in ministry and titles, such as editor of the Methodist Magazine, his spiritual legacy lies in his multi-volume *Commentary on the New and Old Testaments*. Joseph Benson passed onto glory February 16, 1821, at the age of seventy-two.<sup>iii</sup>

***Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary***

by Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown

The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary* was created by three theologians and scholars from across the United Kingdom: Rev. Robert Jamieson, D.D. (January 3, 1802–October 26, 1880), Rev. Andrew Robert Fausset A.M. (October 13, 1821–February 8, 1910), and Rev. David Brown, D.D. (August 17, 1803–July 3, 1897). Robert Jamieson in his early years had intended to study medicine but instead devoted himself to the work of Christ's ministry. His coauthor of the commentary, Andrew Fausset, was a man of many accolades who produced several works on biblical prophecy. Their third partner, Rev. David Brown, served as moderator of the general assembly. In 1871 these three men published a six-volume work known as *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*. This expository continues holding a high reputation due to its "scholarly rigor" and "devotional value." English preacher Charles Spurgeon commended this commentary in saying, "It is to some extent a compilation and condensation of other men's thoughts, but it is sufficiently original to claim a place in every minister's library: indeed it contains so great a variety of information that if a man had no other exposition he would find himself at no great loss if he possessed this and used it diligently."<sup>iv</sup>

***Bible Commentary for English Readers***

by Charles Ellicott

Charles John Ellicott, best known for his Bible commentary and as an outstanding conservative scholar in the nineteenth century, was born at Whitwell, near Stamford, England, April 25, 1819. Ellicott graduated from St. John's College in Cambridge, where he became a fellow. Later he was ordained a priest in the Church of England. After marrying Constantia Becher he became the rector of a small country parish where he used his spare time to study and write his well-regarded commentaries on the New Testament epistles. He was quite accomplished as a divinity professor at Cambridge, dean of Exeter, and bishop of Gloucester but is best remembered for his commentaries on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon. Ellicott's other popular works include *Modern Unbelief*, *The Being of God*, and *The History and Obligation of the Sabbath*. In 1860, he was involved in a serious train accident while traveling between Cambridge and London. Though he

had fractures to both legs and other injuries, it has been said that his first concern was for the academic manuscripts he was transporting, and the second was to minister to the dying passengers around him, with little thought of himself. His injuries left him with a limp; however, the railway company gratefully awarded him a silver pass for free travel between the two cities. About ten years after the accident, Ellicott was commissioned to help revise the King James Bible, a project that is regarded as one of the great works of his life. Ellicott was known for his sympathy toward others and for living a simple life. He was remembered as good-humored, kindly, pleasant, entertaining in conversation, and “a warm, outgoing person with a genuine interest in people.” Ellicott resigned in March 1905 due to failing health and retired with his wife to Birchington-on-Sea, England, where he died October 15, 1905.<sup>v</sup>

### *The Pulpit Commentary*

by Joseph Exell and Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones

*The Pulpit Commentary*, created by Rev. Joseph Exell (1849–1909) and Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones (January 14, 1836–November 2, 1917) is one of the largest homiletical works produced to this day with a total of twenty-three volumes compiled over thirty years. Though not much is known about the faith of the creators of this commentary, the heart and labor of love of these men can be seen in their compilation and selection of one hundred contributors filling 95,000 entries covering the Scriptures. This commentary, being one of the largest of its kind, dissects the Bible into easy-to-read yet detailed outlines, providing key points for those who study God’s Word. In addition to outlines, it provides details on biblical customs and geographical information, as well as translations for key Greek and Hebrew words. This catch-all commentary is a great resource for students and ministers alike.<sup>vi</sup>

### *Exposition of the Entire Bible*

by John Gill

Baptist pastor and scholar John Gill was born November 23, 1697, in Kettering, England, and passed onto glory at the age of seventy-four October 14, 1771. At age twelve, Gill devoted himself to the Lord and made a public profession at eighteen. He went on to become a pastor at age twenty-one. Gill held a Doctor of Divinity degree and is known as the first major writing Baptist theologian. Gill’s *Exposition of the New Testament* includes three volumes written between 1746 and 1748. Soon after, Gill started his *Exposition of the Old Testament*, which included six volumes written between 1748 and 1763. Preacher Charles Spurgeon esteems Dr. Gill highly for his methodical formatted sermons and ability to retain being sound and sober in his commenting—rarely being given to his imagination, thus distinguishing Gill and his excellent work on the Holy Scriptures.<sup>vii</sup>

### *Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*

by Matthew Henry

Matthew Henry was born into a godly home October 18, 1662, in Wales. By the age of three, Henry had developed a passion for books, mainly the Bible. After deciding to pursue theology, he sometimes rose as early as four o’clock in the morning to study. He often studied his day away, except for the allotted morning breakfast and worship.

Though Henry explained he was always best when alone and that no company was as good as that of the book of God, he was rich in friends. Later, when Henry became a minister in Chester he wrote, “I think I can say with confidence that I do not design to take up the ministry as a trade to live by, or to enrich myself, out of the greediness of filthy lucre. No! I hope I aim at nothing but *souls*; and if I gain those, though I should lose all my worldly comforts by it, I shall reckon myself to have made a good bargain.” Henry was not settled in making a name for himself, but rather he would “prefer the good word of my Master before the good word of my fellow-servants.” He was invited frequently to speak and lecture. After a visit to Chester in 1713, his health declined, and then a year later he was thrown off his horse but continued to preach at Nantwich, where he succumbed to apoplexy the morning after, on June 22, 1714. His legacy is still remembered in his six-volume *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* and *Complete Commentary*, for which thirteen other ministers completed Romans through Revelation after his death. Then in 1811 the entire commentary was re-edited. Henry is also remembered for *A Communicant’s Companion* and *Directions for Daily Communion with God*.<sup>viii</sup>

### *Word Studies in the New Testament*

by Marvin Richardson Vincent

Born in Poughkeepsie, New York, Marvin Richardson Vincent (1834-1922) was a third-generation clergyman as well as a seminary professor, an author, and a prolific biblical scholar. He is most well-known for his New Testament study, a four-volume word-by-word Greek translation. First published in 1887, this work falls between a biblical commentary and a Greek lexicon. It is a detailed illumination of the grammar and etymology of the ancient Greek, as well as cultural and historical contexts and idioms. Without Vincent’s work, modern readers using English translations often miss the intent, beauty, and impact of the original writers’ inspired words. Through these volumes Vincent’s deep reverence for the holy Scriptures, his gift for languages, and his affection for the rich culture of their authorship are all evident. Besides his Word Study, Vincent and his colleague Charlton Lewis together translated another famous commentary, *Bengel’s Gnomon of the New Testament*, from German into English (1864). Vincent’s other writings included sermons, training books for ministers and theologians, textual criticisms, and numerous translations of other works from Greek and Latin into English.<sup>ix</sup>

### *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*

edited by John James Stewart Perowne and Frederic William Farrar

*The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* is a complete commentary set published by Cambridge University Press. More than thirty theologians and biblical scholars contributed to the 57 volumes in this collection between the late 1800s and early 1900s. Each volume in the set includes an introduction, history, original language studies, outlines, maps, literary analysis, and verse-by-verse commentary to provide a thorough understanding of the scriptures. Some volumes also include appendices for deeper study on topics and issues raised in the text. General editor and Anglican Bishop John Perowne exercised “limited editorial control over the writers ... being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series.”<sup>x</sup>

*Geneva Study Bible*

edited by William Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, and Thomas Sampson

The original 1560 *Geneva Bible*, which predates the *King James Bible* in 1611, was groundbreaking and has influenced every version of the Bible since its inception. It was the first direct translation from original Hebrew and Greek to English and included features like the first verse separation through numbering, cross-references, maps, and illustrations to help readers understand the text. Its Reformed Protestant perspective, design, study notes, and commentary were created and curated by a small committee of the most notable biblical scholars of their day, hoping their work would help common people in their reading and studying of the scriptures. The *Geneva Bible* significantly impacted literature and history as it increased in popularity throughout the 16th and 17th centuries when English refugees left England. It challenged the Church of England and shaped religious beliefs during the English Civil War. Though it has seen several revisions, this study Bible continues to be a beloved resource for Christians.<sup>xi</sup>

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## Session 1

# *An Introduction to Job and His Trial*

## *Job 1*

### Scriptures

<i>Job 1:1</i>	<i>Job 1:6</i>	<i>Job 1:12</i>
<i>Genesis 6:9</i>	<i>Job 1:7-8</i>	<i>Job 1:13-20</i>
<i>Genesis 17:1</i>	<i>I Corinthians 3:19</i>	<i>Job 1:21</i>
<i>Job 1:2-3</i>	<i>John 3:20</i>	<i>Mark 8:36</i>
<i>Job 1:4</i>	<i>Job 1:9-10</i>	<i>Ezekiel 18:27</i>
<i>Job 1:5</i>	<i>Job 1:11</i>	<i>Job 1:22</i>

A structure of the book, as detailed by Dr. E.W. Bullinger, gives us a quick overview of the book as a whole.

### The Book of JOB as a Whole.

- A | i. 1-5. Introduction. Historical.
- B | i. 6—ii. 10. Satan's assault. Job stripped of all.
- C | ii. 11-13. The Three Friends. Their arrival.
- D | iii. 1—xxxi. 40. Job and his friends.
- E | xxxii.—xxxvii. Elihu.
- D | xxxviii. 1.—xlii. 6. Jehovah and Job.
- C | xlii. 7-9. The Three Friends. Their departure.
- B | xlii. 9, 10. Satan's defeat. Job blessed with double.
- A | xlii. 11-17. Conclusion. Historical.

***Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.***

Absent getting too technical regarding the historical context of Job, it is enough to know that his lineage descends from Nahor, a brother of Abraham.

*Benson Commentary, Job 1:1*

We have observed, that it is likely he was of the posterity of Uz, the son of Nahor, the brother of Abraham; but how far removed from him can only be conjectured from the age of his friends; the eldest of whom, Eliphaz the Temanite, could not be nearer than great-grand-son to Esau; for Esau begat Eliphaz, and the son of Eliphaz was Teman: so that supposing this Eliphaz to be the son of Teman, (and higher it will be impossible to place him,) he will then be five generations from Abraham; but as Eliphaz was very much older than Job, nay, older than his father, as appears from chap. Job 15:10; and, considering that Abraham was very old before he had a son by Sarah, and that Rebecca, grand-daughter to Nahor, by Bethuel, perhaps his youngest son, was of an age proper to be wife to Isaac; we shall, probably, not be wide of the mark, if we allow Job to be at least six, if not seven generations removed from Nahor. The age therefore in which he lived must have coincided with the latter years of the life of Jacob, with those of Joseph, and the descent into, and sojourning in Egypt: his afflictions must have happened during the sojourning, about ten years before the death of Joseph, and his life must have been prolonged to within fourteen years before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, that is, the year of the world 2499.

*And that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

Job was not perfect in that he had no flaws; rather, his inward heart was sincere in his reverence for God and his distaste for evil.

The Lord delivers and teaches those who fear Him and seek to live their lives as perfectly before Him as their weak flesh permits.

He does not work with any who do not inwardly desire to be both upright and blameless before Him.

For the true Christian, not even one sin will be deemed small and allowable. Though the righteous do sin, and far more than they would ever desire, no sin will be deemed by them as either permissible or justifiable.

Job in his pursuit of walking righteously before the Lord was like Noah.

***Genesis 6:9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.***

Abraham's pursuit of righteousness also was similar to Job's upright walk.

***Genesis 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.***

There is no evil greater than sin, and if men do not flee it and understand what an affront it is to God, then it will prove impossible for them to have any true and lasting relationship with Him.

The Lord is righteous, so that for any to be numbered among His people, they must pursue His own righteous integrity.

Although Job feared God and eschewed evil, he was not in any way spiritually mature, nor did he fully understand how God deals with man. If Job were so, then he would not have needed to undergo both Elihu's and God's correction, evidenced later in the book.

The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge, but surely it should never be considered the end of it. A fear of God puts men in a position of coming to know the Lord, but only He knows how far they have come on this journey.

God's Word also teaches us that with true faith, along with the fear of the Lord, Christians should seek to add other virtuous characteristics to their lives.

Although the Scriptures praise Job for his holy character, they in no way imply that he knew all he needed to know about God and His ways with man.

This applies to us as well: although we may have one good quality, this does not mean that we are not lacking in other areas in our life.

Thus, for any who deceive themselves to believe that they do not need some form of spiritual reformation, they are ignorant at best.

As long as we remain on this earth, we believers also remain unfinished products until such time that through the power given to the Son of God, we are transformed to be made like unto Him.

*Job 1:2–3 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.*

<sup>3</sup> *His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*

We first observed the man Job, and now we are instructed in what he possessed. He had a large family and retained a great amount of material abundance, yet even what Job physically possessed could not protect him from the spiritual trials he would soon face.

*Benson Commentary, Job 1:3*

The account of his piety and prosperity comes before the account of his afflictions, to show that neither of these will secure us from the common, no, nor from the uncommon calamities of human life.

As with all men, regardless of their earthly prosperity, they are still vulnerable to Satan's attacks.

This teaches us that human affluence, whether it be status in community, the number of friends we have, or the wealth we have accumulated, will do nothing to protect them against spiritual assaults, if it is God's divine will to allow them.

What is true of sinners, is also true of saints, that material abundance and earthly esteem, can do nothing to protect the life, if it is either God's will that men are chastened, or even destroyed.

Hence, regardless of whatever worldly abundance men possess they should never be misled into believing that these earthly possessions will protect them from spiritual assault.

For all true believers, who are in fact strangers and pilgrims on this earth, the world is always a dangerous place. Job is described as the greatest of all the men of the east, but even this could not protect him from the designed calamities that were to come.

*Job 1:4 And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.*

While Job's character is described as noble and worthy of respect, we learn that his children manifested a taste for worldly pleasure and entertainment. This is often the case with those raised with material abundance.

No doubt, Job's children never learned the greatest attribute of their father, which was his holy, sincere, and religious fear of God—a fear that led him to seek to avoid all paths that led to sin and a departure from God and His will. In regard to Job's children, sadly they desired none of their father's fear of the Lord, nor did they seek to worship Him as they should. They were carnal, worldly, and fleshly in every sense, and ultimately reaped as they had sown.

They would not have the Lord to protect them, simply because in their sinful lives, they desired no sincere relationship with Him.

What is also observable is that when Job potentially detected sin in his children, or thought it may have been committed by them, he sought the Lord for its forgiveness. This response would prove highly profitable later in the book.

For when Job came to understand his own sins, he very quickly and with great sincerity, repented of them.

***Job 1:5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.***

Fathers, especially God-fearing fathers, know far more of the Lord and His dealings with sinners than their children do.

Because Job was concerned about his children's spirituality, he did his best to sanctify them by rising early in the morning and offering sacrifices to God for their sin.

Ultimately, Job was abundantly aware that for all sin there must be worthy sacrifice presented to atone for it.

*Benson Commentary, Job 1:5*

*And rose up early in the morning*—Thereby showing his ardent zeal in God's service. *And offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all*—Well knowing himself, and hereby teaching them, that all sin, even secret unbelief, ingratitude, and vanity of mind, merited condemnation from God, and could only be expiated by the shedding of blood, and offering of sacrifice, in a spirit of true penitence, and humble, lively faith. *It may be my sons have sinned*—His zeal for God's glory, and his love to his children, made him jealous; for which he had sufficient cause, from the corruption of human nature, the frailty and folly of youth, the many temptations which attend feasting, and men's proneness to slide from lawful to forbidden delights.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 1:5*

*That Job sent*—Sent for them, and called them around him. He was apprehensive that they might have erred, and he took every measure to keep them pure, and to maintain the influence of religion in his family. . . . What father is there who loves God, and who feels anxious that his children should also, who does not feel special solicitude if his sons and his daughters are in a situation where successive days are devoted to feasting and mirth?

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

We now shift from the historical record of Job, to Satan's assault and Job being stripped of all. This account begins with the sons of God (God's created beings) coming to present themselves before the Lord, with Satan also among them.

God is sovereign; consequently, those of His government and in His creation must report directly to Him. This appears to be customary and a standard part of heaven's policy, wherein the Lord's ministers must give reports and accounts of their movements and activity in the earth.

*Benson Commentary, Job 1:6*

...that the affairs of earth are much the subject of the counsels of the unseen world, to which we lie open, though that world is in a great measure concealed from us. And such representations may also be intended to discover to us, in part, at least, the causes of

many of those things which happen on earth, and which appear to us unaccountable, namely, that they arise from our having some connection with, or relation to, other orders of beings through the universe, on whose account, and through whose ministry, many things may happen to us, which otherwise would not. Thus the dreadful calamities and afflictions which befell Job, in such quick succession, are utterly unaccountable according to the ordinary course of human things, and seem almost without reason, if he were considered merely as a human being, having no connection with, relation to, or influence upon, any world but this.

***Job 1:7–8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.***

***<sup>8</sup> And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?***

Undoubtedly God singled out Satan by directly speaking to him, to ultimately use him for the Lord's own great design.

Indeed, God has used, and will use, even evil spiritual agencies to accomplish His own divine purposes.

The crucifixion of the Son of God is an example of this, whereby through Jesus' death on the cross, His death brought many new sons to glory. Hence, whereas Satan desired to murder the Son of God, and eventually did, the Lord's wisdom used the devil's attack on His only begotten Son, to actually atone for the sins of all mankind.

Indeed, the Lord taketh the wise, or those who think themselves to be wise, in their own craftiness.

***I Corinthians 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 3:19

The word rendered "taketh" here denotes to clench with the fist, grope, grasp. And the sense is:

(1) However crafty, or cunning, or skillful they may be; however self-confident, yet that they cannot deceive or impose upon God. He can thwart their plans, overthrow their schemes, defeat their counsels, and foil them in their enterprises, Job 5:12.

(2) He does it by their own cunning or craftiness. He allows them to involve themselves in difficulties or to entangle each other. He makes use of even their own craft and cunning to defeat their counsels. He allows the plans of one wise man to come in conflict with those of another, and thus to destroy one another. Honesty in religion, as in everything else, is the best policy; and a man who pursues a course of conscientious integrity may expect the protection of God. But he who attempts to carry his purposes by craft and intrigue—who depends on skill and cunning instead of truth and honesty, will often find that he is the prey of his own cunning and duplicity.

When God drew Satan's attention to Job and praised him for his holy character, He surely knew that this would arouse great envy and jealousy in Satan. But since the devil remained unaware of the Lord's final purpose for His servant, Job, he was unsuspectingly led to assist God in bringing about God's will for Job's life.

Little would arouse Satan's indignation more than God bringing this attention to a man, a mere frail human being, who was everything Satan was not—someone who feared God and eschewed evil.

By the Lord's asking Satan to consider Job and his righteous character, He undoubtedly knew that this would remind Satan of his own lack of any true righteousness.

As with all evil men, Satan hated Job because his own deeds were evil, while the deeds of this righteous servant of God were good.

***John 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.***

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, John 3:20*

*For every one that doeth evil hateth the light. . . .* Not only does the man that doeth evil love darkness rather than light, but he hates the light. (Comp. note on John 7:7.) Its presence makes manifest and reproves his works, which he would hide even from himself. It illumines the dark and secret chambers of the heart, and reveals thoughts and deeds which conscience, seeing in this light, trembles at, and turns away to darkness that it may hide itself from its own gaze.

***Job 1:9–10 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?<sup>10</sup> Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.***

It took only the mere mention of Job to ignite an indignant response in God's adversary, Satan. He replied that the only reason Job feared God was that he had been blessed and protected by God.

This claim would ultimately be proven false—as tragedy did not change Job's heart but only revealed what truly lay within it. Trials also do not actually form men's character but only reveal what it consists of.

Those also who engage in sin will never recognize or give true respect for religious piety. Satan is the very first example of this.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 1:9*

*fear God for naught*—It is a mark of the children of Satan to sneer and not give credit to any for disinterested piety.

Ellicott's commentary also adds some interesting thoughts on this verse.

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 1:9*

*Doth Job fear God for nought?*—Manifesting the worst kind of scepticism, a disbelief in human goodness. Satan knows that the motive of an action is its only value, and by incrimination calumniates the motives of Job. The object of the book is thus introduced, which is to exhibit the integrity of human conduct under the worst possible trial, and to show man a victor over Satan.

Though Satan did not know it, all the harm he would inflict upon Job would one day be reversed by God. In the end, through God's wisdom and heavenly power, he was made to overcome every wicked plan devised by Satan.

***Job 1:11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.***

The vehemence in the devil's reaction reveals the hatred that lives within him. All creatures, including fallen angels like the devil, see things primarily through their own distorted and warped eyes.

Since cursing God is what defined Satan's character, he foolishly assumed that if Job lost all, then he would follow the same pattern as himself, and rebel against His Creator. Yet this was only wishful thinking; in fact, Satan's assaults on Job's life would eventually produce a completely different response in Job. In the end, Job's trial only increased his faith in the Lord, and purified his worship of God.

*Benson Commentary, Job 1:11*

It was a great truth that Job did not fear God for naught; he got much by it: for godliness is great gain. But it was a false lie that he would not have feared God if he had not got this by it, as the event proved.

***Job 1:12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.***

What is observed here is that in respect to the Lord's people, Satan is only given power over them, if in accordance with divine will.

It is God Who is sovereign, and He alone, Who oversees the lives of His people.

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 1:12*

*All that he hath is in thy power . . .* —Mighty as the principle of evil is in the world, it is nevertheless held in check by One who directs it to His own ends. Such is the uniform teaching of Scripture. We are not under the uncontrolled dominion of evil, strong as the temptation may be at times to think so. (See 2Corinthians 12:7; 2Corinthians 12:9; 1Thessalonians 2:18, &c.)

Satan initially claimed that Job was loyal to the Lord because he had been blessed by Him. In response, God yielded more power to His adversary to destroy the very things that Satan had surmised were the reasons for Job's religious piety.

The record of Joseph being sold by his brothers into bondage is also a wonderful example of how God will use evil intentions, by evil men, for the good of His people (Gen. 37:23–28). Thus, though Joseph's brothers intended to cause him harm, the Lord used their brotherly betrayal to exalt Joseph and ultimately even to save their own lives.

God's thoughts are higher than man's, and even every angelic creature God has created. Undoubtedly, Satan's own thoughts and schemes are included in this spiritually verifiable biblical truth.

***Job 1:13–20 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:***

<sup>14</sup> ***And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:***

<sup>15</sup> ***And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.***

<sup>16</sup> ***While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.***

<sup>17</sup> ***While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.***

<sup>18</sup> *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:*

<sup>19</sup> *And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

<sup>20</sup> *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,*

Although Job loved his children, he did not curse his God, even after their sudden and tragic deaths.

While lesser men, perhaps even we ourselves, might have been tempted to lay blame upon the Lord, or at the very least to doubt God's goodness, Job did the exact opposite. He rent his mantle and shaved his head, which were signs of spiritual mourning, and then fell upon the ground and worshiped.

What a great example this man of the East is, who possessed true religious piety, who instead of cursing the Lord after tremendous physical loss, worshiped Him!

The truly righteous and God-fearing also will regularly prove that the most important aspect of their lives is neither their bodies, nor their earthly possessions, nor even their earthly families—which, no doubt, they cherish much—but their God.

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 1:20*

Moments of intense sorrow or trial, like moments of intense joy, force us into the immediate presence of God.

***Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.***

Job wisely knew that whatever he had gained after birth would be surrendered immediately upon the time of his death. This reminds us that no matter whatever any possess while alive on the earth, it must be both forfeited and relinquished at their death.

***Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?***

The soul is the only real treasure any man truly possesses. It will one day leave the body, and the only question is where it will go.

There are but two eternal options: either heaven or hell.

It is also only as men repent for living lives of sin, that their souls can be saved by God.

***Ezekiel 18:27 Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.***

*Benson Commentary, Job 1:21*

*and naked shall I return*—I shall be as rich when I die as I was when I was born; and therefore have reason to be contented with my condition, which also is the common lot of all men. We go naked out of the [womb] into the [world] or lap of our common mother the earth, as the weary child lays its head on its mother's bosom. Death strips us of all our possessions and enjoyments; clothing can neither warm nor adorn a dead body: a consideration which silenced Job under all his losses. The sanctified soul, however, goes out of the world clothed, (2 Corinthians 5:3,) and when it appears in the presence of God is not found naked.

***Job 1:22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.***

Even in the agonizing loss of his children and the plundering of his goods, still *Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

So sincere was Job's faith and trust in the Lord, that he did not even lay blame upon Him, when faced with complete personal loss.

Satan was undoubtedly wrong in surmising that Job would curse the Lord; thus, the Lord was proven right, that Job was a man of high religious integrity. Mutiny had been purposed by Satan, and all his efforts had failed, because of Job's spiritual uprightness and strong religious loyalty to the Lord.

When men murmur and raise their voices against the Lord, it reveals that they are dissatisfied with His rule. Ultimately, Satan's main goal has always been to lead sinners into rebellion against God, and murmuring against the Lord is one of the very first evidences of spiritual insurrection. But because God is just and righteous in all His ways, He will never, nor can He ever, sin against man, as man sins against Him. To foolishly claim sin on God's part, only reveals the spiritual ignorance of ourselves.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 1:22*

...true piety will bear the removal of property and friends without murmuring. Religion is not based on such things, and their removal cannot shake it. It is founded deeper in the soul, and mere external changes cannot destroy it."



## Session 2

# *Satan's Assault Against Job's Life*

## *Job 2:1–13*

### Scriptures

*Job 2:1–3*

*Revelation 12:10*

*Job 2:4–5*

*Isaiah 52:14*

*Job 2:6*

*I Corinthians 10:13*

*Job 2:7*

*Job 2:8*

*Job 2:9*

*Job 2:10*

*Job 2:11*

*James 1:19*

*Job 2:12–13*

*Job 2:1–3* 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.

<sup>2</sup> And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

<sup>3</sup> And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

*Although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.*

Satan had previously implied that the only reason Job feared the Lord, was because God had blessed him and placed a wall of protection around him. Satan commonly introduces false claims against the brethren, knowing that accusations if later even proved untrue, will still damage the innocent.

The devil is described in Scripture as a liar and one who accuses the saints night and day in his constant attempts to impugn their name in God's sight.

In Job's case, Satan repeatedly brought forth false accusations against him in a continued effort to try turning the Lord against this faithful servant of God.

Unremarkably, it can be seen that the devil will always do his best to pit believers against the Lord, and the Lord against them.

*Revelation 12:10* And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rev. 12:10

The description of Satan as an accuser accords with the opinion of the ancient Hebrews in regard to his character. . . . The phrase "of the brethren" refers to Christians, or to the people of God; and the meaning here is, that one of the characteristics of Satan—a characteristic so well known as to make it proper to designate him by it—is that he is an accuser of the righteous; that he is employed in bringing against them charges affecting their character and destroying their influence. The propriety of this appellation cannot be doubted. It is, as it has always been, one of the characteristics of Satan—one of the means by which he keeps up his influence in the world—to bring accusations against the people of God. Thus, under his suggestions, and by his agents, they are charged with

hypocrisy; with insincerity; with being influenced by bad motives; with pursuing sinister designs under the cloak of religion; with secret vices and crimes. Thus it was that the martyrs were accused; thus it is that unfounded accusations are often brought against ministers of the gospel, palsyng their power and diminishing their influence, or that when a professed Christian falls the church is made to suffer by an effort to cast suspicion on all who bear the Christian name. Perhaps the most skillful thing that Satan does, and the thing by which he most contributes to diminish the influence of the church, is in thus causing “accusations” to be brought against the people of God.

It is worth noting that those who bring false claims against the Lord’s elect have close kinship with the devil. Ultimately, those who follow his ways, are under his influence. Whenever, then, false accusations are brought against the people of God without reliable evidence, then we can be sure that the devil is highly involved in seeking to impune the Lord’s elect.

Nothing also reveals the true colors of sinners more than when they bring false charges against the righteous. The Jews did this with the Son of God (Matt. 9:34), Sanballat with Hezekiah (Neh. 6:1–8), and Korah with Moses (Num. 16:1–3). From these records and many others like them in Scripture, we see that the common weapon to blunt the outreach of the kingdom of God is to falsely accuse those who are members of it.

***Job 2:4–5 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.***

***<sup>5</sup> But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.***

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 2:4*

Satan sneers bitterly at man’s egotism and says that Job bears the loss of property and children because these are mere outward and exchangeable goods, but he will give up all things, even his religion, in order to save his life, if you touch his bones and flesh.

We observe now the devil’s new spiritual attack to inflict physical pain, beyond even the emotional damage he has already accomplished through stripping Job’s family and wealth from him.

In respect to the Lord’s chosen, the devil will never be content until both life and soul are taken from them.

Satan did not actually know what Job would do; rather, he merely hoped that he would curse God, if sufficient pain and suffering were inflicted upon him.

It is not enough for the Lord’s adversary to steal from believers, as his ultimate aim is always to then kill and destroy them. Indeed, the hatred of the devil is so intense toward the chosen that he will never be fully satisfied, until death has followed, bodily torture.

This was seen in Satan’s assault on the Savior’s life, when it was not enough for Jesus merely to be crucified, without prior to it, the devil inflicting as much bodily pain and suffering on Christ’s body as He could bear (Matt. 27:26–35).

***Isaiah 52:14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.***

Throughout human history Satan has repeatedly inflicted the bodies of the saved, hoping that by touching their bodies, the believer’s pain will cause them to abandon

religious piety and curse their God. Nothing also can discourage and even break the human spirit more than bodily torture.

Though, surprising to most, there can be a divinity in undergoing physical pain, simply because when men's spirits are broken, their ears and hearts can be opened.

The pride of many is also such and so great, that it is not until all is either lost or seemingly lost (which often includes the loss of physical health) that they become humble enough to turn to God.

For the prodigal son it took a famine and the loss of all his earthly inheritance to help him come to a spiritual state of mind, and return to his father (Luke 15:14–18).

For Christians, we also may need to experience both emotional and physical pain before we come to realize the paths that we are on may be both sinful and personally destructive.

***Job 2:6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.***

The Lord gave Satan permission to do that which he had requested, with one unalterable restriction—he could not in any way endanger Job's life.

Here we see, that even in Job's religious trial, the Lord was protecting his life. Satan was given limitations, and God's power would ensure that they would be kept. Just as God knows those who fear Him, so does He also know the temptations that they are able to overcome.

***I Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.***

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I Cor. 10:13*

*There hath no temptation taken you.*—What is meant by a “temptation common to man” (or rather, *suited to man*) is explained further on as a temptation which one is “able to bear.” From the warning and exhortation of the previous verse the Apostle passes on to words of encouragement, “You need not be hopeless or despairing.” God permits the temptation by allowing the circumstances which create temptation to arise, but He takes care that no Fate bars the path of retreat. With each temptation he makes a way to escape from it.

Though Job's trials were extreme, the Lord knew that he possessed sufficient strength of faith to endure Satan's assaults and ultimately reach God's end for his life.

Because of Job's deep and reverential fear of the Lord, a trial that would have destroyed lesser men, only purified Job's faith.

God's promise is that none will ever be tempted above that which they are able to endure; consequently, if men sin while in temptation, they alone are to blame.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 10:13*

If people fall into sin, under the power of temptation, they only are to blame. They have strength to resist all the temptations that assail them, and God has given the assurance that no temptation shall occur which they shall not be able, by His aid, to resist. In all instances, therefore, where people fall into sin; in all the yielding to passion, to allurements, and to vice, man is to blame, and must be responsible to God. And this is especially true of Christians, who, whatever may be said of others, cannot plead that there was not power sufficient to meet the temptation, or to turn aside its power.

When most read about the trial of Job's life, they often will also very ignorantly blame the Lord. Blind to the Lord's ways with man, sinners will maintain no restraint in judging His ways. Consequently, the Book of Job has caused many to bring false accusations against the Lord, simply because they lacked the spiritual insight to see God's ultimate grand and good purpose.

Ultimately what Job endured did not exceed the limitations of his faith. Because his fear of God was great, he possessed sufficient spiritual faith to endure what God would allow Satan to do to his life.

It is foolish to question God's purposes for this God-fearing man, simply because the Lord knew Job's inward heart, and there was nothing in Job's trial that could not be overcome if he remained constant in his faith.

Though sinners will never agree, trials are necessary in weaning men from sin and developing strong confidence and trust in God.

All truly godly men also shall see that at the end of their trial, all that has been endured was necessary for both their spiritual growth and increased holiness.

***Job 2:7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.***

*Benson Commentary, Job 2:7*

*And smote Job with sore biles—*ἐλκει πονηρῶ, with a foul ulcer, or evil inflammation, say the Seventy; breaking out and spreading itself over all his body. The biles, it seems, were like those inflicted upon the Egyptians, which are expressed by the same word, and threatened to the apostate Israelites, (Deuteronomy 28:27,) whereby he was made loathsome to himself and to his nearest relations, and filled with consuming pains in his body, and no less torments and anguish in his mind. *From the sole of his foot unto his crown*—In all the outward parts of his body. "His tongue," says Poole, "he spared, that it might be capable of uttering those blasphemies against God which Satan desired and expected him to utter." One boil, when it is gathering, is very distressing, and gives a man abundance of pain and uneasiness. What a condition was Job then in, who had biles all over his body, no part being free, and those as much inflamed, and of as raging a heat, as Satan could make them! If at any time we be exercised with sore and grievous distempers, let us not think ourselves more hardly dealt with than God has sometimes dealt with the best of his saints and servants. We know not how far Satan may have a hand, by God's permission, in the diseases with which mankind, especially the children of God, are afflicted; or what infections that prince of the air may spread, what inflammations may come from that fiery serpent. We read of one whom he had bound for many years, Luke 13:10. And should God suffer him to have his will against us, he would soon make the best and bravest of us very miserable. It is a judicious remark of Dr. Mede here, that it is not Job himself or his friends, but the author of the book, who attributes his calamities to Satan; for this writer's intention seems to have been to show, by a striking example, that the world is governed by the providence of God; and as the holy angels, whose ministry God makes use of in distributing his bountiful gifts, punctually execute all his commands; so Satan himself, with his agents, are under the power of God, and cannot inflict any evils on mankind without the divine permission.

***Job 2:8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.***

All Job had left with which to care for himself was a potsherd, an indication of the deep loss and depravity of his destitute and lonely condition. And although Job's condition needed the most tender and loving care, all he possessed to deal with his affliction was a hard, sharp, broken piece of pottery.

We see Job sitting in the ashes of what was once a wealthy and abundant life. And now, after Satan's assaults, a potsherd was indicative of the low state of internal discouragement he found himself in.

Symbolically the potsherd represented what once had been a beautiful vessel, distinguished and worthy of admiration, but now, after being broken, like Job, was fit for nothing but the dunghill. At this point, if not earlier, Job understood that he had progressed beyond all human ability to help himself.

He could not put his shattered life back together without divine assistance, and it is certain that he was increasing in this spiritual conclusion.

By observing Job despondently sitting among the ashes, it is revealed how his soul lacked the strength to either stand or do anything more in his life. Job knew that he was defenseless to stop the vicious spiritual attacks on his family, possessions, and body, so he resigned himself to sit and potentially wait for whatever future tragedy which might come next.

What was true of Job, is likewise true of ourselves—that without the Lord's protection and divine intervention, there is nothing a man can do when attacked by evil spiritual forces, other than to pray for God's deliverance.

Personal power and human ability is therefore never enough to protect any believer from spiritual wickedness that resides in high places, without divine intercession.

If Job had feared the Lord before, now his fear was intensified.

Nebuchadnezzar also, a man of great governmental power and influence, learned the same lesson as Job (Dan. 5:18–22): that the mighty in this world may possess position, wealth, and/or worldly influence, but these things cannot protect them from God's overreaching sovereignty, and if allowed, Satan's assaults.

No one—neither the world's greatest governments nor its highest-ranking individuals—can prevent the will of God from being done on the earth. Thus, if the Lord desires to bring men low, then there is nothing of their own natural strength, and/or ability that can prevent it.

The Lord is sovereign, and time will prove, that none can alter what God has either purposed, or willed to be done on the earth.

***Job 2:9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.***

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 2:9*

*Then said his wife.*—Thus it is that a man's foes are they of his own household (Micah 7:6; Matthew 10:36, &c.). The worst trial of all is when those nearest to us, instead of strengthening our hand in God and confirming our faith, conspire to destroy it.

When Cain slew his brother, Abel, not even brotherhood could prevent his envious and evil heart from committing murder.

Sadly, family bonds, mean nothing to those with corrupt and sinful hearts.

Job's wife should have demonstrated compassion, but instead her hard and insensitive heart spewed nothing but contempt.

This might explain the pleasure-seeking lifestyles of Job's children, simply because a wife and mother this insensitive to another's pain and turmoil could not have influenced her children in any truly good and godly manner.

Job's wife's words were "*Curse God, and die,*" and they reveal her lack of proper respect for both Job and God. It is also quite possible that Satan was the primary influence in turning Job's own wife to turn against him. No sound person would encourage death to another, let alone a family member, without wicked spiritual influence.

That Job's wife spoke of cursing God, thus bringing the Lord into the conversation, proves that her hate was not singly against Job, but also against the Lord.

It is worth noting that at the core of all spiritual betrayal, devilish forces are at work. This is observed with Judas, and it has been repeated since the dawn of time. Where spiritual betrayal exists, and especially so in earthly families, Satan is near, leading and influencing it.

***Job 2:10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.***

Here Job defends God, as a righteous and godly man both must, and will always do. Instead of siding with his wife in cursing God, Job righteously labels her a fool, in a defense of Him.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 2:10*

This is the true expression of piety. It submits to all the arrangements of God without a complaint.

True Christians know that regardless of divine judgment, the Lord's actions are never unfair. Whereas an ungodly man will quickly smear God's name in times of trouble, those with a deep and reverential fear of the Lord will defend it.

To a truly righteous and upright man, God's name is deemed far more important than even his own.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 2:10*

In addition to that, true piety feels that all claim to any blessing, if it had ever existed, has been forfeited by sin.

When the truly righteous suffer loss their eyes will turn inward seeking to see how they have sinned to bring about the negative consequences in their life.

Knowing that God never errs, personal introspection will occur, through seeking the Lord for some hidden sin undetected by the human spirit.

***Job 2:11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.***

As the book's structure reveals, we are now ready for the next important event in the Book of Job: the arrival of his three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. No doubt these individuals were godly associates of Job, yet the record will reveal that they ultimately lacked anything through their own natural wisdom to help their friend.

And though they were surely sincere in the words they would speak, all they really did was add salt to Job's wounds, and bring greater distress to his soul.

Good intentions, as it shall be seen with Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, do nothing to guarantee profitable results.

Likewise, just because men are sincere in trying to help in religious matters, does not mean that they are truly led by God.

Hence, just because someone may be a believer, does not mean that what they say is being inspired by the Lord and His Spirit.

As the pride of man will often lead him to meddle in others' affairs which are in fact, none of his business.

Foolishness also often flows from the mouth of those who, though they may possess some faith, foolishly esteem themselves more inspired than they really are.

The Scripture also wisely commands men to be quick to hear, and slow to speak, until by divine and heavenly revelation they are given something truly meaningful to say.

*James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*

*Job 2:12-13 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.*

<sup>13</sup> *So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.*

The Scripture reveals that at the sight of their friend, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar cried aloud, rent their clothes, and sat on the ground next to him. And though Job's religious friends would later prove to have little wisdom, and actually needed themselves to be prayed for, still their acts of human compassion, at this point in the record, should not go unnoticed.

Taken aback by Job's condition, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar barely recognized that this was the same healthy and prosperous man they had once had known.

Job was, at least on the outside, a shell of his previous self, and his friends recognized the great grief that filled his soul.

At least for now, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar remained wise and spoke not a word. In Job's present condition of being afflicted with boils, prompted his friends to initially say nothing at all.

They had observed Job's grief, and wisely refrained from voicing any of their inward opinions, though this present spiritual approach would soon be abandoned.

*Benson Commentary, Job 2:13*

"A long silence," says Dr. Dodd, "is a very natural effect of an extraordinary grief, which overwhelms the mind, and creates a sort of stupor and astonishment."



## Session 3

# *Job Curses His Day*

## *Job 3*

### Scriptures

*Job 3:1*

*Job 38:2*

*Job 40:1-2*

*Job 38:1-3*

*Job 35:1-2*

*James 3:8*

*Matthew 12:37*

*Job 3:2-12*

*Ecclesiastes 1:12*

*Deuteronomy 8:2*

*Job 3:13-22*

*Job 3:23*

*Job 3:24-26*

*Psalms 34:18*

*Isaiah 66:2*

*Job 3:1 After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.*

Although previously Job had not sinned with his lips, by the end of the book he would not be able to claim this to be true. This is seen in chapter 38 when the Lord reproves Job for darkening His counsel by speaking words without knowledge.

*Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

*Benson Commentary, Job 38:2*

*Who is this, &c.—What and where is he that presumes to talk at this rate? That darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?—Words proceeding from ignorance, mistake, and want of consideration. Who is this that disparages my counsels, and darkens the wisdom of my dispensations with his ignorant discourses about them?*

Perhaps since he had been broken down over time, and now had friends nearby whom he felt he could trust, Job began revealing his true inner thoughts.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 3:1*

*and cursed his day, to wit, his birthday, as is evident from Job 3:3, which is called simply a man's day, Hosea 7:5; which also some others, through the same infirmity, and in the same circumstances, have cursed, as we see, Jeremiah 20:14.*

In vain do some men endeavour to excuse this and the following speeches of Job, who afterwards is reproved by God and severely accuseth himself for them, Job 38:2; 40:4; 42:3, 6. And yet he doth not proceed so far as to curse or blaspheme God, but makes the devil a liar in his prognostics. But although he doth not break forth into direct and downright reproaches of God, yet he makes secret and indirect reflections upon God's providence.

Although Job does not directly curse the Lord, he does curse his day. Perhaps he did not know at this stage of his trial that once men begin cursing the circumstances of their lives, then reproaching the Lord soon follows.

Previously Job had praised God, but now he despised the day of his birth.

How fickle are men also when from their mouths once came praise and worship, now proceeds bitterness and cursing.

Chapter 3 is the first of ten discourses in which Job speaks. These chapters include: 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12–14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26–31, and 42. As the trial of Job advances, we ultimately see his increased contention with the Lord. It is because of this spiritual contention with the Almighty that Job is later reproveth.

*Job 40:1–2 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said,  
2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.*

The Lord stated that by his lack of wisdom, Job had proven himself guilty of darkening God's plans through words without knowledge. For this sin, he needed to stand before the Lord and give an account of his actions.

*Job 38:1–3 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,  
2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?  
3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.*

Whenever men sin against the Lord, they will, like Adam and Eve in the garden (Gen. 3:8–13), need to eventually stand before Him. David needed to give an account of his sin (II Sam. 12:1–13), Miriam hers (Num. 12:1–15), and we ours (Rom. 14:12).

Job could not understand why such a righteous man as himself should have to endure such hardship. Whether aware of it or not, the sinner believes his own righteousness to be more than God's. And for this reason, when personal tragedy hits, foolish complaints, if not initially, can easily soon be directed toward Him.

*Job 35:1–2 Elihu spake moreover, and said,  
2 Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?*

It is undoubtedly self-righteousness which is at the core of men condemning the Lord. Hence, if men think they are on God's level, they will not hesitate in condemning His ways.

Thus, if sinners do not perceive their tragedy and pain to be either directly or indirectly connected to themselves, then they will undoubtedly claim the fault to be solely God's.

Yet God's righteousness is such that He can never, nor will ever, do anything unjust toward man. The Lord's own holy and righteous character prohibits this.

*Opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.*

The tongue is without question an unruly evil. If it is let loose and not controlled by God's Spirit, it will undoubtedly bring judgment upon its owner.

*James 3:8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Jas. 3:8*  
*no man*—literally, “no one of men”: neither can a man control his neighbor's, nor even his own tongue. Hence the truth of Jas 3:2 appears.

*unruly evil*—The Greek, implies that it is at once restless and incapable of restraint. Nay, though nature has hedged it in with a double barrier of the lips and teeth, it bursts from its barriers to assail and ruin men [Estius].

*deadly*—literally, “death-bearing.”

Jesus clearly warned that the words men speak will result in either their justification or condemnation. So great is the tongue, that eternal life hangs in the balance, by the words it brings forth.

***Matthew 12:37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.***

While most give no account to their words and speeches, and also believe they will quickly disappear in the air after spoken, the Lord both remembers and will demand that what has been said through sin, must be given account for (Matt. 12:36) .

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Matt. 12:36*

*But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment—*They might say, “It was nothing: we meant no evil; we merely threw out a supposition, as one way of accounting for the miracle we witnessed; if it will not stand, let it go; why make so much of it, and bear down with such severity for it?” Jesus replies, “It was not nothing, and at the great day will not be treated as nothing: Words, as the index of the heart, however idle they may seem, will be taken account of, whether good or bad, in estimating character in the day of judgment.”

Very few take the words they speak as having any bearing on whether or not they will be justified or condemned.

But since, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, a man’s words will directly affect his salvation.

By a man’s speech is his true inner heart known, and by his utterances his soul is brought to light.

Perhaps Job possessed some of this understanding, but his spiritual ignorance reveals that he did not possess enough of it to avoid the treacherous path of indicting himself in God’s eyes.

Sinners often foolishly believe that they will not have to give an account for the words they speak.

Yet whatever men do through even one member of their body—whether it be by the hand, tongue, or foot—if it is sinful, will one day be brought into the light, and can surely indict the whole man.

Four important points are seen in this chapter: (1) Job cursed his birth; (2) he praises the benefits of the grave; (3) he questions why God gives light to men but then hems them in so that they cannot escape their bondage; and (4) he reveals the personal unrest that filled his soul.

***Job 3:2–12 And Job spake, and said,***

**<sup>3</sup> *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.***

**<sup>4</sup> *Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.***

**<sup>5</sup> *Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.***

**<sup>6</sup> *As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.***

**<sup>7</sup> *Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.***

**<sup>8</sup> *Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.***

<sup>9</sup> *Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day:*

<sup>10</sup> *Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.*

<sup>11</sup> *Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?*

<sup>12</sup> *Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?*

With deep depression will often come the natural conclusion that life is nothing but vanity: that life is not worth living, and to die would be better and a more pleasant alternative.

***Ecclesiastes 1:2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.***

*Benson Commentary, Eccl. 1:2*

*All*—All worldly things; *is vanity*—Not in themselves, for they are God's creatures, and therefore good in their kinds, but in reference to that happiness which men seek and expect to find in them. So they are unquestionably *vain*, because they are not what they seem to be, and perform not what they promise, but, instead of that, are the occasions of innumerable cares, and fears, and sorrows, and mischiefs.

The Scripture states that all creation *groaneth and travaileth in pain* even now. Hence, this life will often not seem worth remaining in it if we forget that God has a plan for it. It is hard to *kick against the pricks*, because this will only injure the one resisting the Lord's plan for our lives.

Without this knowledge, men will spend much of their life fighting against divine will, which in the end will only bring more pain and suffering upon themselves.

He who is foolish enough to contend with the Almighty should never deceive himself to believe, that human will, can ever supersede divine will.

*Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?*

After lamenting being born and the deep pain his trial had brought him, Job unwisely concluded that it would have been better if he had died at birth.

Undoubtedly, Job's weak and painful condition contributed to his thinking. Yet death is an enemy and should never be desired over life, though it often will be.

Sadly, when men have lost sight of God, they often look to the grave, and the false release they think it can give them.

It is also more than enough to suffer personal pain without adding the great burden it is to break fellowship with the only true One Who can remove it.

When believers undergo earthly trials, they seldom consider what they are actually purposed to accomplish, which is to bring attention that something is amiss in either the heart or life, and only a trial of God can assist in correcting it.

The ultimate purpose of all trials also is to reveal the inward heart of the one being tried.

This was true with Israel, and it is likewise true with saints, that trials are purposed to reveal whether those called to God, will obey His commandments or not.

**Deuteronomy 8:2** *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.*

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Deut. 8:2*

*To know what was in thine heart*, i.e. that thou mightest discover to thyself and others that infidelity, inconstancy, hypocrisy, apostacy, rebellion, and perverseness, which lay hid in thy heart; the discovery whereof was of singular use, both to them and to the church of God, in all succeeding ages.

Through earthly trials, the true condition of a man will be made known. This was evidenced with Abraham, when he passed the Lord's trial, as well as with Israel, when they repeatedly failed theirs.

Ultimately, trials will reveal whether men will keep the Lord's commandments or not, and whether or not there is true trust in Him and His will for the life.

**Job 3:13–22** *For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,*

<sup>14</sup> *With kings and counsellors of the earth, which build desolate places for themselves;*

<sup>15</sup> *Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:*

<sup>16</sup> *Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.*

<sup>17</sup> *There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.*

<sup>18</sup> *There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.*

<sup>19</sup> *The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.*

<sup>20</sup> *Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul;*

<sup>21</sup> *Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;*

<sup>22</sup> *Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?*

After questioning why he was born and did not die at birth, Job proceeds to ponder the advantages of death, and how through death, one can find rest from oppression (v. 18), servants are freed from their masters (v. 19), and how death can be considered as light and welcomed, when this earthly life is filled with misery (v. 20).

Job longed for death and the grave and he thought that if he could be so lucky as to die, his soul would rejoice (v. 22).

**Job 3:23** *Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?*

Job's assumption was that since the Lord had given him light, why should he be hedged in? No doubt, Job thought he possessed more light than he really did.

This is common for the afflicted, that they assume to possess more understanding of the Lord than they actually have, and therefore are befuddled and confused as to the reason for their bondage.

For the first time now Job implies that God is involved in his captivity, that *God* had *hedged* him *in*, that it was God Who was allowing no escape from his painful and enslaved condition.

Job foolishly, and with great error declares that surely it must be God's fault that he could find no avenue of escape, nor release from his captivity.

*Benson Commentary, Job 3:23*

*Why is light given to a man whose way is hid?...And whom God hath hedged in—Whom God hath put, as it were, in a prison, so that he can see no way or possibility of escape; but all refuge fails him.*

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 3:23*

*Whom God hath hedged in— . . . The meaning here is, that God had surrounded him as with a high wall or hedge, so that he could not move freely. Job asks with impatience, why light, that is, life, should be given to such a man? Why should he not be permitted to die? This closes the complaint of Job, and the remaining verses of the chapter contain a statement of his sorrowful condition, and of the fact that he had now been called to suffer all that he had ever apprehended. . . . When it is asked, why man is kept in misery on earth, when he would be glad to be released by death, perhaps the following, among others, may be the reasons:*

(1) Those sufferings may be the very means which are needful to develop the true state of the soul. Such was the case with Job.

(2) They may be the proper punishment of sin in the heart, of which the individual was not fully aware, but which may be distinctly seen by God. There may be pride, and the love of ease, and self-confidence, and ambition, and a desire of reputation. Such appear to have been some of the besetting sins of Job.

(3) They are needful to teach true submission, and to show whether a man is willing to resign himself to God.

(4) They may be the very things which are necessary to prepare the individual to die. At the same time that people often desire death, and feel that it would be a relief, it might be to them the greatest possible calamity. They may be wholly unprepared for it. For a sinner, the grave contains no rest; the eternal world furnishes no repose.

... The true place of release from suffering for a sinner, is not the grave; it is in the pardoning mercy of God, and in that pure heaven to which he is invited through the blood of the cross. In that holy heaven is the only real repose from suffering and from sin; and heaven will be all the sweeter in proportion to the extremity of pain which is endured on earth.

Just as men are powerless to prevent a trial, so also are they just as weak and feeble to end it.

Ultimately, both the severity of the spiritual trial and its duration, lay within God's will and not man's.

Also, not until the Lord turns a man's captivity, as will be seen with Job, can true deliverance and personal freedom from sin and its consequences be experienced.

To foolishly believe that we can extract ourselves through fleshly strength when being tried by the Lord, reveals that we do not know the power of the Lord, nor His complete sovereignty over our lives.

***Job 3:24–26 For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.***

<sup>25</sup> ***For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.***

<sup>26</sup> ***I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.***

There is great insight in these verses as they reveal that even prior to Job's trial, there was an uneasiness and an unrest in his soul. Thus, even before Satan's assaults on his life, Job internally knew that he was not in safety, nor could he find rest.

What precisely Job feared would come upon him we do not know for certain. It could have been God's judgment upon his children for their sin, or perhaps, simply the uncertainty and unpredictability of a worldly existence.

Hence, even though Job possessed an abundance of earthly prosperity, he held a strong suspicion that something was not truly right in his life, teaching us that even if a man's outward life may appear both pious and prosperous, if there is sin being committed, then the conscience cannot be at rest, until confession of sin is made.

It is also worth noting, that sin in the heart, is just as worthy of judgment, as sin practiced and executed in the life.

Though Job would continue to believe and profess himself as righteous before the Lord, this did not quiet nor give any true comfort to his heart.

It is not enough then to tell ourselves how righteous we are, if deep within our souls there is a spiritual awareness that all is not right concerning our relationship with God.

*Benson Commentary, Job 3:25*

*For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me*—Before this flood of misery was poured upon me, I was indeed under great and strong apprehensions, which I could not account for, of something or other that would happen to me; something extremely grievous and afflicting; something as bad, nay, worse than death itself. For I considered the variety of God's providences, the changeableness of this vain world, the infirmities and contingencies to which human nature is liable in the present life, God's justice, and the sinfulness of all mankind. And it is now evident that these fears of mine were not in vain, for they are justified by my present calamities. I may, therefore, say that I have never enjoyed any sound tranquility since I was born; and, of consequence, it hath not been worth my while to live, since all my days have been evil, and full of trouble and distress, either by the fear of miseries or by the suffering of them.

Few if any of the critics of God's dealings with Job take into account the inward unrest and spiritual uneasiness, which he clearly confesses in verses 25 and 26.

Few also have suspected that perhaps one of the main objectives of Job's trial was to finally put to rest the inward spiritual instability that had plagued him.

There was something amiss in this pious man, that needed divine correction, before he could enjoy the same internal peace, that his outward life, prior to his trial possessed.

It is also worth noting that no man will ever be able to discover true and lasting rest in his soul, until he spiritually discovers the mystery, and/or secret of what it is to truly possess a spiritually broken and contrite spirit. It is this lesson also which is the ultimate purpose of Job's trial.

For not until the heart is divinely brought low, can true peace with God exist.

It is also only in this condition, of possessing a broken heart and a contrite spirit, that those blind to their sin, can be released from its bondage.

***Psalm 34:18 The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.***

*Pulpit Commentary*, Ps. 34:18

*The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and sayeth such as be of a contrite spirit.* On the value in God's sight of a broken and contrite heart, see Psalm [51]:17; and on his mercy towards the truly contrite, see Psalm 147:3; Isaiah 57:15; [66]:2. He "is nigh" to such persons, he "dwells with" them, "looks to them, ... revives their heart, ... heals" them, "saves" them.

There is as much spiritual and eternal profit when men undergo the Lord's trials, than even when they are blessed by Him.

Hence, a trial of God can accomplish so much more to bring sinners closer to the Lord, than even if they were to be physically blessed by Him.

Isaiah's vision is an example of how the heart will be brought low, when truly exposed to God (Isa. 6:1–5), just as the prodigal son's famine, did the same (Luke 15:11–19).

Hence, it is in a state of seeing the Lord, and coming to know our sin, that true humility in the heart is gained. It is also only those who are both humble and contrite, that God looks upon with favor. Job's own life will prove to be an eternal example of this.

***Isaiah 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Isa. 66:2

*But to this man will I look*—That is, 'I prefer a humble heart and a contrite spirit to the most magnificent earthly temple' (see the notes at Isaiah 57:15).

*That is poor*—Or rather 'humble.' The word rendered 'poor' (עָנִי *ʿānîy*), denotes not one who has no property, but one who is down-trodden, crushed, afflicted, oppressed; often, as here, with the accessory idea of pious feeling Exodus 24:12; Psalm 10:2, Psalm 10:9. The Septuagint renders it, Ταπεινὸν *Tapeinon*—'Humble;' not πτωχόν *ptōchon* (poor). The idea is, not that God looks with favor on a poor man merely because he is poor—which is not true, for his favors are not bestowed in view of external conditions in life—but that he regards with favor the man that is humble and subdued in spirit.

*And of a contrite spirit*—A spirit that is broken, crushed, or deeply affected by sin. It stands opposed to a spirit that is proud, haughty, self-confident, and self-righteous.

It is through faith in God and not complaint, that the Lord both hears and answers the prayers of His people, when also His people are aware of their sin, and repentive of it.

To the humble the Lord looks; to the proud He looks away.

## Session 4

# *Job and His Three Friends: The Introduction of Eliphaz*

## *Job 4–5*

### Scriptures

*Job 4:1*

*Job 42:7*

*James 3:1*

*Jeremiah 23:16*

*Job 4:2–11*

*Job 4:12–17*

*Colossians 2:18*

*Ezekiel 13:1–3*

*Jeremiah 23:25–26*

*Genesis 40:8*

*I John 4:1*

*Deuteronomy 13:1–3*

*Job 4:18–21*

*Job 5:1–27*

*John 16:8*

*Hebrews 4:12*

We now come to line D in the structure of Job: D | iii. 1 —xxx. 40. Job and his friends.

It consists of twenty-nine chapters. Since God ultimately reproves Job's words as well as his three friends, one might ask why such an extensive record is given to speeches that the Lord later declares as completely full of error. The answer lies in the fact that the Lord desires to prove that human reason and rationality, no matter how developed it is, and no matter how much time it is given to advance its case, will always come short of any true understanding of the ways of God and His will for man.

Thus, the Lord allows sufficient time for those involved in the trial, to prove that human wisdom, no matter how developed, nor even how religious it is, can release the sinner. This can be done solely by God's Word.

### *Bullinger's Notes on The Book of Job*

We come, therefore, at once to the next member, "D." It is a large one, consisting of twenty-nine chapters. It contains and records the conference of Job with his three friends; the design of which is to show that man, apart from Divine revelation; has not true wisdom and cannot find out or know God: and cannot understand or know himself. Until man has this knowledge, he will neither justify God nor condemn himself. He may understand Jehovah's "works," but His "ways" cannot be known. His works are seen by all; but His ways are secret and hidden, and can be known only by revelation to His People. Hence we read (*Ps. [103:7]*):

*He made known His WAYS unto Moses, His ACTS unto the children of Israel.*

Ample time is given to Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar so that every ounce of human wisdom is given a reasonable chance to help Job in his circumstances.

Thus, for twenty-nine chapters human opinion, speculation, and reason are allowed every viable opportunity to prove themselves totally capable of delivering a man afflicted by Satan, and blind to his own religious pride.

Dr. Bullinger's notes on the Book of Job give us an overview of the general mode of the human analysis of Job's problem, by his three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

*Bullinger's Notes on The Book of Job*  
Eliphaz reasons on human experience.

Bildad reasons on human tradition; while

Zophar reasons on human merit.

If we look at the three colloquies as a whole, the one great lesson for ourselves is this: that man with all his wisdom, and all his powers, cannot get to know God, and cannot meet man's needs. He can neither satisfy the righteous claims of God, nor heal the wounds of the sinner's heart.

All these reasonings were wrong in their conclusions, as they were false in their logic. They reasoned from the particular to the general: i.e., they argued that what they had seen and observed in their own respective spheres was true universally.

They may speak truly of the "works" of God, and of what they had seen in the case of individuals; but it did not follow that they could gather from these few cases what was the law which regulated the "ways" and dealings of God with mankind.

Eliphaz is the first to answer Job's complaints. His three utterances are given (1) chaps. iv., v., (2) chap. xv., and (3) chap. xxii.

His reasonings, as we have said, are based on human experience. He argued from the particular to the general, and hence arrived at a wrong conclusion. He based his argument on his own experience. "As I have seen" is the burden of his speech. As he had "seen" that it was the wicked who always suffer, and the righteous who prosper, so he concluded that as Job was suffering he must therefore have committed some dreadful sin. At first he only insinuates this. He asks Job if he had not noticed the same thing himself.

***Job 4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,***

Eliphaz spoke before the other two either because he was the eldest, or perhaps because he viewed himself the most knowledgeable. Either way, as the first to speak, Eliphaz no doubt considered himself the one most able and skilled to set Job right. Yet as will be later revealed, Eliphaz is the only one of Job's three friends, whom the Lord directly calls out by name, and publicly reproveth for speaking things, concerning both Job, and Himself, which were not right.

***Job 42:7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.***

Since Eliphaz had placed himself first, and viewed himself as the one with the greatest wisdom, the Lord singled him out for being the greatest and most foolish sinner.

He had publicly lifted himself up because of his religious pride, which also he ironically accused Job of. Fittingly the Lord would publicly address Eliphaz as the one who manifested the greatest ignorance.

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 4:1*  
*Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said.* When Job was done cursing his day, and had finished his doleful ditty on that subject, then Eliphaz took the opportunity of speaking, not being able to bear any longer with Job and his behaviour under his afflictions; Eliphaz was one of Job's three friends that came to visit him, Job 2:11; very probably he might be the senior man, or a man of the greatest authority and power; a most respectable person,

had in great esteem and reverence among men, and by these his friends, and therefore takes upon him to speak first; or it may be it was agreed among themselves that he should begin the dispute with Job; and we find, that in the close of this controversy the Lord speaks to him by name, and to him only, Job 42:7;

When men take upon themselves the senior position, as Eliphaz did, and deliver what they think as righteous correction, but are ultimately proven wrong, then they will also need to bear the greatest judgment.

Hence, if men are led by pride to think themselves the most knowledgeable, then they also endanger themselves for receiving the greatest heavenly correction.

Eliphaz was supremely overconfident in his assertions, though he possessed no genuine truth, nor hidden revelation, in anything he said, to actually assist Job in his troubles. By taking the highest seat, he attracted the Lord's attention, and as such became worthy of the most public correction and chastisement. He foolishly thought himself a teacher of God, when in fact his true condition, was actually lower, than the one (Job) he sought to instruct.

***James 3:1 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.***

*Benson Commentary, Jas. 3:1–2*

*Be not many masters—*Διδασκαλοι, teachers. Let none of you rashly, and without proper qualifications, undertake the office of teachers of others; an office into which many are ready to intrude themselves, without being called of God to it. "The great desire which the Jewish Christians, to whom this letter was written, had to become teachers in the church after their conversion, and to inculcate the obligation of the law of Moses, is noticed by St. Paul, 1 Timothy 1:7. *Desiring to be teachers of the law, &c.*—These teachers of the law in the Christian Church were the great corrupters of the gospel." Knowing that—*If we err, we shall receive the greater condemnation*—On account of our taking upon us an office for which we are not qualified, and in the exercise of which more is required of us, in many respects, than of others in a more private station of life.

It is wisdom to know when God has appointed us to speak in His name, but also sometimes even greater wisdom to refrain when God has not given us such an honor.

Ultimately, to properly speak for the Lord, the Lord must first prompt the message, since it is not given to any man to speak on God's behalf, without first receiving the heavenly revelation, concerning what the Lord actually desires spoken.

Hence, no man is given the freedom to come in God's name, or speak on His behalf, without first being called and appointed for such a purpose.

If this principle is not adhered to, then you can be certain that much that is spoken by those who think they know God, does not come from Him.

***Jeremiah 23:16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.***

*Benson Commentary, Jer. 23:16*

*Thus saith the Lord, Harken not unto the words of the prophets*—People are under no religious obligation to hear what is contrary to the revealed will of God, or to obey those who enjoin things which that does not require. *They make you vain*—Or rather, *they deceive you*, as the words may be properly rendered: or they make you trust to and

undertake vain things. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were fed by these false prophets with the vain hopes of being able to drive the Babylonians from their walls, and raise the siege of the city; yea, and of shaking off the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar entirely, and being quite free for the future. *They speak a vision of their own heart*—A pretended vision which they have framed themselves.

Eliphaz, fully confident in his own fleshly and human rationale, begins the first of his discourses recorded in chapters 4, 5, 15, and 22.

*Job 4:2–11 If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?*

<sup>3</sup> *Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.*

<sup>4</sup> *Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.*

<sup>5</sup> *But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.*

<sup>6</sup> *Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?*

<sup>7</sup> *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?*

<sup>8</sup> *Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*

<sup>9</sup> *By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.*

<sup>10</sup> *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.*

<sup>11</sup> *The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.*

Eliphaz very narrowly argues the basis of Job's sin, by what he has seen.

He corrects Job for being a teacher of others, who now, in his own distress, has not even the answers to help himself. He presumes to know Job's guilt, but is woefully ignorant of the wicked forces that are involved in his life.

The real truth also is that Job did not plow iniquity, nor did he sow wickedness, as Eliphaz so erringly and caustically implied.

*Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*

*Job 4:12–17 Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.*

<sup>13</sup> *In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,*

<sup>14</sup> *Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.*

<sup>15</sup> *Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:*

<sup>16</sup> *It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,*

<sup>17</sup> *Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?*

Because we know that Eliphaz had spoken of God that which was not right, then it is hard to hold any confidence in his declared vision (v. 12).

Hence, even if the Lord had given him revelation, which it is abundantly clear He had not, then it is safe to assume that he also could never possess any true interpretation.

It is also worth noting that many in the religious realm have claimed to see things which they actually have never seen, simply because of being puffed up with human conceit and fleshly pride.

As pride will often deceive all those who are driven by it, to falsely presume that they have received something from the Lord, when actually it has only come from their own puffed-up fleshly mind.

***Colossians 2:18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.***

*Benson Commentary, Col. 2:18*

*Intruding into things which he hath not seen*—With great presumption, and pretending to discover wonderful secrets, relating to their various ranks, subordinations, and offices. “The apostle’s meaning,” says Macknight, “is, that the false teachers, of whom he speaks, presumptuously penetrated into the secrets of the invisible world, and talked of them with an air of certainty, without having any knowledge of the things which they affirmed; particularly that the angels intercede with God for men, and that to worship them is acceptable to God.” *Vainly puffed up by his fleshly*—His corrupt and carnal; *mind*—With the conceit of things which it is impossible he should understand, and a desire of introducing novelties into religion.

It is true that the Lord gives men visions, but it is equally true that many who claim to have seen visions, have actually experienced nothing at all.

Undoubtedly, a man may say that God has spoken to him, but this does not mean that he speaks the truth—since many have proclaimed, and do proclaim even today, that they speak for the Lord, when in fact, the Lord has never, even remotely spoken to them.

***Ezekiel 13:1–3 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,***

***<sup>2</sup> Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD;***

***<sup>3</sup> Thus saith the LORD GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!***

So also, as we read in:

***Jeremiah 23:25–26 I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.***

***<sup>26</sup> How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart.***

*Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible, Jer. 23:26*

How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? . . . To invent such lies, and deceive the people, and turn them away from God; agreeably to the preceding and following verses: this shows that this was not through ignorance and inadvertence; it was a meditated and studied thing by them; they contrived it in their hearts, and they were resolute and bent upon it, and took much delight and pleasure in it; their hearts were in it, and it was in them to do as they did; and in this way they had been long, but should continue no longer.

Just as certain that Eliphaz was never given a vision, it is also certain that he was never appointed to be God’s spokesman.

Sincerity is no guarantee for truth, even if many are deceived to believe, that human and fleshly thought, is divine revelation.

***Genesis 40:8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.***

All who claim to speak by the Spirit of the Lord should be tried, to (and) discern whether what is claimed to have come from the Lord, actually has.

There is also absolutely nothing in God's Word that implies, and surely does not command, that Christians should receive all who come in Christ's name, without first careful spiritual and biblical scrutiny, to determine if they truly are who they claim to be.

For this reason every spirit—and/or every man who claims to speak by the Spirit—should be examined, in order that spiritual impostors, do not gain any preeminence or spiritually respected position, in Christ's church.

***I John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:1*

*Beloved, believe not every spirit*—Do not confide implicitly in everyone who professes to be under the influences of the Holy Spirit. Compare Matthew 24:4–5. The true and the false teachers of religion alike claimed to be under the influence of the Spirit of God, and it was of importance that all such pretensions should be examined. It was not to be admitted because anyone claimed to have been sent from God that therefore he was sent. Every such claim should be subjected to the proper proof before it was conceded. All pretensions to divine inspiration, or to being authorised teachers of religion, were to be examined by the proper tests, because there were many false and delusive teachers who set up such claims in the world.

The last point worth considering is why the Lord even allows false prophets and false teachers to remain in this world and does not reveal them as the spiritual counterfeits they really are. The book of Deuteronomy details the answer.

***Deuteronomy 13:1–3 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,  
2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;  
3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.***

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Deut. 13:3*

*Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet*; not receive his doctrine, though the sign come to pass. For although when such a sign or wonder foretold did not follow or come to pass, it was a sign of a false prophet, as is said, Deu 18:22, yet when it did come to pass, it was no sufficient or infallible sign of a true one, especially in such a case when he brings in new gods. The reason of the difference is, because many causes must concur to make a thing good and true, but any one failure is sufficient to make a thing bad or false. And particularly there are many signs, yea, such as men may think to be wonders, which may be wrought by evil spirits, God so permitting it for divers wise and just reasons, not only for the trial of the good, as it here follows, but also for the punishment of ungodly men, who would not receive Divine truths, though attested by many evident and unquestionable miracles, and therefore are most justly exposed to these temptations to believe lies.

*Proveth you*, i.e. trieth your faith, and love, and obedience, examineth your sincerity by your constancy. See Matthew 24:24 2 Thessalonians 2:11 Revelation 13:14.

Ultimately, it is by false prophets, and dreamers of dreams, that the Lord's people are tried, and spiritually proven if they hold true affection for the Lord or not.

To actually know the Lord, a man must first recognize His Spirit. Through then recognizing the Spirit of truth, it is easy to discern who really comes in the Lord's name, and who does not.

*Job 4:18–21 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:*

<sup>19</sup> *How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?*

<sup>20</sup> *They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.*

<sup>21</sup> *Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.*

It is unsurprising that Eliphaz after speaking of his own supposed vision from the Lord, now casts doubt on the Lord putting trust in His servants—as if God would reveal revelation to him, but then exclude others from functioning in a similar ministry.

By this it is observed that pride often prompts men to believe that they alone can be used by God, when in fact, if in pride, they actually have no true connection to Him.

An examination of Eliphaz's words reveals, that all he could really do is speak of God, simply because nothing in his words or his professed wisdom indicates that he was actually sent to speak for God.

No doubt, he was a religious man who liked to talk, but in the end, had very little profitable to say.

And though there are small elements of truth in Eliphaz's words, nothing he said was truly inspired by the Holy Spirit.

This is an important point to remember when reading his claims against Job, lest a small element of truth spoken by him is confused to be the full truth.

It is also true that there are many who hold fragments of a knowledge of God, but in the end possess nothing truly profitable, which can assist in strengthening the spiritual lives of others.

Likewise, it is quite amazing that men like Eliphaz can utter so much concerning the Lord, when in fact the Lord has inspired nothing of what is spoken.

Moreover, partial truth, or spiritually inappropriate truth, is actually not really truth at all.

*Job 5:1–27 Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?*

<sup>2</sup> *For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.*

<sup>3</sup> *I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.*

<sup>4</sup> *His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.*

<sup>5</sup> *Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.*

<sup>6</sup> *Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;*

<sup>7</sup> *Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*

- <sup>8</sup> *I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:*  
<sup>9</sup> *Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:*  
<sup>10</sup> *Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:*  
<sup>11</sup> *To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.*  
<sup>12</sup> *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.*  
<sup>13</sup> *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.*  
<sup>14</sup> *They meet with darkness in the day time, and grope in the noonday as in the night.*  
<sup>15</sup> *But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.*  
<sup>16</sup> *So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.*  
<sup>17</sup> *Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:*  
<sup>18</sup> *For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.*  
<sup>19</sup> *He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.*  
<sup>20</sup> *In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword.*  
<sup>21</sup> *Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.*  
<sup>22</sup> *At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.*  
<sup>23</sup> *For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.*  
<sup>24</sup> *And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.*  
<sup>25</sup> *Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.*  
<sup>26</sup> *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.*  
<sup>27</sup> *Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.*

Through Eliphaz's failed ministry to convict Job of sin, we have the first example of how the reasoning of man, assists nothing in the affairs of God—that human wisdom and supposition cannot convict men of sin, regardless of the robe and garment of religiosity put around it.

For this work it must be God's Holy Spirit, Who alone is able to produce true conviction in the sinner's heart, and therefore prompt him to both recognize and repent for his sin against the Lord.

***John 16:8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.***

In the end, Eliphaz's confidence in his own self-righteous ability did absolutely nothing to help Job's suffering, or to convince him of sin. This same result will be seen in all Eliphaz's other speeches recorded in chapters 15 and 22.

Because Eliphaz was never led by God's Holy Spirit, he was totally incapable of accomplishing a work that the Lord alone must do.

Ultimately, it is God's Word, spoken through the influence of the Holy Spirit, which alone is able to pierce the sinner's heart and bring him to a state of repentance.

It is this same Word of God, spoken by the inspiration of God, which lays open the true inner feelings and thoughts of the human heart, a task that absent divine revelation, cannot be accomplished through human reason and supposition.

***Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Heb. 4:12*

*Sharper than any two-edged sword*—Literally, “two-mouthed” sword—δίστομον *distomon*. . . . The comparison of the Word of God to a sword or to an arrow, is designed to show its power of penetrating the heart . . . The idea is that of piercing, or penetrating; and the meaning here is, that the Word of God reaches the “heart”—the very center of action, and lays open the motives and feelings of the man.



Session 5

*Job's Initial Response to Eliphaz*

*Job 6*

Scriptures

<i>Job 6:1</i>	<i>Job 6:11</i>	<i>Job 6:18</i>	<i>Job 6:27</i>
<i>Job 6:2-3</i>	<i>Job 6:12</i>	<i>Job 6:19</i>	<i>Job 6:28</i>
<i>Job 6:4</i>	<i>Job 6:13</i>	<i>Job 6:20</i>	<i>Job 6:29</i>
<i>Job 6:5</i>	<i>Job 6:14</i>	<i>Job 6:21</i>	<i>Job 6:30</i>
<i>Job 6:6</i>	<i>Job 6:15</i>	<i>Job 6:22-23</i>	<i>Job 15:17</i>
<i>Job 6:7</i>	<i>Job 6:16</i>	<i>Job 6:24-25</i>	<i>Job 22:5-9</i>
<i>Job 6:8-9</i>	<i>Job 6:17</i>	<i>Isaiah 55:11</i>	
<i>Job 6:10</i>	<i>Psalms 60:11</i>	<i>Job 6:26</i>	

*Job 6:1 But Job answered and said,*

*Benson Commentary, Job 6:1*

*Job answered and said*—Eliphaz concluded his discourse with an air of assurance, being very confident that what he had advanced was so plain and so pertinent that nothing could be objected to it. Job, however, is not at all convinced by it, but still justifies himself in his complaints, and condemns his friend for the weakness of his arguing. Though Eliphaz, in the beginning and some other parts of his speech, was very severe upon Job, he gave him no interruption, but heard him patiently till he had delivered his whole mind. But when he had done this, and had finished all he had to say, Job modestly, but feelingly, makes his reply.

*Job 6:2-3 Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!*

<sup>3</sup>*For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.*

In his defense of wrongful correction, Job attributes thoughtlessness on Eliphaz's part. He was an outsider to Job's pain and suffering and therefore lacked the needed empathy in Job's situation. Eliphaz had spoken casually, if even sincerely, but in truth he merely added to Job's misery.

When in pain and sorrow men will often dread that they must speak, and would prefer remaining quiet, especially if it is needed to defend themselves concerning some perceived sin on their part.

*Job 6:4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.*

Not only were Job's afflictions on the outside, but even far more severe than this was the pain he felt in his inward spirit. He envisioned himself attacked by the Lord, which had taken his last ounce of spiritual strength from him.

True believers, which Job surely was, are able to suffer much in this life, but the greatest pain, and one too difficult to bear, is if they wrongly assume that God has forsaken them.

Job, likens his “afflictions arrows, because, like arrows, they came upon him swiftly and suddenly, one after another, and that from on high, and wounded him deeply.”

***Job 6:5 Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?***

Job here likens himself to beasts of the field, that when content and fed are quiet and unassuming but when in pain bray and low because of their distress and agony. Job’s argument is that if creatures of the field have this luxury, why should not he?

***Job 6:6 Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?***

Though commentators differ on the interpretation of this verse, it is certain that when men are under severe trial, previous things that once blessed them seem tasteless and totally unable to provide satisfaction to the soul.

***Job 6:7 The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.***

*Benson Commentary, Job 6:7*

The sense of the verse seems to be, Those grievous afflictions, which I dreaded the very thought of, are now my daily, though sorrowful, bread.

***Job 6:8–9 Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!***

***<sup>9</sup> Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!***

It is not simply that Job hoped to die; it was a request made to God to die. It is also an act of great mercy that God does not answer all prayers.

An unanswered prayer, therefore, can be as equal an expression of divine love as one answered would be deemed to be.

Many times, for the Lord not to grant our requests, is just as benevolent and caring on His part, as if He did grant them.

When lacking the Lord’s Spirit and His Word, man in all natural aspects is woefully ignorant as to what is best for his life. Because of this he will regularly offer pleas to God, that if answered would bring even greater pain and suffering to his life.

In truth, unanswered requests are often the greatest blessings, simply because they are directed by divine will and not human will.

The rashness of a man’s words, as with Jonah (Jnh. 4:8), reveals that men often toy with the idea of death, without really knowing what a great spiritual enemy death is.

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 6:8*

*Oh that I might have my request!* Here the second point is taken up. Eliphaz has threatened Job with death, representing it as the last and most terrible of punishments (Job 4:9, 20, 21; Job 5:2). Job’s reply is that there is nothing he desires so much as death. His primary wish would have been never to have been born (Job 3:3–10); next to that, he would have desired an early death—the earlier the more acceptable (Job 3:11–19). As both these have been denied him, what he now desires, and earnestly asks for, is a speedy demise. It is not as yet clear what he thinks death to be, or whether he has any hope beyond the grave. Putting aside all such considerations, he here simply balances death against such a life as he now leads, and must expect to lead, since his disease is incurable, and

decides in favour of death. It is not only his desire, but his “request” to God, that death may come to him quickly. *And that God would grant me the thing that I long for*; literally, my expectation or wish.

***Job 6:10 Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.***

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 6:10*

*I would harden myself in sorrow*—rather, “I would exult in the pain,” if I knew that that pain would hasten my death [Gesenius]. Umbreit translates the Hebrew of “Let Him not spare,” as “unsparing”; and joins it with “pain.”

*concealed*—I have not disowned, in word or deed, the commands of the Holy One (Ps 119:46; Ac 20:20). He says this in answer to Eliphaz’ insinuation that he is a hypocrite.

***Job 6:11 What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?***

In defending his request of God to die and why it should not be thought unreasonable, Job declares, *What is my strength?* and therefore why should he maintain any desire to remain living in this weakened physical and mental condition? In Job’s mind the hope of ever gaining strength again was far beyond his reach, so why should he wish to live any longer and prolong his life?

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 6:11*

What strength have I, so as to warrant the hope of restoration to health? a hope which Eliphaz had suggested. “And what” but a miserable “end” of life is before me, “that I should” desire to “prolong life”? [Umbreit].

***Job 6:12 Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?***

Is a man’s strength like that of a stone, Job asks, which is impervious to harsh climate and can endure without the least of struggle, the raging of the sea, and all other inclement environments thrown against it?

Is a man’s flesh also as brass, whereby it is likewise impervious to the arrows’ attacks and the spear’s thrust?

Job’s reasoning is that since man is flesh and blood, made of the dust of the earth, and is as mortal as the grass of the field, why should it be thought that he is anything but weak, feeble, and completely vulnerable to so many things so much more powerful than himself?

By what he has suffered, Job now is aware, more than ever, of the weakness of his flesh, and of man in general. The flesh is weak, and those under trial will become painfully conscious of how frail the human condition is, absent God’s Holy Spirit to strengthen it.

***Job 6:13 Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?***

*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Job 6:13*

*Is not my help in me?*—This would be better rendered in an affirmative manner, or as an exclamation. The interrogative form of the previous verses need not be continued in this. The sense is, “alas! there is no help in me!” That is, “I have no strength; I must give up under these sorrows in despair.” So it is rendered by Jerome, Rosenmuller, Good, Noyes, and others.

*And is wisdom quite driven from me?*—This, also, should be read as an affirmation, “deliverance is driven from me.” The word rendered wisdom (תִּשְׁיָאָה *túshîyáh*) means properly a setting upright; then help, deliverance; and then purpose, enterprise; see the notes at Job 5:12. Here it means that all hope of deliverance had fled, and that he was sinking in despair.

***Job 6:14 To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.***

After documenting his own weakness, Job states that it should be pity that is due him, and not as Eliphaz had done, by being completely insensitive to his internal pain and agony.

If Eliphaz also was a true friend, Job reasoned, compassion would fill his heart, not religious judgment.

Job thus attributes the insensitive words of Eliphaz to Eliphaz’s own lack of any true fear of the Lord. Should not he, Eliphaz, be more mindful of God’s judgment in his own life, and not be so causal in his reproof of Job?

No doubt, in difficult times words are important, as they either can heal the human heart, or add salt to an already painful condition.

Eliphaz also would soon learn, the Lord hears all things, and also will ultimately hold men accountable for their words. Eliphaz would come to learn this through his own personal experience of being corrected by the Lord for his own misrepresentation of the truth.

***Job 6:15 My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away;***

Where Job had looked for aid and comfort from his friends, he had discovered that like a stream that vanishes in the summer, gaining any true help from them was hopeless.

***Job 6:16 Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid:***

Here again is another analogy of the vanity and uselessness of Eliphaz’s unjust reproof of Job, which promised deliverance, yet in reality was actually no real help at all.

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 6:16*

*Which are blackish by reason of the ice.* Job seems to have seen wadys where, in the winter-time, the water was actually frozen into hard black ice.

***Job 6:17 What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.***

In respect to the waters spoken of in verse 16, Job now likens Eliphaz and his friends’ help to be soon-vanishing water, which because it does not stem from a spring cannot remain constant, and therefore could not truly be trusted in.

What Job was spiritually learning by personal experience in regard to trusting man is what God’s Word has revealed for millennia, that the help of man is vain.

***Psalms 60:11 Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.***

*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Ps. 60:11*

It is a delusion (cp. Psalm 33:17) to look to human strength for victory.

***Job 6:18 The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.***

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 6:18*  
*turned aside*—rather, “caravans” (Hebrew, “travellers”) turn aside from their way, by circuitous routes, to obtain water. They had seen the brook in spring full of water: and now in the summer heat, on their weary journey, they turn off their road by a devious route to reach the living waters, which they remembered with such pleasure. But, when “they go,” it is “into a desert” [Noyes and Umbreit]. Not as English Version, “They go to nothing,” which would be a tame repetition of the drying up of the waters in Job 6:17; instead of waters, they find an “empty wilderness”; and, not having strength to regain their road, bitterly disappointed, they “perish.”

***Job 6:19 The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.***

*Geneva Study Bible, Job 6:19*  
*The troops of Tema* {} looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.

(1) They who pass by it to go into the hot countries of Arabia, think to find water there to quench their thirst but they are deceived.

***Job 6:20 They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.***

Job likens the help of his friends to dried-up streams and empty water holes, where it might be perceived that help could be found, but in reality could not.

There are also none who place their hope and trust in man, who are not in the end consistently discouraged and let down because of whom they have placed their trust in.

To trust in man is to trust in a fallen creature, flawed with inevitable shortcomings and weakness.

To trust in God, is to trust in a Holy Being, perfect in every respect to assist those who rely upon Him, in their time of need.

***Job 6:21 For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid.***

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 6:21*  
As the dried-up brook is to the caravan, so are ye to me, namely, a nothing; ye might as well not be in existence [Umbreit]. The Margin “like to them,” or “to it” (namely, the waters of the brook), is not so good a reading.

*ye see, and are afraid*—Ye are struck aghast at the sight of my misery, and ye lose presence of mind.

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 6:21*  
*Ye see my casting down, and are afraid.* Here Job penetrates to the motive which had produced the conduct of his friends. They had come with good intentions, meaning to comfort and console him; but when they came, and saw what a wreck he was, how utterly “broken up” and ruined, they began to be afraid of showing too much friendliness. They thought him an object of the Divine vengeance, and feared lest, if they showed him sympathy, they might involve themselves in his punishment.

Though it is possible to lay fault upon Job's friends, as if it would never happen to us, the truth is that even the most spiritual and loyal friend can fail to help in time of need. This was evidenced in Peter when he followed Jesus *afar off* (Matt. 26:58) and then betrayed the very One he had claimed personal allegiance and love toward.

Fear therefore does a great amount of harm to the soul, but never more so than when it prevents men from providing aid and comfort, to those they love, simply because of the fear of coming too close and perhaps suffering the same fate as them.

***Job 6:22–23 Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?  
23 Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?***

Job had not asked for his friends to come, neither had God directed them for such a purpose. They had come through their own choosing, and as a result would be held personally accountable for their actions. They had placed themselves in Job's trial by their own choice, and consequently would very soon need to give an account of their false accusations and assumptions of sin on Job's part.

***Job 6:24–25 Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.***

***25 How forcible are right words! But what doth your arguing reprove?***

Job, revealing his humility, states that he would hold his tongue and not defend himself against Eliphaz's accusations if true understanding and enlightenment could be brought to him regarding sin on his part. This shows that Job was not rigid in his defense, only that his friends' weak human arguments could be easily refuted.

Indeed, Job later proved that he would listen to those wiser than himself when first Elihu and then the Lord began their address.

It is evident that this upright man who feared God was willing to be taught, just not by any more spiritually ignorant than himself.

Job's openness to proper correction is revealed beginning with Elihu's address in chapters 32–37, of which Job offers no defense of his sin, nor refutes any of Elihu's reproof.

Job's willingness to be divinely corrected continues when the Lord Himself reproves Job in chapters 38–42.

Ultimately, Job desired instruction, even if it was correction, and was more than willing to be taught the error of his ways. But this would only be true, if someone was able to actually help him understand how he had sinned against the Lord, and in the manner he had erred.

*Benson Commentary, Job 6:24*

*Teach me*—Instead of censuring and reproaching, instruct and convince me by solid arguments; *and I will hold my tongue*—I will patiently hear and gladly receive your counsels; *and cause me to understand wherein I have erred*—Show me my mistakes and miscarriages; for I am ready to receive your reproofs, and humbly to submit to them. *How forcible are right words!*—The words of truth and solid argument have a marvellous power to convince and persuade a man; and, if yours were such, I should readily yield to them. *But what doth your arguing reprove?*—There is no truth in your assertions, nor weight in your arguments, and therefore they are of no account, and have no power with me.

Job, because of his fear of God, knew both the strength and power of God's true Word. He was more than aware that the inspired Word of God possesses sufficient spiritual ability to pierce the sinner's heart and convince him of sin.

Hence, though Job's friends insinuated that their arguments came from the Lord, Job inherently knew that they were bringing nothing truly of Him.

What this teaches us is this, that where the true Word of God resides and is spoken, and subsequently held forth by those filled with the Holy Spirit, there will always be power and accuracy in its message.

God's Word is more than sufficient to fully accomplish all that He has purposed it should. The words of man—though they may be dressed with religious trimmings—have no such power.

***Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Isa. 55:11

1. That God has a design in giving his Word to people. He has as distinct an intention in his Word as he has in sending down rain upon the earth.

2. That whatever is his design in giving the gospel, it shall be accomplished. It is never spoken in vain, and never fails to produce the effect which he intends. The gospel is no more preached in vain than the rain falls in vain. And though that often falls on barren rocks, or on arid sands; on extended plains where no vegetation is produced, or in the wilderness 'where no man is,' and seems to our eyes in vain, yet it is not so. God has a design in each drop that falls on sands or rocks, as really as in the copious shower that falls on fertile fields. And so the gospel often falls on the hard and barren hearts of men. It is addressed to the proud, the sensual, the avaricious, and the unbelieving, and seems to be spoken in vain, and to return void unto God. But it is not so. He has some design in it, and that will be accomplished.

***Job 6:26 Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?***

*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Job 6:26

*Do ye imagine to reprove words?* i.e. do you think that all your arguments are solid and unanswerable, and all my answers are but idle and empty words? Or do you think it is sufficient to cavil and quarrel with some of my words and expressions, without considering the merits of the cause, and the truth of my condition, or giving an allowance for human infirmity, or for my extreme misery, which may easily force from me some indecent expressions? ...

*Which are as wind*, i.e. which you esteem to be like the wind, vain and light, without solid substance, making a great noise with little sense, and to little purpose. ... Do you take me for a desperate and distracted man, that knows not or cares not what he saith, but only speaks what comes first into his mind and mouth? The *wind* is oft used to express vain words, as Job 15:2 Jeremiah 5:13; and vain things, Job 7:7 Proverbs 11:29.

***Job 6:27 Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.***

Job likened himself to a child alone in his misery, which had no reliable means of help. Job's friends had failed him and had only dug a deeper pit for him to fall into. This is often the characteristic of those who are merely religious, who commonly are not

interested in sincerely helping the broken, but instead their only real aim is to catch them in their words—with the ultimate intent of bringing religious judgment.

This approach was evidenced in the religious leaders in Jesus' day who cared not for the man with the withered hand, but only sought to accuse Christ (Matt. 12:10–13).

***Job 6:28 Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie.***

Though Job was afflicted, he had not lost the discernment to know whether what he had spoke was sincere or not. Eliphaz had attacked Job's character, and in response Job appealed to Eliphaz's own conscience.

*Benson Commentary, Job 6:30*

Is there iniquity in my tongue?—Consider, if there be any iniquity, or untruth, in what I have already said, or shall further speak? Have I hitherto uttered any thing that is faulty? *Cannot my taste discern perverse things*—That is, my understanding, which judges of words and actions, as the palate doth of meats. I hope it is not so corrupted but that I can discern what is bad, though spoken by myself.

In seeking to reason with his friends, Job calls upon them to look upon him so they could more rightly judge if indeed he was the hypocrite that they had so foolishly claimed him to be.

Job knew that with a more careful examination of his life, it would be clearly evident that he had neither lied nor misrepresented himself.

A truly righteous man also will not be hesitant to challenge accusers to more fully scrutinize his life, to either prove or disprove, religious integrity.

Hence, whereas sinners will dread having their life come under divine inspection, a truly righteous man will welcome it.

***Job 6:29 Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.***

Job's spiritual integrity was at stake; thus, he implored his friend to re-examine if he was actually the sinner they claimed him to be. In essence, Job sought a reopening of his case, knowing that if all things were considered and rightly weighed, then it would not be with judgment that he would be looked upon by his friends, but rather shown both mercy and pity.

Job's name, integrity, and righteousness were at stake; understandably, it remained reasonable that sufficient time should be given to rightfully appraise his life, to determine if what he had been accused of, was actually true.

Job knew himself innocent of all charges, and rightfully hoped that with greater spiritual inspection, he would receive a full and complete exoneration.

***Job 6:30 Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my taste discern perverse things?***

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 6:30*

*Is there iniquity?—Or, injustice in my tongue? Is my taste so perverted that it cannot perceive what is perverse?* “Ye appear to think that I am wholly incapable of judging my own cause because it is my own; but if ye will only condescend to return in due course, ye shall find that I know what is right as well as you, and that there is no more vicious reasoning in me than there is with you, and probably less.”

We could continue studying Eliphaz's misjudgments concerning Job, as well as Job's defense of himself; however, this would only clutter the real purpose of the book, by getting lost in the words of those who did not themselves truly know the Lord. If more study is desired, Eliphaz's full message can be found in chapters 15 and 22. In these chapters Eliphaz continues his address by beseeching Job to hear, based primarily on what Eliphaz in his own personal life had seen.

*Job 15:17 I will shew thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare.*

By his third address, because he finds himself unable to convince Job of any wrongdoing, Eliphaz, without any spiritual restraint, accuses Job of crimes far beyond any true verifiable evidence.

The harshness and injustice of Eliphaz's words are recorded in chapter 22:

*Job 22:5-9 Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?*

<sup>6</sup> *For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.*

<sup>7</sup> *Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.*

<sup>8</sup> *But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it.*

<sup>9</sup> *Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.*

When the proud are not heard as they think they should be, their claims and exaggerations about how others have sinned seem to have no limits. This was certainly true of Eliphaz, revealing that a solely self-righteous, and religious man, will stop at nothing, including bringing false accusations against those he claims to desire to help. This will be done in an attempt to remain right in his own eyes.

Because of time constraints only part of Job's initial response to Eliphaz is addressed. The rest can be studied in chapter 7, and then later in chapters 16 and 17, as well as chapters 23 and 24.

In each and every claim against Job, Eliphaz failed to convince Job of sin, or to offer any true understanding as what was necessary for his deliverance.

Though Eliphaz talked much and was supremely confident of Job's perceived sin, in the end he only brought the Lord's condemnation upon himself, a spiritual reality that shall accompany all who come in God's name, but are not led by the Lord's Holy Spirit.



## Session 6

# *Job and His Three Friends: The Introduction of Bildad*

## *Job 8*

### Scriptures

<i>Job 8:1–2</i>	<i>Job 8:7</i>	<i>Job 8:14–15</i>
<i>Job 8:3</i>	<i>Job 8:8</i>	<i>Job 8:16–18</i>
<i>Job 8:4</i>	<i>Job 32:7–9</i>	<i>Job 8:19</i>
<i>Romans 13:10</i>	<i>Job 8:9–10</i>	<i>Job 8:20</i>
<i>Job 8:5–6</i>	<i>Job 8:11–12</i>	<i>Job 8:21–22</i>
<i>Hebrews 4:16</i>	<i>Job 8:13</i>	

*Job 8:1–2 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,  
2 How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?*

Bildad demonstrates little patience toward Job and voices irritation after hearing his rebuttal to Eliphaz as to the cause of his trouble.

Bildad's speech immediately declares not only ignorance on his part but also supreme arrogance.

He likens Job's words to being as a strong wind, claiming him full of pride, and this is the reason that he cannot be persuaded of any personal guilt.

Similar to what we observed in chapter one, when messengers came one by one to inform Job of the loss of all that he owned or cherished, now a similar pattern begins developing when one by one, those who are thought to be Job's friends accuse him of being a sinner. Before it was Eliphaz, now Bildad, and soon it would be Zophar.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:2*

*The words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?*—The Syriac and Arabic (according to Walton) render this, "the spirit of pride fill thy mouth." The Septuagint renders it, "The spirit of thy mouth is profuse of words"—*πολυρῥῆμον polurrēmon*. But the common rendering is undoubtedly correct, and the expression is a very strong and beautiful one. His language of complaint and murmuring was like a tempest. It swept over all barriers, and disregarded all restraint.

*Job 8:3 Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*

Bildad's words, though accurate come not from either the influence or inspiration of God's Holy Spirit.

What this teaches us is that men may speak a measure of truth, but this does not mean they speak for the Lord. Hence, though Bildad's words are accurate, they are spoken generally, without any actual measure of the Spirit leading him.

*Benson Commentary, Job 8:3*

*Doth God*—Hebrew, אֵל, El, the mighty God, as this word signifies; *pervert judgment?*—Judge unrighteously? No: this is inconsistent with God's nature, which is essentially and necessarily just, and with his office of governor of the world. *Or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*—Hebrew, אֱלֹהִים, *Shaddai*, a word that sets forth God's *omnipotence* and *all-sufficiency*. These names are emphatically used to prove that God cannot deal unjustly or falsely with men: because he hath no need so to do, nor temptation to it, being self-sufficient for his own happiness, and being able, by his own invincible power, to do whatsoever pleaseth him.

Though Bildad spoke of God as unable to pervert justice, in truth he should have looked within himself and cast the mote out of his own eye before thinking himself able to cast it out of Job's.

The truth is that what he said of Job was actually indicative of himself. The Lord had given him no spiritual right to chastise Job, and it was his own pride and arrogance which prompted him to do so.

***Job 8:4 If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;***

Bildad's words reveal his complete and total lack of compassion toward Job when speaking of the death of his children. The death of one child is unbearably painful, let alone the deaths of all of one's children.

If men are not prompted by love, or led by God's Holy Spirit, then even if their speech contains elements of truth, they do not speak for God.

If a man also lacks divine love, then any other thoughts he may think he possesses of God, or of His reasons for divine judgment cannot be accurate.

Perhaps Job's children had reaped as they had sown, but bringing up their deaths reveals immense spiritual insensitivity on Bildad's part. Truth delivers; it does not injure.

***Romans 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.***

To love fulfills divine law, and as such can only generate good to those around us.

***Job 8:5–6 If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;***

***<sup>6</sup> If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.***

It is amazing how right a man's words can initially seem to be without careful spiritual inspection.

Bildad now claims, not simply by insinuation but by accusation, that if Job were actually pure and upright, then God would hear him and rise to answer his pleas; that it was because of the sin of hypocrisy on Job's part, that prohibited the Lord from answering Job's prayers.

Bildad's words continue, but with the very shaky premise that if Job were truly pure and upright, then the Lord would respond to his pain.

The truth is, near the end of the record the Lord actually does, exactly as Bildad accused Him of not doing here.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:6*

*If thou wert pure and upright— . . . Nothing could be more unjust and severe, however, than to take it for granted that he was a hypocrite, and then proceed to argue as if that were a settled point. He does not make it a supposition that possibly Job might have erred—which would not have been improper; but he proceeds to argue as if it were a point about which there could be no hesitation.*

Bildad speaks of men being upright before the Lord as if it were a small thing—as if man in his sinful state could ever be pure in the Lord's eyes without the Lord making him such.

It is also not because of a man's uprightness and purity that any are saved, but only because of divine acts of mercy and grace.

It is also only religious hypocrites who do not know this, and Job surely was not one of these.

It should be noted as well that true religion does not make a man pure but rather reveals to him how impure he really is.

The truth also is that any prayer, heard and answered by God, comes from a sinner to some degree. This is because even godly men are sinful men. Hence, if God were to hear only those without sin, then none could be actually heard at all, since no prayer answered by the Lord could ever be based solely on the worthiness of man.

God's throne is a throne of mercy and grace, which is what is necessary to assist those in time of need.

It is because of mercy and not worth that men are delivered, and only when this is truly understood, that true confidence in God can be held.

***Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.***

Bildad speaks of Job as though he were not pure and upright, and to this Job replies, "Who then can be?" Only the self-righteous, like the Pharisee in Jesus' parable in Luke 18, think themselves worthy to stand in God's holy presence on their own merits, whose belief system is set in stark contrast to the publican in the very same parable, who, repentant of his sinful condition, pleads for divine mercy.

Job was aware, at least to a degree, of the sinner's unholy state. This is seen in the burnt offerings he presented to the Lord on behalf of his children in chapter one. Job's sacrifices reveal his consciousness of sin and the need for its atonement.

What Job knew concerning atonement for sin, was far more than Bildad knew, who assumed he had none.

***Job 8:7 Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.***

Though Bildad's words would be proven true, they were not because of anything divinely revealed to him by God. It is also common that those who are not led by God's Holy Spirit, and reveal themselves as false prophets, will often prophesy good, when in fact they have not received, nor have been taught anything truly from the

Lord. Examples include the 400 false prophets in I Kings 22:1–38, and Hananiah the false prophet in Jeremiah's time in Jer. 28:1–17.

***Job 8:8 For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:***

Bildad here appeals to Job to consider the past—to search in history for answers concerning the present.

The truth is, wisdom is not always found in a former age, or in the lives of our forefathers. Elihu addresses this issue in chapter 32 when he speaks of what length of years should accomplish but seldom do.

***Job 32:7–9 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.  
8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.***

***9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.***

It is not merely what a man has seen, either with his own eyes, or the experiences of others, that imparts true wisdom. For this there is needed, the *inspiration of the Almighty*.

It is thus only from the Lord and divine revelation that true understanding can enter the sinner's heart.

And though human history does afford some measure of instruction, the truly deep things of both God and life are only discovered through spiritual inspiration.

***Job 8:9–10 (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)***

***10 Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?***

Again, Bildad states that present knowledge is insufficient; consequently, men should inquire in the past, if they desire to possess true knowledge.

Ultimately, whatever men actually trust in, is where they will search for life's answers.

Thus, he who trusts in himself, will look within himself as a means to guide his path, even as those who look to others as holding the keys to life, will place their trust in man.

To trust in man though is to depart from God.

It is also not natural wisdom, which is the true source of wisdom; rather, it is that spiritual wisdom which originates from above and is imparted through the Spirit of God.

***Job 8:11–12 Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?  
12 Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb.***

Here Bildad refers to two marsh plants common in the area to illustrate the short and very limited prosperity of the hypocrite. He points out that hypocrites may flourish for a time, but their time of prosperity will be momentary and shall very quickly wither away.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:11–12*

The word “rush” here (goam) גֹּמֶה *gôme*’ denotes properly a bulrush, and especially the Egyptian papyrus (puh-PIE-russ)—*papyrus Nilotica*; see the notes at Isaiah 18:2. It is derived from the verb (GAH-mah) גָּמַח *gâmâ*’, to absorb, to drink up, and is given to this plant because it absorbs or drinks up moisture. . . .

*Without mire*—Without moisture. It grew in the marshy places along the Nile.

*Can the flag*—Another plant of a similar character. The word (ah-HOO) אֶחָוִי *’âchû*, flag, says (Je-sen-ee-us) Gesenius, is an Egyptian word, signifying marsh-grass, reeds, bulrushes, sedge, everything which grows in wet grounds. . . . Jerome says of it, “When I inquired of the learned what this word meant, I heard from the Egyptians, that by this name everything was intended in their language which grew up in a pool.” The word is synonymous with rush, or bulrush, and denotes a plant which absorbs a great quantity of water. What is the exact idea which this figure is designed to convey, is not very clear. I think it probable that the whole description is intended to represent a hypocrite, and that the meaning is, that he had in his growth a strong resemblance to such a rush or reed. There was nothing solid or substantial in his piety. It was like the soft, spongy texture of the water-reed, and would wilt under trial, as the papyrus would when deprived of water. . . .

*And is not cut down*—Even when it is not cut down. If suffered to stand by itself, and if undisturbed, it will wither away. The application of this is obvious and beautiful. Such plants have no self sustaining power. They are dependent on moisture for their support. If that is withheld, they droop and die. So with the prosperous sinner and the hypocrite. His piety, compared with that which is genuine, is like the spongy texture of the paper-reed compared with the solid oak. He is sustained in his professed religion by outward prosperity, as the rush is nourished by moisture; and the moment his prosperity is withdrawn, his religion droops and dies like the flag without water.

***Job 8:13 So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish:***

Bildad’s words accuse Job of only possessing outward religion, and that Job was in fact a hypocrite at heart. From Bildad’s puerile perspective, Job’s life had crashed because of the insincerity of his faith.

Job’s life, he concludes, was like that of marshy plants, which can endure only in the wet season, when there is sufficient moisture to keep them alive, but in times of drought, will soon wither away.

And though it is true that the hypocrite’s hope will perish, this surely would not be Job’s end.

As for hypocrisy, God’s Word teaches us that its roots stretch deep into man’s past, all the way back to his beginning. Hence, even in the time of Job, religious hypocrisy was as present, prevalent, and pervasive as it is today.

Yet, Job was not such a hypocrite as Bildad implied.

In truth, if there existed religious hypocrisy, it would be found in Bildad, long before it could ever be either discovered or proved to be in Job.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:13*

That there were hypocrites even in that early age of the world. They are confined to no period, or country, or religious denomination, or profession. There are hypocrites in religion—and so there are in politics, and in business, and in friendship, and in

morals. There are pretended friends, and pretended patriots, and pretended lovers of virtue, whose hearts are false and hollow, just as there are pretended friends of religion. Wherever there is genuine coin, it will be likely to be counterfeited; and the fact of a counterfeit is always a tribute to the intrinsic worth of the coin—for who would be at the pains to counterfeit that which is worthless? The fact that there are hypocrites in the church, is an involuntary tribute to the excellency of religion.

Though what Bildad believed concerning Job was not true, what he spoke of the hypocrite's end surely is.

Hypocrisy is that ostentatious behavior in man, wherein God is honored, but the heart remains estranged from Him.

Ultimately, the hypocrite's actions are purposed to please men, since it is from them that hypocrites desire to gain their true recognition.

The hypocrite also, blind to the true reality of the Lord, will set about to live his religious life seeking to gain both praise and acclaim for himself.

Hypocrites are worshipers of themselves who, remain ignorant of any true knowledge of God, as well as the divine judgment awaiting them.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:13*

The hypocrite has a hope of eternal life. This hope is founded on various things. It may be on his own morality; it may be on the expectation that he will be able to practice a deception; it may be on some wholly false and unfounded view of the character and plans of God. Or taking the word "hypocrite" in a larger sense to denote anyone who pretends to religion and who has none, this hope may be founded on some change of feeling which he has had, and which he mistook for religion; on some supposed vision which he had of the cross or of the Redeemer, or on the mere subsiding of the alarm which an awakened sinner experiences, and the comparative peace consequent on that. The mere cessation of fear produces a kind of peace—as the ocean is calm and beautiful after a storm—no matter what may be the cause, whether it be true religion or any other cause. Many a sinner, who has lost his convictions for sin in any way, mistakes the temporary calm which succeeds for true religion, and embraces the hope of the hypocrite.

***Job 8:14–15 Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.  
15 He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.***

Continuing with the theme of the frailty of the hypocrite and how his life cannot endure trial, Bildad references the spider vainly trying to hold its web together when other creatures far stronger than it pass through its web, but cannot because of the weak silk it is made of. Such then is the hypocrite's life, Bildad reasons, which cannot stand up to life's trials because of lack of true spiritual strength and integrity.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:15*

*He shall lean upon his house*—This is an allusion to the web or house of the spider. The hope of the hypocrite is called the house which he has built for himself; his home, his refuge, his support. But it shall fail him. In times of trial he will trust to it for support, and it will be found to be as frail as the web of the spider. How little the light and slender thread which a spider spins would avail a man for support in time of danger! So frail and unsubstantial will be the hope of the hypocrite! It is impossible to conceive any figure which would more strongly describe the utter vanity of the hopes of the wicked.

... *He shall hold it fast*—Or, he shall lay hold on it to sustain him, denoting the avidity with which the hypocrite seizes upon his hope. The figure is still taken from the spider, and is an instance of a careful observation of the habits of that insect. The idea is, that the spider, when a high wind or a tempest blows, seizes upon its slender web to sustain itself. But it is insufficient. The wind sweeps all away. So the tempest of calamity sweeps away the hypocrite, though he grasps at his hope, and would seek security in that, as a spider does in the light and tenuous thread which it has spun.

All that Bildad states concerning the hypocrite is true; it is just not true of Job.

Bildad continues with another comparison, and it is a strong one revealing how even the earth will disown the hypocrite.

***Job 8:16–18 He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.***

<sup>17</sup> ***His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.***

<sup>18</sup> ***If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.***

Such is the end of the hypocrite, that even the earth which was the cradle of his birth, will one day disassociate itself from him.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:18*

*Then it shall deny him*—That is, the soil, the earth, or the place where it stood. This represents a wicked man under the image of a tree. The figure is beautiful. The earth will be ashamed of it; ashamed that it sustained the tree; ashamed that it ever ministered any nutriment, and will refuse to own it. So with the hypocrite. He shall pass away as if the earth refused to own him, or to retain any recollection of him.

*I have not seen thee*—I never knew thee. It shall utterly deny any acquaintance with it. There is a striking resemblance here to the language which the Savior says he will use respecting the hypocrite in the day of judgment: “and then will I profess to them, I never knew you;” Matthew 7:23. The hypocrite has never been known as a pious man. The earth will refuse to own him as such, and so will the heavens.

Other translations of verse 18 confirm this future reality.

(NIV) *But when it is torn from its spot, that place disowns it and says, ‘I never saw you.*

(NLT) *But when it is uprooted, it’s as though it never existed!*

(ESV) *If he is destroyed from his place, then it will deny him, saying, ‘I have never seen you.’*

***Job 8:19 Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:19*

*Behold, this is the joy of his way*—This is evidently sarcastic. “Lo! such is the joy of his course! He boasts of joy, as all hypocrites do, but his joy endures only for a little time. This is the end of it. He is cut down and removed, and the earth and the heavens disown him!”

*And out of the earth shall others grow*—This image is still derived from the tree or plant. The meaning is, that such a plant would be taken away, and that others would spring up in its place which the earth would not be ashamed of. So the hypocrite is removed to make way for others who will be sincere, and who will be useful. Hypocrites and useless people in the church are removed to make way for others who will be active and devoted to the cause of the Redeemer.

The Lord's promise is that all false religion will one day be replaced by true religion, that all false worshipers shall be supplanted by true worshipers: *out of the earth shall others grow.*

Though hypocrites may have a temporary influence, in the end only those with genuine faith and uprightness of heart will inherit the earth. This was God's promise to Israel, and it shall be fulfilled.

There is no lasting and substantial hope for any who do not love, obey, and keep the Lord's commandments out of a sincere and pure heart, but instead feign obedience to God, though their hearts are actually far from Him.

***Job 8:20 Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers:***

Bildad's words now shift to a very general reality, and though the words spoken again contain some truth, they are once more in error concerning Job.

It is amazing, as it will always be with the merely religious, that they can hold the truth, but the truth does not hold them: that though they have had exposure to God, they have no idea how their limited spiritual knowledge should be properly applied to either their own lives, or the lives of others.

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 8:20*

*Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man.* ... If Job is, as he says, true to God, upright, and (humanly speaking) "perfect," then he has only to go on trusting God; God will not leave him "till he fill his mouth with laughing, and his lips with rejoicing" (ver. 21); then "they that irate him shall be clothed with shame, and their dwelling-place shall come to nought" (ver. 22); but if, as we feel instinctively that Bildad believes, Job is not "perfect," but "an evil-doer," then he must expect no relief, no lull in his sufferings; he is obnoxious to all the threatenings which have formed the bulk of Bildad's discourse (vers. 8–20)—he may look to being cut off, like the rush and the flag (vers. 11, 12), crushed like the spider's web (ver. 14), destroyed, and forgotten, like the rapidly growing gourd (vers. 16–19); he must look for no help from God (ver. 20); but must be contented to pass away and make room for men of a better stamp (ver. 19).

***Job 8:21–22 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.***

***<sup>22</sup> They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought.***

Bildad concludes that if Job is truly penitent and righteous, this will be his end. Bildad's words are not nearly as harsh as the judgments he uttered concerning hypocrites, but they are not based on any known wisdom on his part.

God has not revealed to Bildad Job's end, and it was presumptuous for him to think he knew it.

In the end, Bildad could (at least he thought) identify Job's sin, but he could not (as his words prove) help deliver Job from it.

Sadly, it takes very little wisdom to perceive sin in others—it is abundant, and can be observed quite easily. What is difficult, and will require divine assistance, is to find an escape from sin, and not simply utter words of condemnation, which in the end also will only result in bringing condemnation upon ourselves.

Session 7

*Job's Initial Response to Bildad*

*Job 9*

Scriptures

<i>Job 9:1-2</i>	<i>Job 9:9</i>	<i>Job 9:16</i>	<i>Job 9:24</i>
<i>Romans 8:8</i>	<i>Isaiah 40:26</i>	<i>Job 9:17</i>	<i>Job 9:25-26</i>
<i>Romans 3:20</i>	<i>Job 9:10</i>	<i>Job 9:18</i>	<i>Job 9:27</i>
<i>Phillipians 3:9</i>	<i>Job 9:11</i>	<i>Job 9:19</i>	<i>Psalms 147:3</i>
<i>Job 9:3</i>	<i>Job 42:5</i>	<i>Job 9:20</i>	<i>Job 9:28</i>
<i>Job 9:4</i>	<i>Job 9:12</i>	<i>Job 9:21</i>	<i>Job 9:29</i>
<i>Job 9:5-6</i>	<i>Job 9:13</i>	<i>Job 9:22</i>	<i>Job 9:30-31</i>
<i>II Peter 3:10</i>	<i>Job 9:14</i>	<i>Job 9:23</i>	<i>Job 9:32-33</i>
<i>Job 9:7-8</i>	<i>Job 9:15</i>	<i>Job 40:8</i>	<i>Job 9:34-35</i>

*Job 9:1-2 Then Job answered and said,*

<sup>2</sup> *I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?*

On the charges of Bildad claiming him to be a hypocrite, Job utters these memorable and instructive words:

*But how should man be just with God?*

No greater question has ever been asked, and every truly godly man will seek the Lord for its answer.

How, then, can mortal and sinful man, which all men are at their core, ever be found worthy of a holy and eternal God?

Bildad had spoken much of Job's perceived sin, but could not provide any actual wisdom on how sinners can be accounted as righteous before God.

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 9:2*

I know it is so, to wit, as you say, that God is just in all his ways, that he doth ordinarily bless the righteous, and punish the wicked.

But how should man be just? Heb. *and how*, &c.? i.e. and I know that no man is absolutely just, or can defend his righteousness, if God be severe to mark what is amiss in him.

The question Job asks is one that those conscious of their fallen nature have inquired into for ages: how can a man through his flesh and his own innate and natural ability, transform himself to be found just before a holy God?

The truth is that it is beyond his capacity to do so, since to be found acceptable unto the Lord through personal holiness is, as the Scripture reveals, completely unattainable.

In man's natural state of being in the flesh, it is impossible to gain divine justification through self-improvement.

*Romans 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

This will include even if God's law is used in an attempt to do so.

***Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.***

In this sinfully-born condition even religious education cannot help the sinner to be found just before God.

Because of this truth, that through themselves sinners cannot make themselves sufficiently righteous before God, another means for gaining righteousness is needed to be introduced.

This path resides not in man, but rather through faith in God's Son, simply because no man will be found just before the Lord, absent faith in the One He has provided to make him that way.

***Philippians 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:***

It is this *righteousness* which has God as its source, and not man, which allows for sinners to be made righteous, just, and acceptable unto God. Through then faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God's righteousness can be imparted to the sinner.

Hence, though Job did not know it at this time in history, it would later be revealed with the coming of Christ, that faith in Him, and not improvement of self, is the only way for sinners to truly be justified and stand righteous before a holy, pure, and eternal God.

***Job 9:3 If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.***

If a man is sincere and does not deceive himself, he knows that regardless of whatever sin or transgression the Lord charges him with, he will not be able to mount an adequate and proper defense to acquit himself.

Job knew, that if even one sin in a thousand were brought against him, he could not defend it, and would be righteously condemned by God.

Job is fully aware of this spiritual reality to the point of discouragement, that sinners on their own can never be found just before a holy God, simply because they could never give an account, or defend even one of their sins as acceptable to Him.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:3*

The word "thousand" here is used to denote the largest number, or all. A man who could not answer for one charge brought against him out of a thousand, must be held to be guilty; and the expression here is equivalent to saying that he could not answer him at all. It may also be implied that God has many charges against man. His sins are to be reckoned by thousands. They are numerous as his years, his months, his weeks, his days, his hours, his moments; numerous as his privileges, his deeds, and his thoughts. For not one of those sins can he answer. He can give no satisfactory account before an impartial tribunal for any of them. If so, how deeply guilty is man before God! How glorious that plan of justification by which he can be freed from this long list of offences, and treated as though he had not sinned.

***Job 9:4a He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength:***

No man can match God's wisdom, neither can they His might. To contend with the Lord, Job declares, shall only result in bringing more pain and suffering upon oneself.

***Job 9:4b Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?***

Though Job was not aware of how any could be found just before God, he was fully aware that hardening himself against the Lord was not the answer.

To harden oneself against God, is to go against all the natural and spiritual laws in the universe.

To engage in this sinful behavior cannot lead to prosperity. This includes either the prosperity of the soul, or the life.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:4*

Prosperity is not found in opposing God. It is only by falling in with his arrangements and following his designs. A prosperous voyage is made by falling in with winds and currents, and not in opposing them; prosperous agriculture is carried on by coinciding with the favorable seasons of the year, and taking advantage of the dews, and rains, and sunbeams that God sends, and not in opposing them; prosperity in regard to health is found in taking advantage of the means which God gives to secure it, and not in opposing them. And the sinner in his course has no more chance of success and prosperity, than a man would have who should make it a point or principle of life always to sail against tides, and currents, and head winds; or he who should set at defiance all the laws of husbandry, and plant on a rock, or in the dead of winter; or he who should feed himself on poison rather than on nutritious food, and cultivate the nightshade rather than wheat. The great principle is, that if a man desires prosperity, he must fall in with the arrangements of God in his providence and grace; and wisdom is seen in studying these arrangements, and in yielding to them.

Pharaoh is an example of hardening the heart (Exod. 7:22), but he is just one of many who have suffered the awful consequences of resisting divine will. The religious leaders in Jesus' day also hardened themselves against the Lord, and as a result, crucified the very One sent by God to save them (Matt. 20:18-19).

At the base of a hard heart, is the stubborn desire to do one's own will. It is this hardening in pride, which God's Word warns believers to avoid at all cost, because if engaged in, the Lord has sworn concerning any who do so, *They shall not enter into my rest.*

To harden the heart against God, is to ultimately depart from Him, from which there can be no return. He who willfully hardens his heart against the Lord, shall receive as divine judgment, being eternally cut off from Him. This was true concerning Israel, even as it will prove equally true with us.

To harden the heart against submitting to divine will, can have no other result than forfeiting any chance of gaining eternal life. This hardening will include either against God, or those born of Him. For just as none can truly love the Lord without loving those born of Him, so also cannot sinners harden themselves against either the children and/or messengers of God, and still remain saved in God's sight. This was evidenced in Israel, when they were led by Korah, and both gathered and conspired against Moses and Aaron to overthrow their spiritual leadership.

***Job 9:5-6 Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger.***

***<sup>6</sup> Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.***

As the Scripture reveals, the Lord's power shall one day consume the entire earth, and prompt it to be dissolved and melt with a fervent heat.

***II Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.***

He Who is able to remove mountains from their bases, is easily able to remove and vanquish from the earth, all, and any, hardened in pride against His will.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:5*

*Which removeth the mountains*—In order to show how vain it was to contend with God, Job refers to some exhibitions of his power and greatness. The "removal of the mountains" here denotes the changes which occur in earthquakes and other violent convulsions of nature. This illustration of the power of God is often referred to in the Scriptures; compare Judges 5:5; 1 Kings 19:11; Psalm 65:6; Psalm 114:4; Psalm 144:5; Isaiah 40:12; Jeremiah 4:24.

***Job 9:7–8 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.  
8 Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.***

It is amazing that the very One Who has called us to be His own and allowed us to cry, "Abba, Father," has such spiritual power over all things.

None also can claim that they truly know the Lord, if still ignorant of His ability to either dispose of, or lift up, anything and everything He so wills, including creation itself.

***Job 9:9 Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.***

Much knowledge has been lost concerning the study of the stars and the role they play in revealing God's glory. How also the stars foretold the coming of God's Son, as well as displaying the mercy of God which endures forever. It has been confirmed by science that the universe extends in all directions equally—no area of the heavens is more densely populated than the other, nor are there large gaps between constellations, since all are spread out equally, and fill up the entire heavens in every direction.

***Isaiah 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.***

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Isa. 40:26*

Not one faileth, either to appear when he calleth them, or to do the work to which he sends them.

The heavens are in all respects a finished work. They are God's handiwork upon which no part of the canvas has not been touched by the Lord's brush.

It is also evident in relationship to the stars, that the more artificial light increases on the earth, the more sinners become removed from the Lord's celestial lights, which themselves reveal both the Lord's power and godhead.

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 9:9*

Arcturus is a northern constellation, near that called the Bear, which riseth to us about the beginning of September, and by its rising produceth (as Pliny affirms) horrible storms and tempests. Orion is a more southerly constellation, that ariseth to us in December,

and is noted by astronomers for raising fearful winds and tempests, both by sea and land. The Pleiades is a constellation not far from Orion, and near that called the Bull, which we call the Seven Stars: to us it riseth at the beginning of the spring, and by its rising causeth rains and tempests, and therefore is unwelcome to mariners at sea. *By the chambers* (or *inmost and secret chambers*, as the word signifies) *of the south*, he seems to understand those stars and constellations which are towards the southern pole, which are fitly called *inward chambers*, because they are for the most part hid and shut up (as chambers commonly are) from these parts of the world, and do not rise or appear to us till the beginning of summer, when they also raise southerly winds and tempests, as astronomers observe.

***Job 9:10 Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.***

The wonders the Lord has performed in creation are past finding out. They are too marvelous to comprehend and remain unfathomable to human understanding.

Such, then, are the works of the Lord, which remain beyond the ability of any man to either properly count, or naturally perceive. Other translations give us a more full sense of this passage.

(NIV) *He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.*

(NLT) *He does great things too marvelous to understand. He performs countless miracles.*

(NASB) *It is He who does great things, [a]the unfathomable, And wondrous works without number. a. Literally until there is no searching out.*

(AMP) *Who does great things, [beyond understanding,] unfathomable, Yes, marvelous and wondrous things without number.*

***Job 9:11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.***

Here Job confesses how blind he is to God's presence. By sinners not perceiving God, they falsely assume that He is not highly involved in trying to save them.

All sinners also are naturally blind to the Lord until He chooses to reveal Himself to them.

It is also generally true that the Lord will open a man's ears before He does his eyes—that He will speak to the heart, before the eyes are brought to see Him.

***Job 42:5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.***

*Benson Commentary, Job 9:11*

*And I see him not*—I see the effects, but I cannot understand the causes or grounds of his actions, for they are incomprehensible to me, or any other man: for though Job speaks only in his own person, yet he means to affirm it of all men, that such is the weakness of their understandings that they cannot search out God's counsels and ways. . . . *He passeth on also*—He goeth from place to place; from one action to another. *But I perceive him not*—He passes and acts invisibly and undiscerned.

***Job 9:12 Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?***

Job's awareness of God's power is seen here, that if the Lord chooses to take something away, then He can in no way be hindered, nor questioned in what He has done.

God's verdicts are the final ruling, and man has neither the power to either change or appeal them.

Sinners also have both individually and collectively since the beginning of time sought to overthrow God's sovereignty, reject His will, and despise His commandments, but none have succeeded, and each have failed.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:12*  
*Behold, he taketh away—property, friends, or life.*

*Who can hinder him?*—Margin, turn him away. Or, rather, "who shall cause him to restore?" that is, who can bring back what he takes away? He is so mighty, that what he removes, it is impossible for us to recover.

*Who will say unto him, What doest thou?*—A similar expression occurs in Daniel 4:35. The meaning is plain. God has a right to remove any thing which we possess. Our friends, property, health, and lives, are his gift, and he has a right to them all. When he takes them away, he is but taking that which is his own, and which has been lent to us for a little time, and which he has a right to remove when it seems good to him. This truth Job fully admits, and in the calm contemplation of all his losses and his sorrows, he acknowledges that God had a right to do as he had done; see note, Job 1:21.

In truth, every event in Job's life, whether he was aware of it or not, was according to divine will. The spiritual lessons that Job needed taught were deep and profound, and only an arduous trial purposed by the Lord could help him actually learn them.

Sadly, it is often the case that, to be brought to true sight of the Lord, the introduction of a spiritual trial is a necessary evil.

It is also only as men personally experience certain things in their life, including pain and suffering, that they can be brought to the true meaning of life. Hence, if there is no better way to come to understand our ignorance of the Lord, or the sin in ourselves, then some level of tragedy may be needed to awaken us.

***Job 9:13 If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:13*  
So Dr. Good renders it, "the supports of the proud." The meaning is, probably, that all those things which contribute to the support of pride, or all those persons who are allied together to maintain the dominion of pride on the earth, must sink under the wrath of God.

***Job 9:14 How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him?***

Job inwardly knew of his inferiority to properly approach the Lord and present sufficient spiritual wisdom to reason with Him. No man also will feel so small in God's sight, than when he is made to mount a credible defense of his sin.

Understandably, sinners are spiritually unworthy of addressing the Lord, and their innate natural timidity before Him proves this.

***Job 9:15 Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.***

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 9:15*

Job is still righteous in his own eyes, ch. 32:1, and this answer, though it sets forth the power and majesty of God, implies that the question between the afflicted and the Lord of providence, is a question of might, and not of right; and we begin to discover the evil fruits of pride and of a self-righteous spirit. Job begins to manifest a disposition to condemn God, that he may justify himself, for which he is afterwards reprov'd.

Many a man has sought to maintain a stubborn belief of internal righteousness through remaining silent. Silence therefore can be as much a sign of a man refusing to hear the truth, or submit to divine will, as any outward and spoken resistance. Silence therefore does not always necessarily prove a man innocent; in fact, it generally proves him quite the opposite.

***Job 9:16 If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.***

When men are faced with tragedy and believe it to be the Lord's doing, they often lose confidence that they can still be heard by Him.

Feeling removed from God's presence, those in pain consistently refuse to believe that God remains open to their prayers, and willing to come to their aid.

What the afflicted feel though, is not actually true, as all prayers of faith, which are in accordance with divine will, shall be both heard and answered by God.

Moreover, just because the broken do not believe that they can be healed by the Lord through prayer, does not mean that they cannot be. There are many things that God can do for a man if approached in prayer, which extend far beyond the reason of the one, who is offering the prayer.

***Job 9:17 For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.***

Job believes that the events which had manifested themselves as storms, and which had overwhelmed his life, were without divine cause or reason.

He considered that the Lord had acted unjustly toward him, without proper cause, absent also judicial fairness.

Job foolishly thinks God an autocrat, Who had used His power impetuously and without sufficient spiritual reason.

This is a common human opinion of those who have lost their trust in God.

Viewing the Lord like the imaginary Greek gods Ares and Poseidon—who were both known and feared for their hot tempers, and who were thought to act and judge impulsively—sinners likewise often believe that God brings judgment upon their lives, without either sufficient cause, or reasonable excuse.

***Job 9:18 He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.***

If before Job's contention with the Lord was not previously obvious, it is now. He blames Him for the torrents of assaults against his life which did not even allow him to catch his breath.

He blames the Lord for his sorrow, misery, and bitterness, and thus sees no connection to any sin, in any manner on his part.

To blame and accuse the Lord of injustice is a constant refrain of those who know not the sin in themselves.

***Job 9:19 If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?***

Not only had God afflicted him, reasoned Job, but He had also been unfair in not allowing him to plead his case. Yea, according to Job, the Lord had produced his misery, and then, to compound the injustice, He had not even given him a chance to stand trial and/or defend himself.

He had been unjustly wronged, Job foolishly surmised, and the Lord had compounded His sin, by withholding the opportunity for him to plead a fair defense.

***Job 9:20 If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.***

When a man views himself as a victim, he will view even his carnal and sinful condition as a reason for victimization.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:20*

Did a man ever yet undertake to repel the charges of guilt brought against him by his Maker, and to prove that he was innocent, in which he did not himself show the truth of what he was denying?

***Job 9:21 Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.***

Other translations help us to more properly understand this verse.

(NLT) *"I am innocent, but it makes no difference to me— I despise my life.*

(Christian Standard Bible) *Though I am blameless, I no longer care about myself; I renounce my life.*

(Contemporary English Version) *I am not guilty, but I no longer care what happens to me.*

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:21*

*Yet would I not know my soul— ...* So clear does this seem to me, that I have no doubt that Job expressed more than three thousand years ago what will be found true to the end of time—that if a man advances the claim to absolute perfection, it is conclusive proof that he does not know his own heart. A superficial view of ourselves, mingled with pride and vanity, may lead us to think that we are wholly free from sin.

***Job 9:22 This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.***

In an attempt to justify himself, Job lays the charge against God, that *He destroyeth both the perfect and the wicked*, that the Lord destroys good men, just as He does the bad.

Consequently, why should any man seek to walk uprightly before Him? Believing this distortion to be true, is the only way Job can reason the absence of sin in himself.

***Job 9:23 If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.***

How harsh, false, and in error are Job's words, that God laughs and disregards the cries of the innocent, when in fact harming the innocent is one of the things that the Lord declares He hates.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 9:23*

...He laughs at (disregards; not derides) the pining away of the innocent." The only difference, says Job, between the innocent and guilty is, the latter are slain by a sudden stroke...

Such is often the case with the afflicted, who because they deem themselves as wholly innocent, subsequently blame the Lord for committing violent crimes, against them. Sinners will regularly do this, in order to maintain a righteous belief in self.

***Job 40:8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?***

So stubborn is man's desire to remain righteous in his own eyes, that he will very quickly, and with asperous judgment regularly condemn the Lord, to maintain belief in personal innocence.

Ultimately, those who view themselves as without sin, will inevitably view God as greatly evil and unfair.

None also will lay malicious and treacherous claims against the Lord more, than those who believe themselves pure in their own eyes, and righteous in their own sight.

Job's continued belief that he was *innocent* and was destroyed like the *wicked*, reveals that he undoubtedly viewed himself as without any sin, like also the Pharisee in Luke 18, who unrealistically prayed, *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are* (v. 11).

To the self-righteous man, though others may sin, he undoubtedly cannot. He thinks himself superior to others, and as such, views them as having need of mercy, when he does not.

***Job 9:24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he?***

Job now accuses the Lord for the wicked ruling the earth, as if the rise of sin in man and its continued spread somehow is God's fault.

Again, viciously and erringly blaming the Lord for sin, is a common practice for those blind to the sin in themselves.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 9:24*

If God be not the cause of these anomalies, where is the cause to be found, and who is he?

***Job 9:25–26 Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.  
26 They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.***

*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Job 9:26*

Job as usual heaps images together to picture out the brevity of his life, cf. ch. Job 7:6 seq. Here the images are new, a runner, a skiff of reed, an eagle swooping on his prey.

***Job 9:27 If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:***

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 9:27*

Job represents himself as sometimes, for a moment, imagining that he might put aside his load of sorrow by not thinking of it. He tries, and says to himself, "I will forget," etc.; but in vain.

If men could actually forget their tragedies, then they would also falsely presume that they will not need to give account to God, for their sin.

The Lord has made man as such, that he cannot distance himself from a burdened and troubled heart, since its real purpose is often intended to bring the sinner's thoughts back to God.

Hence sin, tragedy, and pain cannot be forgotten, nor can any comfort themselves sufficiently to calm their burdened hearts, because if they could, then this would not cause them to flee sin, but rather only embrace it even more.

Hence, if men could forget their troubles, they also would forget what caused them in the first place.

Remembrance of both pain and error is therefore intended to encourage the broken to turn to the Lord, from Whom all true healing originates.

***Psalm 147:3 He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.***

If men could forget their sin, and the troubling consequences it produces, then they would see no need to return to the Lord, and seek forgiveness for it.

***Job 9:28 I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.***

Fear and guilt are common human emotions, which when sin is present, and being walked in, will only intensify.

***Job 9:29 If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?***

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 9:29*

*I shall be wicked, or guilty, to wit, before thee. Whether I be holy or wicked, if I dispute with thee, I shall be found guilty. . . . Why should I trouble myself with clearing mine innocency, seeing God will still hold me guilty?*

Those who view themselves as victims of sin will often take the position that any labor to seek to overcome it, is vain. This is hardly a strong argument for choosing to remain in sin, but it is commonly employed when unbelievers have chosen not to exert the necessary spiritual energy, to remain trusting, and holding strong confidence in God.

***Job 9:30–31 If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean;  
31 Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.***

The labor Job referred to in verse 29 is that of cleansing himself, but to truly be cleansed of sin, is God's work; it is not man's. How false also are Job's thoughts, when he states that even if he were clean, the Lord would still plunge him into a ditch.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:30*

*If I wash myself with snow water—If I should make myself as pure as possible, and should become, in my view, perfectly holy. . . . The expression used here by Job, also is imitated by the Psalmist, to denote his innocence:*

*xI will wash mine hands in innocency:*

*So will I compass thine altar, O Lord. Psalm 26:6.*

*Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain,*

*And washed my hands in innocency.*

***Job 9:32–33 For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.***

<sup>33</sup> ***Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.***

Job again makes an appeal for his day in court, but now he adds his need for a *daysman*, or “an umpire or arbiter, a mediator.” Little does Job know at this point in his trial, that Elihu would become exactly this. His ministry, Elihu’s ministry, though, would not help Job plead his case before God; rather, he would bring God’s case against Job. In the end, the Lord would answer Job’s prayer for a *daysman*, but he would not function in the manner Job actually hoped he would. Since Elihu’s ministry does not plead that there is no sin on Job’s part, but rather pleads for Job to hear him, on how Job has sinned against God.

***Job 9:34–35 Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me:***

<sup>35</sup> ***Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me.***

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 9:34*

*Let him take his rod away from me; ...* Job means that it would be a part of the duty of the “daysman” to see that God’s rod was removed from him before he was called upon to plead, so that he might not labour under so erect a disadvantage as his sufferings would place him under.

Seldom do those sent by God conduct themselves in the manner that sinners think they should. Hence, just as sinners do not know God, they also do not know the real purpose of those sent in the Lord’s name. The Jews thought that Jesus as the Messiah, the King of Israel, should overthrow Rome to install His own government in its place. Yet, instead, Christ died so that the whole world, including Rome, could be forgiven for their sin.

Teaching us that when the Lord does send a mediator and/or arbitrator on His behalf, seldom do they conduct themselves as transgressors of divine will think they should. Such was the case with Christ, and such also will be the same result concerning Elihu, Job’s future *daysman*.



## Session 8

# *Job and His Three Friends: The Introduction of Zophar*

## *Job 11*

### Scriptures

*Job 11:1–3*

*Romans 2:8*

*Matthew 7:2*

*Job 11:4*

*Job 33:8–9*

*Job 33:10*

*Job 11:5–6*

*Ezekiel 13:2*

*I Corinthians 4:5*

*Job 11:7–10*

*I Corinthians 8:2*

*Job 11:11*

*Job 11:12*

*Job 11:13–16*

*Job 11:17–20*

*I Samuel 3:19*

*Job 11:1–3 Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,*

<sup>2</sup> *Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?*

<sup>3</sup> *Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?*

Zophar esteems Job full of words, as uttering mindless chatter, and possessing complete lack of wisdom.

How could a man, he reasons, so *full of talk be justified?*

Zophar, like his contemporaries, feels it his religious duty (albeit not a duty received from God) to set Job right.

Consequently, he enters into the discussion, not with friendly consideration but with venomous accusation.

He possesses an even more caustic attitude toward Job. His speech is seen to be more sharp and his judgments more condemning. No doubt he is offended and frustrated that Job could defend himself against Eliphaz's and Bildad's reasonings concerning his perceived sin.

This has incensed him, and judgment flows from his unrighteous, seemingly uncontrolled anger. From the moment Zophar speaks, neither love nor compassion is seen as his motive, but only religious indignation—a personal animosity produced from the fact that Job could not be humbled.

*Benson Commentary, Job 11:1*

*Then answered Zophar the Naamathite— ... Eliphaz began modestly: Bildad was a little rougher: but Zophar falls upon Job without mercy. "Those that have a mind to fall out with their brethren, and to fall foul upon them, find it necessary to put the worst colours they can upon them and their performances, and, right or wrong, to make them odious." Zophar, highly provoked that Job should dare to call in question a maxim so universally assented to as that urged by his friends, immediately charges him home with secret wickedness. He tells him that he makes not the least doubt, were the real state of his heart laid open, that it would be found God had dealt very gently with him, Job 11:2–7. That he was highly blameworthy to pretend to fathom the depths of divine providence, a task to which he was utterly unequal: that, however his wickedness might be concealed from*

me, yet it was open and bare to God's all-seeing eye; could he therefore imagine that God would not punish the wickedness he saw? Job 11:7–11. It would surely be far more becoming in him to submit, and give glory to God, by making an ample confession and full restitution. In that case, indeed, he might hope for a return of God's goodness to him; but the way he was in at present was the common road of the wicked, whose only hope was annihilation, Job 11:12–20.—Heath and Dodd.

Bitterness and even greater false judgments often overwhelm the self-righteous when their arguments and accusations are soundly rebutted and do not take hold. This was the case with Zophar, as he is incensed that Job could so easily defend himself against Eliphaz's and Bildad's words.

No doubt the frustration could be traced to the fact that he felt himself, and his other friends, superior to Job.

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 11:1–6

Zophar attacked Job with great vehemence. He represented him as a man that loved to hear himself speak, though he could say nothing to the purpose, and as a man that maintained falsehoods. He desired God would show Job that less punishment was exacted than he deserved. We are ready, with much assurance, to call God to act in our quarrels, and to think that if he would but speak, he would take our part. We ought to leave all disputes to the judgment of God, which we are sure is according to truth; but those are not always right who are most forward to appeal to the Divine judgment.

The Scriptures reveal that men should cherish, love, and obey the truth and not the unrighteous indignation and anger which lives within them.

***Romans 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.***

What men obey—whether it is God, His Spirit, and/or His Word, or the carnal impulses that originate from the flesh—reveals the nature they are of.

Because also those who are not born of God lack the fruit of the Spirit, which will include love, joy, and peace, etc. (Gal. 5:22-23), and will accompany being filled with the Spirit, it is easy to see why discontentment fills them.

Coupled with this is the fact that when sinners do not possess strong arguments in an attempt to condemn those they view lower than themselves, they will often use exaggeration and outlandish lies to strengthen their case. This is exactly what is evidenced in Zophar's hateful rhetoric.

In reality, what Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar accused Job of, was actually true of themselves.

They claimed they had come to help and comfort their friend, but ultimately their actions demonstrated a far different, bordering on sinister, motive.

Just because a man feels the urge to speak and give an answer for something, does not mean that he should. Scripture often instructs believers to hold their peace, even if what is being said or spoken against them is wrong.

Jesus exhibited this behavior when the two false witnesses accused Him (Matt. 26:61-63).

By answering a fool according to his folly, actually only provides him more grounds for conceit.

The more Job's three condescending friends spoke, the more they strengthened the Lord's case against themselves.

Eventually their own words would produce the reason for the Lord's growing wrath being directed toward them.

Scripture instructs all believers to *study to be quiet, and to do your own business* (I Thess. 4:11).

Saints also should never get so caught up in other people's lives, lest they forget to examine and mind their own.

Job's friends had assumed the roles of judges, when in fact they should have remained students.

By inserting themselves and their limited and erring understanding into Job's life, they only brought disgrace upon themselves.

And though they spoke of Job as thinking himself innocent and pure, this is actually what they conceitedly believed their *own* character to be.

Had they remained quiet, and continued to pray for their friend, God's anger would have no need to eventually be directed toward them.

They had taken the highest seat, and the Lord would very soon direct them to assume the lowest.

***Matthew 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.***

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Matt. 7:2*

*For with what judgments ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete—whatever standard of judgment ye apply to others.*

*it shall be measured to you again*—This proverbial maxim is used by our Lord in other connections—as in Mr 4:24, and with a slightly different application in Lu 6:38—as a great principle in the divine administration. Unkind judgment of others will be judicially returned upon ourselves, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

***Job 11:4 For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.***

Zophar's words, at least initially, appear similar to Elihu's correction in Job 33:8-9.

***Job 33:8-9 Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying,***

***<sup>9</sup> I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.***

The difference between Zophar's and Elihu's words lies in the inward motivation for speaking them. Hence, whereas Elihu sought Job's reformation, Zophar desired nothing more than producing condemnation.

It is thus not always exactly what is spoken, but also the manner and the motive we speak from, which allows the broken to hear the truth.

So while Zophar sought to incriminate Job of sin, feeling himself free from it, Elihu sought to enlighten Job to come to realize his sin, in order that he might be forgiven, and ultimately healed of his pain.

Hence, while Zophar sought a verdict of condemnation and nothing more, Elihu sought to clear Job of his confusion in order that through repentance, he might be given mercy from the Lord.

This is also why Job rejected Zophar's words, but did not Elihu's.

Elihu's correction also adds additional truth which was absent in Zophar's address.

***Job 33:10 Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy.***

In reality, Job had accused the Lord of the very same sin which his friends had committed against himself—manifesting blame without any true understanding of the situation.

It is one thing to defend our faith when it is challenged with insincerity by men like Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, but it's quite another matter to lay charges against the Lord, for His perceived injustice, because we think ourselves pure.

***Job 11:5–6 But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee;  
⁶ And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.***

It is hard to imagine that Job's pain and the loss he endured was less than his iniquity, but this is exactly what Zophar asserted.

Zophar also, through personal imagination, claimed to speak for the Lord, when in fact he was far removed from Him.

It is also spiritually presumptuous for any to assume, and even worse to declare, what God thinks, if in truth, God has never even spoken to them at all. To do this is to prophesy out of one's own heart, which the Lord greatly despises and considers highly deplorable.

***Ezekiel 13:2 Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts...***

As revealed in Ezekiel, it is a great and notable sin to speak something which originates from man, and deceitfully claim its origination as from God.

*Benson Commentary, Ezek. 13:2–4*

*Song of Solomon of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel—So they called themselves, as if none but they had been worthy of the name of Israel's prophets, who were indeed Israel's deceivers. Say unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts—According to their own fancy, without having received any revelation from God. ... Wo unto the foolish prophets—Ignorant and wicked, and who, while they wilfully deceived the people, unthinkingly brought destruction upon themselves. Observe, reader, foolish prophets are not of God's sending: those whom he sends, he either finds or makes fit for his work. Where he gives warrant, he gives wisdom. That follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing—Who utter their own imaginations for true prophecies, and pretend to have visions when they never had any.*

There are many matters which God's Word declares should not be judged until the Lord comes and provides sufficient spiritual light to judge them correctly. The tragedies in Job's life are a clear example of this.

None, including Job himself, knew the real cause of his trial, nor the deep spiritual reason why the Lord allowed it.

***I Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 4:5

*Judge nothing*—Pass no decided opinion; see the note at Matthew 7:1. The apostle here takes occasion to inculcate on them an important lesson—one of the leading lessons of Christianity—not to pass a harsh opinion on the conduct of any man, since there are so many things that go to make up his character which we cannot know; and so many secret failings and motives which are all concealed from us.

*Until the Lord come*—The Lord Jesus at the Day of Judgment, when all secrets shall be revealed, and a true judgment shall be passed on all men. ...

- (1) That we should not be guilty of harsh judgment of others.
- (2) the reason is, that we cannot know their feelings and motives.
- (3) that all secret things will be brought forth in the great Day, and nothing be concealed beyond that time.
- (4) that every man shall receive justice there. He shall be treated as he ought to be. The destiny of no one will be decided by the opinions of people; but the doom of all will be fixed by God. How important is it, therefore, that we be prepared for that Day; and how important to cherish such feelings, and form such plans, that they may be developed without involving us in shame and contempt!

***Job 11:7–10 Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?***

<sup>8</sup> ***It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?***

<sup>9</sup> ***The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.***

<sup>10</sup> ***If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?***

Zophar asks Job to do something he neither knows how to do, nor can do himself—to search and *find out God*.

Contrary to those who ignorantly think themselves religiously wise, is true wisdom, which is fully aware that whatever is known, is not nearly as much, as what should be known.

***I Corinthians 8:2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.***

Whatever any man thinks he knows of the Lord, and especially the Lord's dealings with man, is vastly inferior to what he should know.

There is no exception to this enduring truth, and no man should think himself above this revealed revelation, that whatever men think they know of the Lord, is far below what they should.

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, I Cor. 8:2

There is no proof of ignorance more common than conceit of knowledge. Much may be known, when nothing is known to good purpose. And those who think they know any thing, and grow vain thereon, are the least likely to make good use of their knowledge. Satan hurts some as much by tempting them to be proud of mental powers, as others, by alluring to sensuality. Knowledge which puffs up the possessor, and renders him confident, is as dangerous as self-righteous pride, though what he knows may be right.

***Job 11:11 For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?***

Zophar foolishly, because of his pride, believed Job to be both wicked and vain, which was in fact the complete opposite of Job's true character.

In reality, if any man possessed vanity and wickedness, it would be Zophar and his other two friends, and not Job.

*Benson Commentary*, Job 11:11

*For he knoweth vain men*—Though men know but little of God, and therefore are very unfit judges of his counsels and actions, yet God knows man exactly. He knoweth that every man in the world is guilty of much vanity and folly, and therefore seeth sufficient reason for his severity against the best men. *He seeth wickedness also*—He perceiveth the wickedness of evil men, though it be covered with the veil of religion.

The emptiness that Zophar referred to did not lie in Job's religion but in his own. He had foolishly assumed his own faith, holy, pure, and righteous, yet Job's vain. Time would prove the complete opposite to be true.

It is also worth noting that later in the record the Lord never speaks directly to Zophar, revealing also that when the Lord resists the proud He will often not even speak to them directly.

***Job 11:12 For vain men would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt.***

Other translations give us a more insightful understanding of Zophar's words.

(NIV) *But the witless can no more become wise than a wild donkey's colt can be born human.*

(Berean Study Bible) *But a witless man can no more become wise than the colt of a wild donkey can be born a man!*

(NAS) *An idiot will become intelligent When a wild donkey is born a human.*

*Benson Commentary*, Job 11:12

*For, or, yet, vain man would be wise*—Man, who since the fall is void of all true wisdom, pretends to be wise, and able to pass a censure upon all God's ways and works. *Born like a wild ass's colt*—Ignorant, and dull, and stupid, as to divine things, and yet heady and untractable. Such is man by his birth; this evil is now natural and hereditary, and therefore common to all men: of consequence it is not strange . . .

***Job 11:13–16 If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him;  
14 If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.***

***15 For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear:***

***16 Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away:***

Zophar proclaimed that if Job would repent of his vanity, his countenance would be changed, and he would soon forget his misery. Thinking himself a prophet, Zophar foolishly concludes he knows Job's future.

The truth is, Zophar is nothing he either claimed or thought himself to be.

Hence, just as he did not know Job's present sin, equally as ignorant was he of Job's foreseeable future. It is also possible that Zophar was the last to speak simply because he never could distinguish himself among his other friends.

The more insecure a man is, the more judgmental and harsh he can be on others.

In truth, Zophar was neither a prophet nor a seer, and should never have thought himself able to correct Job, let alone speaking anything concerning Job's future.

He did not know Job's sin, and it was pride and spiritual arrogance that initiated him to assume he did.

He had taken on the role of a prophet, but in doing so he only really revealed himself a fool.

*Job 11:17–20 And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday: thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.*

<sup>18</sup> *And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.*

<sup>19</sup> *Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.*

<sup>20</sup> *But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.*

These are hopeful thoughts concerning Job's future, but the Lord had inspired none of them.

Those deceived by themselves in religion, often promise that God's blessings will come upon others, when in fact the Lord has revealed nothing to them.

Even today many who claim themselves as messengers of God, come in His name promising both revival and blessing, which has no chance of coming to pass. This is because what they speak has not its source in God, but rather in the empty, vain, and hopeful imagination of man.

A biblical example of this sin is seen in Ahab's 400 false prophets, who prophesied of victory (I Kgs. 22:6), whereas the true prophet of the Lord, Micah, prophesied of defeat as well as ultimately the death of the one seeking counsel (I Kgs. 22:17).

It is also a sign of false prophets who deceptively present themselves as sent by the Lord, but are not, who imply that if their revelations are both believed and obeyed, then spiritual blessings shall be given.

Yet the truth is, that one of the very first and credible signs that a man is not sent by the Lord, and that he does not speak for Him, is that what is prophesied does not come to pass.

It is also by applying this simple principle, of whether or not something actually comes true, after it is spoken, which reveals who are the Lord's true prophets, and those who are merely religious counterfeits.

It is also only those who are truly commissioned by the Lord and ordained to speak on His behalf, whose words God will not allow to fall to the ground.

Spiritual impersonators have no such divine promise.

***I Samuel 3:19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.***

*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, I Sam. 3:19*

*The Lord was with him]* This was the one source of strength for all the “heroes of Hebrew history;” for Abraham, Genesis 21:22; Jacob, Genesis 28:15; Joseph, Genesis 39:2; Moses, Exodus 3:12; Joshua, Joshua 1:5; Gideon, Jdg 6:16; David, 1 Samuel 16:18; 1 Samuel 18:14.

*did let none of his words fall to the ground]* The fulfilment of his prophetic utterances was the attestation of his divine mission. Cp. Deuteronomy 18:21–22. ‘*Falling*’ is a natural metaphor in all languages for ‘*failing*.’

By Samuel’s example and many others, we learn that those whom God is truly with, and who are actually led by His Spirit, shall have their spiritually inspired words upheld—a divine and eternal promise that those who only promote themselves as speaking for the Lord, shall never possess.

Session 9

*Job's Initial Response to Zophar*

*Job 12*

Scriptures

<i>Job 12:1-2</i>	<i>Job 12:6-8</i>	<i>Job 12:16</i>	<i>Job 12:23</i>
<i>Matthew 6:7</i>	<i>Job 12:9</i>	<i>Job 12:17</i>	<i>Job 12:24</i>
<i>Isaiah 29:14</i>	<i>Job 12:10</i>	<i>I Corinthians 3:19</i>	<i>Daniel 4:34-36</i>
<i>Job 12:3</i>	<i>Isaiah 45:1</i>	<i>Job 12:18</i>	<i>Job 12:25</i>
<i>II Timothy 3:12</i>	<i>Isaiah 45:2</i>	<i>Job 12:19</i>	<i>Deuteronomy 28:28</i>
<i>Job 12:4</i>	<i>Isaiah 45:3</i>	<i>Job 12:20</i>	<i>Job 13:1-2</i>
<i>II Peter 3:3</i>	<i>Job 12:11-13</i>	<i>Job 12:21</i>	
<i>Proverbs 14:9</i>	<i>Job 12:14</i>	<i>Job 12:22</i>	
<i>Job 12:5</i>	<i>Job 12:15</i>	<i>Psalms 21:11</i>	

*Job 12:1-2 And Job answered and said,  
2 No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.*

Job said in sarcasm what his three friends believed to be true—that their wisdom was rare and that wisdom would die with them.

Job thus rebukes his friends, who had far higher opinions of themselves than was merited by the superficial wisdom they brought forth.

They all had spoken at great length, but they did not help Job at all. It is also common with both the heathen and the hypocrite, that they foolishly think that the more they speak the greater chance they will be heard by the Lord.

*Matthew 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*

An abundance of words, though, does not cause the Lord to answer prayer, nor can it help to convince the guilty of sin.

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 6:7*

*Their much speaking.*—This thought was the root-evil of the worship of the heathen or the Pharisee. It gave to prayer a quantitative mechanical force, increased in proportion to the number of prayers offered. If fifty failed, a hundred might succeed.

If the Holy Spirit does not prompt reproof, then the guaranteed error in human correction, will prohibit any true change in the sinner's heart.

The Lord has also declared that all the wisdom of this world, characterized by human thought, reason, and opinion, shall together be brought to naught.

*Isaiah 29:14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.*

***Job 12:3 But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?***

Job's friends thought themselves superior in knowledge primarily because their own lives had not been touched by tragedy.

Many a man may live his life unaffected by Satan, unaware that the real reason why he has not been singled out for devilish attack, is simply because he poses no real threat to Satan.

Because Job sought genuine and sincere fellowship with the Lord and revered His holy name, Satan sought his destruction.

Hence, it was both Job's fear and faith in God, which prompted the devil's jealousy, and for this he sought his demise.

***II Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.***

Consider as well that when believers join themselves to God, they are no longer innocent bystanders in the war between the Lord and Satan. To possess a fear and loyalty toward the Lord, will undoubtedly, arise indignation in Satan.

***Job 12:4 I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.***

Just as Job was mocked by those around him, God's Word reveals that there will be an increase of mockers in the last days.

***II Peter 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.***

Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem mocked Nehemiah and his building of the wall of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:19). Jeremiah was mocked when he preached for the Lord (Jer. 20:7). The apostles were mocked for drinking new wine when they were supernaturally filled with the Lord's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:13).

Throughout Jesus' journey to the cross, Herod, the religious leaders, and the soldiers, all mocked the Savior (Luke 23:11-23).

Hence, it is often the case with sinners to mock those who possess true faith, even as they foolishly mock their own sins against God.

Fools also in mocking sin, bring both shame and judgment upon themselves.

***Proverbs 14:9 Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.***

*Benson Commentary, Prov. 14:9*

*. . . Sin deludes, or makes a mock of, fools, or sinners; that is, exposes them to shame and contempt . . .*

***Job 12:5 He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.***

This verse on the surface can be perceived as difficult to understand. The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary* helps in its interpretation.

As the torch is to the wanderer, so Job to his friends. Once they gladly used his aid in their need; now they in prosperity mock him in his need.

Because Job's friends were safe and at ease, they could mock his words.

Sadly, he who is not afflicted by adversity can easily think himself superior to those who are.

***Job 12:6–8 The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.***

<sup>7</sup> ***But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:***

<sup>8</sup> ***Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.***

Job speaks of robbers prospering and strong beasts prevailing upon the earth. He uses realities present in nature to defend the fact that just because men are afflicted, does not mean that they are always sinners.

***Job 12:9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?***

By referencing creation and the creatures in it, Job rightly declares that all is under God's providence, and as such, part of His divine will. Job views his own life as no different than this.

*Benson Commentary, Job 12:9*

*Who knoweth not in all these—Or, by all these brute creatures; that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this—That God, by his power and wisdom, hath created and ordered all that is in them, or that is done by and among them. Job meant in these verses to express his firm opinion that all animate and inanimate nature clearly bore testimony to the creating power and overruling providence of God: see Nehemiah 9:6. This is the only time that we meet with the name Jehovah in all the discourses between Job and his friends. For God in that age was more known by the name of Shaddai, the Almighty.*

***Job 12:10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.***

The soul and breath life of every living creature is in God's hands.

No doubt, Job knew what men are woefully ignorant of today, that *the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind* remain in the hands and will of God, and that all life is subject to His divine will.

Reminding us as well that the only soul which shall enter eternity, shall do so, only because of divine will.

If men were truly aware and actually believed this divine truth, that all life is in God's hands, then they would hold a much greater reverential fear for God—that in the hand, power, and decision of God, *is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.*

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:10*

*In whose hand is the soul of every living thing—Margin, "Life." The margin is the more correct rendering. The idea is, that all are under the control of God. He gives life, and health, and happiness when he pleases, and when he chooses he takes them away. His sovereignty is manifested, says Job, in the inferior creation, or among the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of heaven.*

*And the breath of all mankind*—Margin, “Flesh of man.” The margin is in accordance with the Hebrew. The meaning is, that man is subjected to the same laws as the rest of the creation. God is a sovereign, and the same great principles of administration may be seen in all his works.

Few records reveal God’s sovereignty over the affairs of men more than the revelation given to Isaiah concerning Cyrus, the Persian king who returned the Babylonian Jews to their homeland. When also the Lord anointed even a non-Jew, to carry out His divine will for His people (Ezra 1:1–4).

***Isaiah 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;***

*Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary, Isa. 45:1–4*

Cyrus is called God’s anointed; he was designed and qualified for his great service by the counsel of God. The gates of Babylon which led to the river, were left open the night that Cyrus marched his army into the empty channel. The Lord went before him, giving entrance to the cities he besieged. He gave him also treasures, which had been hidden in secret places. The true God was to Cyrus an unknown God; yet God foreknew him; he called him by his name. The exact fulfilment of this must have shown Cyrus that Jehovah was the only true God, and that it was for the sake of Israel that he prospered. In all the changes of states and kingdoms, God works out the good of his church.

***Isaiah 45:2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:***

Cyrus was the Lord’s anointed, and his task was according to divine will. Thus the prophecy is that God would go before him, and destroy all obstacles that could hinder his success. Ultimately, it was the Lord’s divine power that ensured Cyrus’ victory.

***Isaiah 45:3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.***

By the Lord’s blessing His people with hidden treasures, they would be brought to know that He is both with and for them. What a wonderful revelation is hidden in this verse, that by blessings, riches, and spiritual treasures the people of God are brought to know both the reality and generosity of God.

In truth, both blessings and curses are purposed to awaken men to the presence of the Lord, and His spiritual activity in the earth.

*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Isa. 45:3*

*That thou mayest know*—That from these signal successes, and these favors of heaven, you may learn that Yahweh is the true God. This he would learn because he would see that he owed it to heaven (see the note at Isaiah 45:2); and because the prediction which God had made of his success would convince him that he was the true and only God.

***Job 12:11–13 Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?***

<sup>12</sup> ***With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.***

<sup>13</sup> ***With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.***

Bildad had spoken of those of the past possessing a level of wisdom; Job does not refute this, but rightfully adds that it is the Lord Who is the true source of it.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:13*

*With him is wisdom*—Margin, correctly, “God.” However much wisdom there may seem to be with aged men, yes the true wisdom—that which was supreme and worthy of the name—was to be found in God alone. The object of Job was to lead the thoughts up to God . . . He made all things; he sustains all things; he reverses the condition of people at his pleasure; he sets up whom he pleases, and when he chooses he casts them down. His works are contrary in many respects to what we should anticipate; and the sense of all is, that God was a holy and a righteous sovereign, and that such were the reverses under his administration that we could not argue that he treated all according to their character on earth.

***Job 12:14 Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.***

That which the Lord tears down, if He so desires, can never be raised to life again. This is true of cities and souls. Biblical examples confirming this truth include the destruction of the ancient cities Babylon (Isa. 13:19–20), Edom (Jer. 49:16–17), and Tyre (Ezek. 26:3–14), and their never being built up again. What the Lord *breaketh down, it cannot be built up again.*

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:14*

*He shutteth up a man*—He can shut up a man in such difficulties and straits that he cannot extricate himself . . . “he shuts up a man in the grave (בְּקִבְרָתָא) and it cannot be opened.”

***Job 12:15 Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.***

God's power over the earth is clearly demonstrated by His control over the water above it, whereby He can either make a land to prosper, to feed and nurture the earth's inhabitants, or if necessary, withhold rain to ruin them.

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 12:15*

*Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up.* God, at his pleasure, causes great droughts, which are among the worst calamities that can happen. He withholds the blessed rain from heaven (Deuteronomy 11:17; 1 Kings 8:35; 1 Kings 17:1), and the springs shrink, and the rivers dry up, and a fruitful land is turned into a desert, and famine stalks through the land, and men perish by thousands. Also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth; i.e. he causes floods and inundations. Once upon a time he overwhelmed the whole earth, and destroyed almost the entire race of mankind, by a deluge of an extraordinary character, which so fixed itself in the human consciousness, that traces of it are to be found in the traditions of almost all the various races of men. But, beside this great occasion, he also in ten thousand other cases, causes, by means of floods, tremendous ruin and devastation, sweeping away crops and cattle, and even villages and cities, sometimes even “overturning the earth,” causing lakes to burst, rivers to change their course, vast tracts of land to be permanently submerged, and the contour of coasts to be altered.

***Job 12:16 With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.***

Though God did not create deceivers, He does maintain control over the extent of their influence.

Hence, though the Lord has no connection to those who deceive, still He has set bounds regarding the degree they can operate. In a similar manner, the Lord had set boundaries on Satan, regarding the affliction and harm allowed to be directed towards Job (Job 1:12).

Even the devil is not given *carte blanche* in order to enforce his full will in regards to man.

*Benson Commentary, Job 12:16*

*The deceived and the deceiver are his*—Wholly subject to his disposal. He governs the deceiver, and sets bounds to his deceits, how far they shall extend: he also overrules all this to his own glory, and the accomplishment of his righteous designs of trying the good and punishing wicked men, by giving them up to believe lies. Yet God is not the author of any error or sin, but only the wise and holy governor of it.

***Job 12:17 He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.***

Human counselors are no match for divine providence. Hence, the perceived wise in the earth can be led to destruction, as easily as they can be revealed as fools.

***I Corinthians 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.***

***Job 12:18 He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.***

Though kings may bind themselves together to form confederacies and seek to increase their power in the earth through unity, the Lord can bind them and place them in bonds, just as they have produced the captivity of others.

So also, just as easily as kings and rulers can bind men, so can God free them. This is evidenced in the supernatural acts of Peter being freed from prison (Acts 12:5–11), and the Jews' miraculous exodus from Egypt (Exod. 12:30–32).

***Job 12:19 He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.***

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 12:19*

*princes*—rather, “priests,” as the Hebrew is rendered (Ps 99:6). Even the sacred ministers of religion are not exempt from reverses and captivity.

Just as the Lord maintains power over nations and their leaders, so does He hold the same power over those in religion. Therefore the priest can be as easily led away to captivity, as can the ruler.

Hence, whether it is world authority, or religious authority, each can be spoiled and overthrown, if in accordance with divine will.

***Job 12:20 He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:20*

*He removeth away the speech of the trusty*—Margin, “lip of the faithful.” “He takes away the lip,” that is, he takes away the power of giving safe counsel or good advice. The “trusty” or “faithful” here refer to those of age and experience, and on whose counsel men are accustomed to rely. The meaning here is, that their most sagacious anticipations are disappointed, their wisest schemes are foiled. They fail—in their calculations of the [course] of events, and the arrangements of Providence are such that they could not anticipate what was to occur.

*The understanding of the aged*—To whom the young were accustomed to look up with deference and respect. The meaning here is, that they who were accustomed to give wise and sound advice, if left by God, give vain and foolish counsels.

***Job 12:21 He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.***

No worldly prince or ruler can prevent the Lord from taking away his natural strength and/or earthly position.

Ultimately, every man is vulnerable to having God's will carried out regarding his life.

The point of these examples is to reiterate the spiritual truth that it is not actually men who rule the world, though they are chess pieces in it, but rather God.

***Job 12:22 He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.***

In the Book of Esther, Haman is a wonderful example of how the Lord observes what is done in darkness, and responds by completely reversing the deceiver's plan. Haman's plot to destroy Mordecai and the Jews (Esth. 3:6), which he had orchestrated in darkness, with great deceit and cunningness, led to his own disgrace and public hanging (Esth. 7:10).

***Psalms 21:11 For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.***

*Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Job 12:22*

The meaning of Job 12:22 in this connection can only be, that there is nothing so finely spun out that God cannot make it visible. All secret plans of the wicked, all secret sins, and the deeds of the evil-doer though veiled in deep darkness, He bringeth before the tribunal of the world.

***Job 12:23 He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.***

God increases and enlarges nations as regularly as He destroys them. Whenever then nations, governments, or people rise in influence upon the earth, and control vast amounts of territory, it is because of divine will. Whenever also the same nations are either shrunk, or completely removed from the earth and the annals of history, this also is the work of God.

In truth, a nation and/or people's destiny is solely in the hand of God.

***Job 12:24 He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.***

Just as God can touch the outside of a man, so can He also either remove, or impart understanding and reason. Nebuchadnezzar, who was king over the Chaldean dynasty of Babylon, learned this lesson when he was restored from his madness, prompting him to spiritually realize through personal experience that the Lord reigns over all, including even the chief rulers of great military powers.

***Daniel 4:34-36 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:***

<sup>35</sup> ***And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?***

<sup>36</sup> ***At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords***

*sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.*

***Job 12:25 They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.***

During his conversion the apostle Paul was made blind for a season (Acts 9:8–9) in order that he might be humbled and come to know the Lord's power over his life. Both blindness and the recovery of sight are manifestations of the Lord's divine authority over men.

Thus, just as easily as He can bring sight to the blind, so also can the Lord produce blindness in those who possess sight.

One of the Lord's judgments also for continued sin and resistance to divine will, is to smite those who do so, with even greater blindness and instability of mind.

***Deuteronomy 28:28 The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart.***

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Deut. 28:28*

Wherever the sinner goes, the curse of God follows; wherever he is, it rests upon him.

***Job 13:1–2 Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it.***

***<sup>2</sup> What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.***

Job reminds his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, that whatever they presumed to know of the Lord and His sovereignty over the earth, he was equally aware of it, if not more.

Job's friends had spoken of their understanding of divine providence; to this he proclaims, *I am not inferior unto you.*

*Benson Commentary, Job 12:3*

*But I have an understanding ... I am not inferior to you*—In these things; which he speaks, not in a way of boasting, but for the just vindication both of himself and of that cause of God, which, for the substance of it, he maintained rightly, as God himself attests, Job 42:6. *Who knoweth not such things*—The truth is, neither you nor I have any reason to be puffed up with our knowledge of these things; for the most barbarous nations know that God is infinite in wisdom, and power, and justice.

For the second time Job utters these memorable words, *I am not inferior unto you*, (the first time being in Job 12:3), emphasizing that whatever Job's friends presumed to know of the Lord, Job possessed a similar knowledge of as well.

Hence, there was nothing they spoke regarding God's sovereignty over creation, or His judgment upon sin, that Job was not also acutely aware of himself.

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had assumed Job ignorant, when in fact they were in no way more knowledgeable of the Lord than him. In reality they had introduced no new wisdom which was not previously known, nor had they convinced Job of any deep sin on his part.

They had spoken with much confidence concerning their friend's sin, and had thought themselves greatly superior to him, when in fact all that they had presumed to know concerning the Lord, Job knew equally as well.

It is because of this spiritual reality that Job was so easily able to refute Eliphaz's, Bildad's, and Zophar's religious accusations. What they had said was a well-traveled road; what Job really needed, was a new spiritual path, presently unknown to him.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 13:1*

All this which either you or I have discoursed concerning the infinite power and wisdom of God, I know, both by seeing it, i.e. by my own observation and experience, and by *hearing* it from my ancestors; so that I did not need your tedious and impertinent discourses concerning those matters.

Because of time constraints, only Job's initial response to Zophar is addressed here. His responses continue in chapters twelve through fourteen, as well as chapter twenty-one.



Session 10

## *The Introduction of Elihu*

### *Job 32:1–14*

#### Scriptures

<i>Job 32:1–2</i>	<i>Matthew 18:3–4</i>	<i>Job 32:9</i>
<i>Job 36:2</i>	<i>Job 32:7</i>	<i>Job 32:10</i>
<i>I Corinthians 14:24–25</i>	<i>Proverbs 2:6</i>	<i>Job 32:11–12</i>
<i>Job 42:1–6</i>	<i>I Corinthians 12:98</i>	<i>Psalms 51:17</i>
<i>Job 32:2–3</i>	<i>I Kings 4:29</i>	<i>Job 32:13</i>
<i>Job 32:4–5</i>	<i>Matthew 13:11</i>	<i>Job 32:14</i>
<i>Ecclesiastes 3:7</i>	<i>Ecclesiastes 8:17</i>	
<i>Job 32:6</i>	<i>Job 32:8</i>	

*Job 32:1–2 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.*

<sup>2</sup> *Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.*

The structure of the Book of Job reveals the great importance of Elihu's ministry in preparing Job to hear directly from the Lord.

The Book of JOB as a Whole by Dr. E.W. Bullinger.

- A | i. 1–5. Introduction. Historical.
- B | i. 6—ii. 10. Satan's assault. Job stripped of all.
- C | ii. 11–13. The Three Friends. Their arrival.
- D | iii. 1—xxxi. 40. Job and his friends.
- E | xxxii.—xxxvii. Elihu.
- D | xxxviii. 1.—xlii. 6. Jehovah and Job.
- C | xlii. 7–9. The Three Friends. Their departure.
- B | xlii. 9, 10. Satan's defeat. Job blessed with double.
- A | xlii. 11–17. Conclusion. Historical.

Elihu is the only one whose message Job does not refute, the only one who could silence Job's critics, and also the only human character in the book whom God Himself does not reprove and correct.

These facts alone should draw our attention to this relatively obscure biblical figure.

The facts therefore indicate that Elihu was exactly who he claimed to be—one sent to speak on God's behalf.

*Job 36:2 Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.*

Job could not be persuaded of his guilt, nor did his conscience convict him of sin, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

When men are righteous in their own sight and claim innocence before God, He will often send a minister.

Throughout human history the ignorance of men has required physical messengers led by the Holy Spirit to open their ears.

Only then can they hear the great lessons critical for deliverance, such as personal righteousness is never greater than God's and that it is always a sin against heaven to justify self over God.

The Lord chose Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, to introduce these deep and profound spiritual lessons to Job, thus preparing his heart for the entrance of the Lord's own correction.

Practically, Elihu's ministry readied Job for a much greater ministry to follow: the ministry of the Lord Himself.

As John the Baptist was a forerunner to Christ (Mark 1:1-8), so does Elihu assume a similar role for Jehovah.

It is customary that before sinners are ready for direct exposure to the Lord, repentance of sin must first take place.

And just as John the Baptist's ministry preached the need for repentance (Matt. 3:1-2), so shall Elihu's ministry do the same.

In studying the book we observe that Elihu speaks to Job for five uninterrupted chapters. Strikingly, Job offers no retort or disagreement with any of his words, as he had previously done with his other three friends.

While Job resisted Eliphaz's, Bildad's, and Zophar's unjust accusations of committing sin, once Elihu begins his address, Job remains silent.

Perhaps the reason for this is that true wisdom will often silence those who know it is lacking in their own lives.

Jesus' words to those who brought to Him the woman taken in adultery is a great example of this (John 8:1-9), revealing that the words of the Holy Spirit, spoken by true messengers of the Lord, often produce speechlessness in the hearers.

Ultimately, the sword of the Spirit pierces the sinner's heart so effectively that even the tongue is stopped from defending itself.

Only by Elihu's spiritually-appointed ministry, could the self-righteousness in Job begin to be broken. His other friends' attempts to do this had astoundingly failed.

Teaching us that it requires inspired spiritual prophecy, provided by the Lord, for a self-righteous man's heart to be touched, whereas mere human wisdom attempting to do this, will accomplish nothing.

***I Corinthians 14:24-25 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:***

***<sup>25</sup> And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.***

Inspired prophetic truth will do for the unbeliever, what human assumption and reason cannot—prompting him to recognize the presence and reality of God. The Holy Spirit accomplishes this great feat by revealing to sinners that God knows both their thoughts and the hidden intentions of their hearts.

When the sinner's inner soul is made known to him, via the Spirit of God, the door then opens for him to realize that it is not man who is actually addressing him, but the Lord Himself.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 14:24

The word here rendered "convinced" (ἐλέγγετῶν *elengchetai*) is rendered "reprove" in John 16:8, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin," etc. Its proper meaning is to "convict," to show one to be wrong; and then to rebuke, reprove, admonish, etc. Here it means, evidently, that the man would be convicted, or convinced of his error and of his sin; he would see that his former opinions and practice had been wrong; he would see and acknowledge the force and truth of the Christian sentiments which should be uttered, and would acknowledge the error of his former opinions and life. The following verse shows that the apostle means something more than a mere convincing of the understanding, or a mere conviction that his opinions had been erroneous. He evidently refers to what is now known also as "conviction" for sin; that is, a deep sense of the depravity of the heart, of the errors and follies of the past life, accompanied with mental anxiety, distress, and alarm. The force of truth, and the appeals which should be made, and the observation of the happy effects of religion, would convince him that he was a sinner, and show him also his need of a Saviour.

When a man filled with God's Holy Spirit brings forth prophecy from the Lord, its power will produce personal conviction of sin for those who believe it. Examples include David (II Sam. 11:1–26), Nineveh (Jnh. 3:1–10), and Saul (Acts 9:1–21).

Once Elihu had finished addressing Job's sin in chapters 32–37, the Lord commenced His own correction in chapters 38–42.

God's reproof and correction of Job includes that he had spoken without knowledge (Job 38:2) and had dismissed the Lord's judgments in order to maintain his own self-righteousness (Job 40:8).

Sinners are often willing to condemn the Lord and His dealings with them, in order to hold steadfast to their false belief of being innocent before Him. By falsely claiming fault with the Lord, this allows sinners to justify themselves. And most, because they love self more than the Lord, are much more ready to find fault with Him, than with themselves.

The last eleven chapters of the book reveal the great amount of heavenly correction needed for Job to come to know the extent of his sin, and the critical need to repent for it.

Although Job feared the Lord, he still lacked much understanding concerning the Lord's dealings with man.

Thus, it would take not only God's messenger, Elihu, but also Jehovah Himself to fully instruct this sincere though self-righteous man in things still deficient in his faith.

Job's confession at the end of the book helps us to understand one of the great spiritual lessons he learned, that the Lord knows even the thought of sin, hidden and attempted to be kept secret in the heart.

*I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*

*Job 42:1–6 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,*

<sup>2</sup> *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*

<sup>3</sup> *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

<sup>4</sup> *Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.*

<sup>5</sup> *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.*

<sup>6</sup> *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

To understand properly the Book of Job, Job's confession here to the Lord is critical to remember.

For it is not simply Job's words against the Lord that he repented of, but also his thoughts.

Teaching us that what was transpiring inside of Job, was even more contentious than what he actually spoke.

It was therefore not just Job's words that found fault with God, but also his heart, of which a degree of what he felt, he wished to remain private.

Job's confession of sin ultimately led him to repent in *dust and ashes*.

When the Lord reveals to a truly God-fearing man his spiritual ignorance, he will repent.

Little also will bring a sincere, godly man to his knees more quickly, than when he realizes that so much of what he has spoken concerning the Lord has been both false and in error.

To harm our own name because of personal sin is painful; to harm God's name, is tragic.

*Job 32:2–3 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.*

<sup>3</sup> *Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.*

Elihu's wrath was twofold. (1) He was angry with Job's three friends for having no answer for Job yet they had still condemned him. (2) His wrath was directed toward Job because he justified himself rather than God.

Whenever two parties have the same flaw of self-righteousness (as evidenced by Job and his three friends), the revelation needed for deliverance shall remain elusive.

Often when men cannot help the broken, they will judge them instead.

Job's friends had condemned him when in fact they should have spent more time analyzing why they could not persuade him of his guilt. It takes little wisdom to condemn others; it takes much greater wisdom to help them find their way back to God.

What these verses also teach us is that inspired spiritual anger prompted by the Lord in His servants, should not be considered wrong nor sinful, and especially so when dealing with those who remain self-righteous in their own sight.

Elihu's wrath was kindled against Job and his three friends, and very soon a similar spiritual anger would both appear and be manifested by the Lord.

*Job 32:4–5 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.  
5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.*

Elihu, maintained proper respect and deference for those older than himself, because not until Job's other three friends had finished voicing their opinions, did Elihu, who was younger than all of them, voice his.

Elihu's anger stemmed from the fact, that though older than himself, and supposedly more spiritually mature, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had offered nothing truly useful to help Job.

Job's friends had spoken much, but not a word was fitly and rightly spoken regarding Job's sin, or a way to escape it.

A word fitly spoken is one uttered at exactly the most opportune time, and no word can be truly this, unless a man is led by the Spirit concerning when he should speak. Examples of this include Peter calling Israel to repent after they had seen the Holy Spirit descending upon the apostles (Acts 2:38), as well as Nathan's words to David informing him that he was guilty of sinning against Uriah and Bathsheba after hearing Nathan's story of the poor man's lamb (II Sam. 12:1-13).

Wisdom should teach us that it is not enough to speak for the Lord, until it is first revealed what is right and proper to speak.

Patience also is often essential in doing the will of God. Since there is a moment when it is righteous to hold forth God's Word, even as there are times that God's Spirit will instruct His messengers to remain silent.

Elihu possessed the spiritual wisdom to know when to do both. Hence, Elihu had remained quiet, spiritually subject, and discreet in listening to those older than himself, until it was fully realized that they had absolutely no answer for Job, but had still foolishly condemned him.

As with all things, timing—even the time to speak—is everything.

*Ecclesiastes 3:7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.*

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Eccl. 3:7*

*a time to keep silence, and a time to speak (k); when it is an evil time, a time of calamity in a nation, it is not a time to be loquacious and talkative, especially in a vain and ludicrous way, Amos 5:13 [Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.]; or when a particular friend or relation is in distress, as in the case of Job and his friends, Job 2:13 [So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.]; or when in the presence of wicked men, who make a jest of everything serious and religious, Psalm 39:1 [I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.]; and so when under afflictive dispensations of Providence, it is a time to be still and dumb, and not open the mouth in a murmuring and complaining way, Leviticus 10:3 [Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.].*

***Job 32:6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.***

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 32:6*

Elihu professes to speak by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and corrects both parties. He allowed that those who had the longest experience should speak first. But God gives wisdom as he pleases; this encouraged him to state his opinion. By attention to the word of God, and dependence upon the Holy Spirit, young men may become wiser than the aged; but this wisdom will render them swift to hear, slow to speak, and disposed to give others a patient hearing.

Youth alone does not disqualify a man for either spiritual service or divine responsibility.

Timothy was a young Christian when Paul gave him the charge to preach the Word of the Lord with boldness and assume the role of overseeing the early Christian church (I Tim. 4:1-2). No doubt Elihu was a man like Timothy; though young in years, still the Lord had chosen him for a very specific and important ministry. David also was the youngest of Jesse's sons when the Lord anointed him (I Sam. 16:13).

Teaching us that a humble young man can be much more valuable in ministry, than an aged and foolish old man, who also lacks the spiritual wisdom to know either what to speak, or when to speak it.

Jesus also stated that it was necessary for all believers to maintain the heart of a child, regardless of age, in order to enter His kingdom.

***Matthew 18:3-4 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.***

***<sup>4</sup> Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Mark 10:15*

*Whosoever shall not receive*—Whosoever shall not manifest the spirit of a little child. . . .

*As a little child*—With the temper and spirit of a child—teachable, mild, humble, and free from prejudice and obstinacy.

No matter the length in ministry, or position in the church, if men do not have the heart of a child then heaven cannot be entered, nor others helped in their time of need.

***Job 32:7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.***

One might assume that the older men get the wiser they become; however, this is generally not the case, since true wisdom is not imparted through the number of years lived, but rather is solely a gift from God.

It is the Lord Who imparts wisdom into men's hearts; consequently without Him doing so, it cannot be actually possessed.

***Proverbs 2:6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.***

Spiritual wisdom is the first gift listed in connection to possessing the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians 12.

***I Corinthians 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.***

For a man to possess the wisdom of God, the Spirit of God must dwell in him. Hence, just as God gives the Holy Spirit, so too must He impart the gift of divine wisdom for any to possess it.

Men generally have very small minds, constrained also by rigidity of human thought.

But in contrast to this, the Lord gave Solomon what was said to be *largeness of heart*, or a heart that was able to be instructed in, and enlightened to, understanding the will of God, and how it was to be applied in leading the people of God.

***I Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.***

*Benson Commentary, I Kgs. 4:29*

*And largeness of heart*—Vastness of understanding, or a very comprehensive mind, capable of receiving the knowledge of all things, both divine and human.

Jesus spoke of giving spiritual enlightenment to some, while withholding it from others.

***Matthew 13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.***

Without wisdom being given to men by God, it is impossible for them to understand any of the workings of God. For this, both the Spirit of God and the gift of wisdom are necessary.

***Ecclesiastes 8:17 Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.***

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Eccl. 8:17*

*that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun:* he can find out that it is done, but not the reason why it is done: the ways of God are in the deep, and not to be traced; they are unsearchable and past finding out; there is a depth of wisdom and knowledge, in them, inscrutable by the wisest of men . . .

***Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.***

These are Elihu's words, and they reveal what every fruitful and faithful minister of God knows: that it is the Spirit of God and the inspiration of the Almighty that produces true spiritual understanding in the soul; that true wisdom is received from above, and cannot be gained through natural means.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 32:8*

*But there is a spirit in man*— . . . All true wisdom, is the sentiment, is from above; and where the inspiration of the Almighty is, no matter whether with the aged or the young, there is understanding. Elihu undoubtedly means to say, that though he was much younger than they were, and though, according to the common estimate in which the aged and the young were held, he might be supposed to have much less acquaintance with the subjects under consideration, yet, as all true wisdom came from above, he might be qualified to speak.

***Job 32:9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.***

Elihu reinforced his point that though Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar eclipsed him in years, neither their age, nor their previous religious experience, had brought them to understand not only the nature of Job's sin, but more importantly, how to help him to recover from it.

***Job 32:10 Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.***

Elihu, now ready to instruct, summons those present to hearken to what he is about to reveal.

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 32:10*

*Therefore I said, Hearken to me.* Elihu evidently claims, not exactly what is ordinarily understood by inspiration, but that his spirit, is divinely enlightened, and that therefore he is more competent to take part in the controversy that has been raised than many of the aged. I also will show mine opinion. "I also," or "even I"—i.e. I, young as I am, "will show my opinion," or "utter what I know on the subject." Elihu does not speak of his convictions as mere "opinions," but claims to be in possession of actual "knowledge."

It is not prideful to speak boldly for the Lord, especially if God is inspiring the message.

Hence, just as Peter and John at the gate called Beautiful, demanded the lame man to *look on us* (Acts 3:4-7), so does Elihu demand the same spiritual attention given to him here. Jonah also heralded the prophecy of Nineveh's destruction, if its inhabitants did not repent of their sin (Jnh. 3:4). Jeremiah likewise cried to open the ears of those in Jerusalem for their sins against God (Jer. 2:1-2), John the Baptist also with great boldness publicly proclaimed Christ's coming (Matt. 3:1-5). Thus, where the Spirit of the Lord truly abides, boldness to speak on God's behalf, will also abide.

***Job 32:11–12 Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say.***

<sup>12</sup> ***Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words:***

It is worth considering that Elihu could actually be the author of the Book of Job. This would explain a great deal, as only two people are realistic candidates as to who would be most qualified to record the events in Job's life: either Elihu or Job himself. Hence, the Lord very likely used one of the most obscure men in the Bible, to bring forth one of the most important messages—that a *broken* and *contrite spirit* is always a pearl of great price. And to possess this, God will not despise.

***Psalms 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 51:17*

*Thou wilt not despise*—Thou wilt not treat with contempt or disregard. That is, God would look upon them with favor, and to such a heart he would grant his blessing. See the notes at Isaiah 57:15; notes at Isaiah 66:2.

***Job 32:13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.***

Here we see the spiritual reason why Job's three friends were never given the wisdom to help their friend—simply because in human arrogance they would have claimed that they themselves had found out wisdom.

But just as a fool does not know God, neither will God grant heavenly wisdom to any who secretly desire to use divine wisdom as a means for glorying in themselves.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 32:13*

You were not permitted to refute or convince him, for if you had been you would have been lifted up with pride, and would have attributed to yourselves what belongs to God.

What was true of Job's friends is equally true of many today, that even if God did provide for them spiritual wisdom, the praise would not go to God, but rather only to themselves.

No doubt the old saying that the Lord created man last, so that he could never claim that creation was his own work, has a realistic measure of truth to it.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 32:13*

*God thrusteth him down, not man*—These are the words of Elihu. The meaning is, "God only can drive Job from his position, and show him the truth, and humble him. The wisdom of man fails. The aged, the experienced, and the wise have been unable to meet his arguments and bring him down from the positions which he has taken. That work can be done only by God himself, or by the wisdom which he only can give." Accordingly Elihu, who proposes to meet the arguments of Job, makes no appeal to experience or observation; he does not ground what he says on the maxims of sages or the results of reflection, but proposes to adduce the precepts of wisdom which God had imparted to him; Job 33:4, Job 33:6.

Elihu knew that the Lord alone could convict Job of sin, and that His divine spiritual correction was necessary to sufficiently humble Job, in order that he might know the real depth of his sin.

***Job 32:14 Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.***

Elihu makes it very clear that he had absolutely no role whatsoever in the previous failed attempts to help Job.

Elihu will also reveal later in the book, that he would both search and fetch his wisdom from afar.

Because of this, that His source was from the Spirit of the Almighty, Elihu's answers to Job's problems would contain a spiritual newness and freshness, not found in any of the preceding arguments of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, as well as Job himself.

Elihu's words would bring forth new spiritual understanding, which would both humble and ready Job, for the Lord's entrance into his life.

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 32:14*

*Now he hath not directed his words against me.* Elihu thinks that he can interfere in the controversy with the better prospect of a good result, since he is untouched by any of Job's words, and can therefore speak without passion or resentment. *Neither will I answer him with your speeches.* He is also going to bring forward fresh arguments, which, as they avoid the line taken by the three friends, may soothe, instead of exasperating, the patriarch.



Session 11

*Elihu Silences Job's Critics: Eliphaz, Bildad,  
and Zophar*

*Job 32:15–33:3*

Scriptures

*Job 32:15–16*  
*Micah 3:8*  
*Job 32:8*  
*Job 32:17–18*  
*Jeremiah 20:9*  
*Job 32:20*  
*Job 32:21*

*Deuteronomy 1:17*  
*Galatians 1:10*  
*Job 32:22*  
*Psalms 36:2*  
*Psalms 12:3*  
*Job 33:1*  
*Job 33:2–3*

*Psalms 107:20*  
*II Peter 1:21*  
*Jeremiah 23:21*  
*Deuteronomy 18:20*  
*Jeremiah 2:8*

*Job 32:15–16 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.*  
<sup>16</sup> *When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;)*

The great spiritual impact of Elihu's divinely-ordained ministry begins to be seen here.

Once Elihu begins to speak, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, who had previously felt their wisdom superior in every manner and in every way, now became *amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.*

The Hebrew word for *amazed* is #2865 *chathath*. *Strongs' Concordance* defines it as "to be shattered or dismayed."

*Brown-Driver-Briggs* defines the word, "be shattered, broken, figurative of nations under divine judgment Isaiah 7:8; Isaiah 30:31; so probably also Isaiah 8:9."

*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* defines the word, "A primitive root; properly, to prostrate; hence, to break down, either (literally) by violence, or (figuratively) by confusion and fear—abolish, affright, be (make) afraid, amaze, beat down, discourage, (cause to) dismay, go down, scare, terrify."

From these definitions we can see the strong spiritual impact that Elihu's presence would begin to make on Job's miserable comforters.

They begin to realize that they have been wrong, their arguments shattered, and fear for their error is increasingly growing.

The dramatic effectiveness of Elihu's words to Job's friends is threefold, as they are (1) *amazed*, (2) *answered no more*, and (3) *left off speaking*.

Where previously they assumed to know all, and spoke incessantly about their own personal wisdom and experiences, now there is deafening silence.

Where previously they had much to say, and were certain of all they said, now exposed to true wisdom, their appearance is as mute men.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 32:15*

*They were amazed*—There also are the words of Elihu, and are designed to express his astonishment that the three friends of Job did not answer him. He says that they were completely silenced, and he repeats this to call attention to the remarkable fact that men who began so confidently, and who still held on to their opinion, had not one word more to say. . . . They could say absolutely nothing. This fact, that they were wholly silent, furnished an ample apology for Elihu to take up the subject.

*Benson Commentary, Job 32:15*

*They were amazed*—Job's three friends stood mute, like persons amazed, not knowing what to reply to his arguments, and wondering at his bold and confident assertions concerning his integrity, and his interest in the favour of God, under such terrible and manifest tokens, as they thought them, of God's just displeasure against him. They answered no more . . .

It takes spiritual power to turn the sinner from the evil of his way, and until it is introduced, he will continue as he always has.

Jesus equipped His apostles with the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), and all who are sent by Him will share in possessing similar spiritual power and wisdom. This is essential in ministry, without which no leader can be effective in it.

To be truly dynamic in turning the lost to Christ will require the presence of the Spirit of Christ. And then God's Holy Spirit—and not the reasonings, opinions, and foolish assumptions produced by the spirits of men—sinners are made known their sins, and hopefully are convicted by them.

***Micah 3:8 But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Mic. 3:8*

"I am full of (or filled with) power by the Spirit of the Lord and of judgment and might." The false prophets, walked after their own spirit, Ezekiel 13:3. Their only power or influence was from without, from favoring circumstances, from adapting themselves to the great or to the people, going along with the tide, and impelling persons whither they wished to go. The power of the true prophet was inherent, and that by gift of "the Spirit of the Lord" . . .

The power to either silence or refute critics was evident not only in Jesus' earthly ministry (Matt. 22:15–22) but also in those He ordained to continue to spread His name. Though men have no power, ability, and/or strength in their own words, the Lord has great power in His.

Wherever true ministers of the gospel reside, the Lord's spiritual power will be manifested by them.

Where the Spirit of the Lord truly is, spiritual power will be clearly evident in those who possess it. This was the case with Micah (Mic. 3:8), Zechariah (II Chrn. 24:20), Elijah (I Kgs. 12:1–24), David (I Sam. 16:13), and God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (Luke 4:14) along with so many others (Heb. 11:32–35). Elihu's divinely-ordained ministry will prove to be no different.

***Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.***

***Job 32:17–19 I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion.***

***<sup>18</sup>For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me.***

***<sup>19</sup>Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.***

Elihu now reveals how God's Spirit is ready to break forth from within him, *as wine which hath no vent*.

Where the Spirit of God truly is, there will exist great internal spiritual energy and compulsion to carry out divine will.

This internal force is so great, that even if God's messengers would seek to suppress its internal promptings, they cannot. Jeremiah briefly attempted to not speak in the Lord's name, but the Spirit of the Lord would not allow him to hold his peace.

The Lord's passion is so strong and so compelling in His messengers' hearts, that if He compels truth to be brought forth from them, then faithful men of God have no natural ability whatsoever to resist becoming obedient to divine will.

***Jeremiah 20:9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.***

Just as Elihu spoke of the Word of God in him, *as wine which hath no vent and ready to burst like new bottles*, so does Jeremiah speak of the spiritual Word from within him, *as a burning fire shut up in his bones*. This is always the case with those ordained by God to bring forth His Word, when the truth of God is not brought forth by mere duty, but rather through strong spiritual fervor and desire.

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Jer. 20:9*

*Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name:* this daily scorn and reproach which the prophet saw himself exposed unto, for preaching against the sin and wickedness of the people, was a sore temptation upon him to lay down his employment as a prophet. He did not speak this openly, but he spoke it in his heart, he had (as he confesseth) many such thoughts in his breast. But he saith he was not able to do what he thought to do, he found in his heart a constraint to go on, that when a revelation came at any time from God unto him, it was like a fire in his bones, which he must quench by uttering what God had revealed to him.

***Job 32:20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.***

Elihu properly understood that the only way he could be relieved from his spiritual burden and find refreshment in his soul, was to speak what the Spirit of the Lord had been impressing upon him.

The Spirit of the Lord was like a burning fire, which could only be quenched, by speaking forth the truth. It was only when this would be done, that both relief and refreshment could return to his soul.

Distinct from Job's other three friends, Elihu did not desire to speak, but the Spirit of the Lord within him gave him no reasonable alternative. Sin was present, and the Holy Spirit's will, was that it must be addressed.

***Job 32:21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.***

True ministers of the Lord neither can be, nor will be, respecters of persons. To do so would endanger their own spiritual standing and ministry before God.

***Deuteronomy 1:17*** *Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.*

Partiality in judgment will always result in improper justice. All true judgment belongs to the Lord; it is revealed by Him, and is to be administered in His name. For this reason neither the fear of man, nor praise from him should alter the judgment of God. To do so, will disqualify a man from either becoming, or remaining, a true servant of Jesus Christ.

***Galatians 1:10*** *For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Gal. 1:10–14

In preaching the gospel, the apostle sought to bring persons to the obedience, not of men, but of God. But Paul would not attempt to alter the doctrine of Christ, either to gain their favour, or to avoid their fury. In so important a matter we must not fear the frowns of men, nor seek their favour, by using words of men's wisdom. Concerning the manner wherein he received the gospel, he had it by revelation from Heaven. He was not led to Christianity, as many are, merely by education.

Just as it was God who called Paul to ministry, so it was God Who chose Elihu to speak on His behalf. Because of this, Elihu's loyalty remained with the Lord, and not man. It was the Lord Who had made, sustained, and saved him, understandably his allegiance and loyalty remained with his Savior.

***Job 32:22*** *For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away.*

The consequential result of engaging in flattery, shall produce greater spiritual blindness to the sin in self.

***Psalms 36:2 (NIV)*** *In their own eyes they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin.*

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 36:2

The word rendered "flattereth"—*חָלַף* *châlaq*—means to be smooth; then, to be smooth in the sense of being bland or flattering; Hosea 10:2; Psalm 5:9; Proverbs 28:23; Proverbs 2:16; Proverbs 7:5.

Elihu was more than fully aware of the sin of flattery and its dangerous consequences. He knew that if committed, the Lord would take him away. It was neither in Elihu's character or nature to flatter. He did not know how to do it and was not about to begin learning to engage in it now.

What Elihu knew of flattery, David also was acutely aware of as well—that the Lord would cut off, disown, and dissociate Himself from all who engage in this sin.

***Psalms 12:3*** *The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things.*

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 12:3

*All flattering lips*—The meaning is, that he will cut off all “persons” who use flattery; that is, he will cut them off from the favors which he will show to his own people, or will punish them. The word used here is the common one to denote disowning or excommunicating, and derives its meaning from the act of separating offenders from a community. See Genesis 17:14; Leviticus 17:10; Leviticus 18:29; Leviticus 20:3, Leviticus 20:6...

Flatterers smooth over not only their own sins against God, but also the sins of others.

Hence, where flattery minimizes sin, the Holy Spirit and God's holy Word both highlight and expose it.

Flattery also requires a very sweet, candied, and agreeable tongue so that what is said will be perceived as pleasing to those it is purposed to both deceive and influence.

Many a false prophet has gained his religious reputation and spiritual influence through flattery, through preaching what the simple desire to hear, and not what the Lord demands they hear.

Through also false revelations, flatterers seduce people to believe untruths (Luke 6:26).

Ultimately, the flatterer's main spiritual objective is to enlarge the egos, hopes, and imaginations of others, in order that he may enhance himself.

The devil leads, influences, and deceives as many with flattery, as he pressures with persecution.

This was evidenced in Genesis with Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:5), and he employs this same tactic today.

Through flattery many have been led to trust in lies, which in the end ultimately destroyed their own life.

***Job 33:1 Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.***

It is not wrong to implore, pray, or even demand that men listen to our words if what we are about to speak has its source in God. Hence, if the Spirit of God is truly working within to speak His Word, it is quite appropriate, and even essential, that others are alerted to the importance of what is about to be said.

Those also sent by God, have more than enough right to demand that sinners hear the truth.

The Lord does not coax nor beg sinners to hear His message; He commands them to.

To foolishly assume that the Lord has no right to enter into your life, is to conclude that life does not originate from Him. Every potter has the right to either shape or mold the clay as he pleases, and the Maker of both the potter and the clay is no different.

***Job 33:2–3 Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.  
3 My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.***

Seeking to distinguish himself from Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, Elihu declares he will speak with an upright heart and utter knowledge clearly. His words, he states, will not bring more confusion, but rather impart clarity and lucidity regarding Job's sin.

Job, who previously rejected being convicted by the spirit of man, now is given a chance to be reconciled through being exposed to the Spirit of God.

The words of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had done nothing but provoke Job and cause him internal unrest.

Yet Elihu's message would accomplish the complete opposite. Since it originated from above, it would prove easy to be entreated and recognized as having the Lord as its true source.

Ultimately, Elihu would provide a breath of fresh air, whereas previously only debate and strife had prevailed.

Job's friends had spoken through their own will, but now Elihu, sent *on God's behalf*, would speak through the direction of the Lord's Holy Spirit, and as such would introduce to Job the healing and restorative power of God's Word.

***Psalm 107:20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.***

It is easy to see why the confusing human arguments of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had collectively failed, simply because their words had not God as their true source. True prophecy originates not from human imagination, but from heavenly revelation. Its source is not man, but God.

***II Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.***

Many have failed in ministry simply because they sought and attempted to operate a divine calling which God has not give them.

Understandably, no man can possess any legitimate spiritual ministry without Jesus calling him to it. The Lord has set the members in His church as it has pleased Him, and surely not how it pleases the members.

Whenever also the spiritually ignorant speak through their own human supposition, they can do nothing but bring forth false prophecy, which is exactly what Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had done.

***Jeremiah 23:21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.***

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Jer. 23:21*

*I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran . . . They might be sent of men, and be encouraged by them; but they were not sent of God: it is not only necessary that men employed in religious affairs should have an external call, in an orderly way, from the church of God; but also an internal call from the Lord himself; he qualifying them with gifts, putting his word into their mouths, and inclining their hearts to publish it; see Hebrews 5:4; but these false prophets had no mission nor commission from the Lord, nor were they sent on any errand, or with any message from him; and yet they ran; showed great diligence and zeal, and made haste to tell the people what the Lord had never said to them, but what were the warm imaginations of their own heads and hearts; they ran a race or course of ministry, but it was not good . . .*

*I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied;* wherefore what they prophesied was not the word of the Lord, but what they themselves devised; and so was what was false, as the Targum adds: it is a sad character of men when they speak in public neither by the will of God, nor according to the word of God.

All true and legitimate spiritual ministries in the church require a divine call before they are entered into. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and this is especially so in regard to being ordained to speak for God. To presume to either be a prophet, or speak as one, requires first being called by God to the office.

But, if spiritual counterfeits dangerously engage in presumably speaking for the Lord, absent being actually commissioned by Him, then the divine judgment for their sin is death.

***Deuteronomy 18:20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.***

It is a great crime to come in the Lord's name, and not be commanded by Him to do so.

It is also not uncommon in professed Christian ministry, that both pastor and priest can be alienated from the Lord, while still claiming to speak in Christ's name. No doubt there are far more false prophets and teachers operating in both the world and the professed church, than true ones. Just like in Micaiah's day there are always far more false prophets to be inquired of, than true ones (I Kgs. 22:1–38).

***Jeremiah 2:8 The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.***

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Deut. 18:20*

*But the prophet which shall presume to speak in my name . . . Pretending a mission and commission from God, and yet was never sent by him, like the prophets in Jeremiah 23:21,*

*which I have not commanded him to speak;* which though true was not to be spoken in a public manner, by assuming a public office, without a divine authority or a commission from God, and much less what was false, and never commanded to be spoken at all by any:



Session 12

## *Elihu's Reproof of Job*

### *Job Chapter 33:4–33:14*

#### Scriptures

<i>Job 33:4</i>	<i>Psalms 97:2</i>	<i>Job 33:10–11</i>
<i>Psalms 100:3</i>	<i>Exodus 33:20</i>	<i>Job 33:12</i>
<i>Job 33:5</i>	<i>Job 33:8–9</i>	<i>Proverbs 19:3</i>
<i>Job 33:6</i>	<i>Job 27:6</i>	<i>Job 33:13</i>
<i>Job 13:23</i>	<i>Job 42:6</i>	<i>Romans 14:12</i>
<i>Job 33:7</i>	<i>Job 23:10</i>	<i>Acts 17:31</i>
<i>Exodus 20:19</i>	<i>Job 40:4</i>	<i>Job 33:14</i>
<i>II Chronicles 6:1</i>	<i>Proverbs 30:12</i>	<i>Psalms 119:71</i>

*Job 33:4 The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*

By acknowledging his Creator, Elihu revealed he knew the Lord as the true source of his life.

“As a man; so every man is made by God, and not by himself” (Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 33:4).

If men know themselves as made by God, and not gods themselves, they will pity the transgressor and not harshly judge him.

Elihu rightfully places himself on the same natural and human level as Job, in an attempt to help him realize that it was not human pride that was leading his correction.

Where Elihu did distinguish himself from Job, is by his possessing and obeying the Spirit of God within him.

Elihu would speak through being inspired by the Spirit of God, and his spiritual humility here proves that he is worthy of the task.

What Elihu speaks as true of himself is true of all mankind.

*Psalms 100:3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

*Job 33:5 If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.*

It is necessary in all criminal proceedings that the defendant be given ample opportunity to mount a proper defense.

Elihu assures Job that if there was a fault in his own spiritual reasoning and conclusions, then Job would be given the opportunity to voice an objection. Yet, time would reveal that unlike the words of Job’s other three friends, the truth of Elihu’s message could not be refuted. Its source was the Lord, and it would begin to accomplish His divine purpose in Job’s life.

Let us also remember, Elihu is the only human character in the Book of Job whom God does not single out for divine reproof.

He is also the only human admonisher of Job whom Job listens to without either rebutting or denying the charges brought against him.

Whereas previously Job had defended both his faith and his person, now he does neither. By this fact alone we can rightfully assume that Elihu was indeed who he claimed to be, one sent by God, similar to John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1–3), to ready Job for the arrival of the Lord Himself (Job 36:2).

***Job 33:6 Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay.***

Job had prayed for a mediator and intercessor to make known to him his sin; Elihu would become just this.

***Job 13:23 How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 13:23*

*How many are mine iniquities and sins?*—Job takes the place of the plaintiff or accuser. He opens the cause. He appeals to God to state the catalogue of his crimes, or to bring forward his charges of guilt against him. The meaning, according to Schultens, is, "That catalogue ought to be great which has called down so many and so great calamities upon my head from heaven, when I am conscious to myself of being guilty of no offence." God sorely afflicted him. Job appeals to him to show why it was done, and to make a statement of the number and the magnitude of his offences.

*Make me to know*—I would know on what account and why I am thus held to be guilty, and; why I am thus punished.

Job had wished for one capable of convincing him of sin, and if someone could be found, then his prayer would be answered.

Ultimately, it is only the Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit Who can convict men of sin, and only those actually led by It, who can assist in bringing other sinners to true repentance.

This is also why Job's other three friends had failed to convince Job of sin, simply because the Lord was neither inspiring their words, nor their ministries. They had spoken without being led by the Spirit of the Lord, and their failure and spiritual inability to help Job confirmed this.

The Lord knows the hearts of all men, and surely He will never give either spiritual power or spiritual authority to those not purposed to speak on His behalf.

God also imparts no heavenly gift, nor divine revelation, merely for a man's personal glory and/or religious advancement, since all gifts, powers, and endowments of the Spirit, are not given for the personal advancement of the recipient, but for the edification, healing, and/or illumination of those to whom they are sent.

***Job 33:7 Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.***

Elihu well knew the terror that could overcome sinners when required to stand before the Lord in judgment; thus, he assures Job that his words would not compound Job's potential fear.

Where carnal judgment is heavy upon those whom it is directed, Christ's words are light, even when given in the form of reproof and correction.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:7*

*Behold my terror shall not make thee afraid*—Job had earnestly desired to carry his cause directly before God, but he had expressed the apprehension that he would overawe him by his majesty, so that he would not be able to manage his plea with the calmness and self-possession which were desirable. He had, therefore, expressed it as his earnest wish, that if he were so permitted, God would not take advantage of his majesty and power to confound him; see the notes at Job 13:21. Elihu now says, that the wish of Job in this could be amply gratified. Though he spake in the name of God, and it might be considered that the case was fairly carried before him, yet he was also a man. He was the fellow, the equal with Job. He was made of the same clay, and he could not overawe him as the Almighty himself might do. There would be, therefore, in his case all the advantage of carrying the cause directly up to God, and yet none of the disadvantage which Job apprehended, and which must ensue when a mere man undertook to manage his own cause with the Almighty.

Until sinners come to realize God's true character and are cleansed of their sin, they will naturally fear the thought of entering His presence.

The Israelites begged and pleaded with Moses to intercede on their behalf, because of fear, in order that they might not need to have direct communication with the Lord.

*Exodus 20:19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*

God's glory is so great and the light of His person so radiant, that Scripture reveals that the Lord surrounds Himself in a cloud of thick darkness.

*II Chronicles 6:1 Then said Solomon, The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.*

So also,

*Psalms 97:2 Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*

The Lord surrounds Himself in darkness so that His presence will not destroy those too unholy to endure it. Hence, the Lord appeared on Mt. Sinai in a thick cloud (Exod. 19:9), and shielded His true celestial glory from Israel, even as He led the Israelites on their journey to Canaan, through His glory being hidden in a cloud (Exod. 13:21).

Practically, it is impossible for any mortal creature to observe God's true light and celestial glory and not be consumed by it.

*Exodus 33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.*

*Benson Commentary, Exod. 33:20*

*Thou canst not see my face*—The full display of my glory, that *light inaccessible*, before which the angels stand, but which would be insufferable to mortal eyes; this *no man can see and live*.

Given the powerful and intimidating nature of God, it is not surprising that sinners shall hesitate in desiring direct communication with Him.

The sin in man no doubt highly cautions him to keep a great distance between himself and the Lord, absent approaching Him with full and complete repentance for his sin.

And though men are surely not wise, they do possess enough spiritual sense to realize that if they are in sin, they remain unworthy to stand in the divine, holy, and fearful majesty of God.

It is also worth noting that Jesus our Lord, will need to transform our own bodies, in order that we may both safely and with joy eventually see Him as He is (Phil. 3:21).

***Job 33:8–9 Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying,***

***<sup>9</sup> I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.***

Though Job did not use these exact words, Elihu summarizes his inward confession of claiming innocence and lacking any provable iniquity. Job's insistence to maintain personal integrity and righteousness is seen in his memorable, though demonstrably wrong declaration:

***Job 27:6 My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.***

No doubt what Job uttered in chapter 27 was greatly revised in chapter 42.

***Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.***

What men claim of themselves regarding their character is seldom right or the truth.

This is evidenced when Peter proclaimed that he would never deny the Lord Jesus but then undoubtedly did (Luke 22:54–62).

Job also improperly presumed that he would be so well vindicated of being confirmed righteous before God, that after his trial he would come forth as pure gold.

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

What Job previously viewed as his own personal righteousness and strong religious integrity greatly changed, once he came to realize the extent of his sin committed against the Lord. For then, after true spiritual illumination, he would no longer view himself as a righteous man, one who was as pure as gold, but rather as a sinner stained and made vile by sin.

***Job 40:4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.***

One of the great initial purposes of the Holy Spirit is to convict men of sin (John 16:8). Just as light makes known darkness, the Lord's Holy Spirit will with great force convince men that darkness lives within themselves.

Any also who have not sincerely come to know themselves to be a sinner, prove, that they neither know the Lord, nor their own unholy nature. Since it is only those whose eyes are spiritually blind who cannot see their naturally-born sinful condition.

***Proverbs 30:12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.***

In the end, and in the Lord's sight, all mankind has gone astray, and there is not even one righteous, no, not one (Rom. 3:10–12). Though Job was not aware of this spiritual truth at the beginning or middle of his trial, at the end he surely would be.

***Job 33:10–11 Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy, <sup>11</sup> He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.***

Through Elihu's correction we begin to observe Job's first accusative and observable sin, which was not only labeling God his enemy, as he had previously done in error (Job 19:11), but now there is actual public blame for the Lord sinning against him.

The repetition of *he* in these verses reveals the great emphasis that Job has openly placed upon God for placing him in captivity.

***Job 33:12 Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.***

Belief in human purity, will very quickly transform into rebelling against divine authority.

He therefore who thinks himself pure in his own eyes, will be the first to believe that God is unjust towards him.

Because sinners view themselves as without sin, they will attribute sin to Him Who has none.

The man also who is prone to dangerously find fault with the Lord, innately believes that there is no true fault within himself.

***Proverbs 19:3 The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD.***

Time would prove that the thoughts, opinions, and false beliefs which Job held of the Lord contained great error.

No one also would dare to call the Lord into question, let alone speak against His government, unless he internally believed, at least to a degree, himself equal with Him.

At the core of all spiritual rebellion remains the devilish and perverted belief that sinful and fallen man, is on the same level as the Lord, and thus has a legitimate spiritual right to judge Him.

For none also will bring accusation against any, unless they believe themselves either superior or equal to them.

***Job 33:13 Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.***

It is because of vanity that men strive against the Lord and because of pride that they assume the Lord must give account to them.

So twisted also is the sinner's heart that he thinks himself the Lord's judge.

In actuality, it will never be God Who shall be forced to give account to man, but man, who must one day stand before the holy tribunal of God.

***Romans 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.***

The apostle Paul spoke of that day when the Lord will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He has appointed.

Jesus' resurrection from the dead proved that He would be this Man.

***Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.***

***Job 33:14 For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.***

Job had complained of the Lord not responding to his pleas, but Elihu reveals that God does speak to men, though they perceive it not. Was it perhaps that the Lord had spoken to Job, not only once but possibly twice, and yet Job could not perceive it?

It is also not the fault of God that men cannot perceive His voice, and are so dulled in spiritual perception, that they cannot recognize the Holy Spirit's presence.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:14*

*For God speaketh once*—The object of what is here said is, to show the reason why God brings affliction upon people, or to explain the principles of his government which Elihu supposed had been sadly misunderstood by Job and his friends. The reason why he brings affliction, Elihu says, is because all other means of reclaiming and restraining people fail. He communicates his will to them; he speaks to them again and again in dreams and visions; he warns them of the error of their course Job 33:14–17, and when this is all ineffectual he brings upon them affliction. He lays them upon their bed where they must reflect, and where there is hope that they may be reclaimed and reformed, Job 33:18–28.

*Yea, twice*—He does not merely admonish him once. He repeats the admonition when man refuses to hear him the first time, and takes all the methods which he can by admonition and warning to withdraw him from his wicked purpose, and to keep him from ruin.

*Yet man perceiveth it not*—Or, rather, "Although he does not perceive it or attend to it." ... Of the truth of what Elihu here says, there can be no difference of opinion. It is one of the great principles of the divine administration that the sinner is often warned, though he heeds it not; and that God sends repeated admonitions even when people will not regard them, but are bent on their own ruin.

In truth, and according to Elihu's words, the Lord had spoken to Job, and more than once, but Job, because of spiritual dullness, either had not truly heard, or refused to hear, God's internal promptings in his heart.

Yea, the Lord does speak, not once, but twice, but it is men that perceive Him not.

Though Job was initially unaware of this, both affliction and then correction, would be necessary for him to truly learn God's involvement in his life.

Hence, by the end of the book, just like the psalmist, Job will with both joy and certainty view all that he has went through in coming to more properly know God, as a good thing.

***Psalm 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.***

Once on the other side of spiritual trials and afflictions, true believers will thank God for them.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 119:71*

*It is good for me that I have been afflicted*—See the notes at Psalm 119:67. Whatever may have been the form of the affliction, it was good for me. The design was benevolent; the result has been my own benefit. This will be the experience sooner or later resulting from all the afflictions of the righteous.

*That I might learn thy statutes*—That I might be brought more fully to understand what they require; and that I might be led to conform to them. It is implied here

(a) that this is the tendency of affliction; and

(b) that this is an advantage—a good.

Anything that will lead a man to obey God is a blessing and a favor. Whatever leads a sinner to secure the salvation of his soul is a gain to him. No matter what it may cost; no matter what he may be required to give up; no matter to what persecutions and troubles it may expose him; no matter what he may suffer, or how long he may suffer; no matter though poverty, contempt, toil—even the rack or the stake—may be the consequence of his religion—yet it is again to him; and he will be thankful for it in the end...



Session 13

*Elihu Readies Job to Hear God's Correction*

*Job 33:15–30*

Scriptures

*Job 33:15*  
*Numbers 12:6*  
*Job 33:16–17*  
*Job 33:18*  
*Job 33:19*  
*Hebrews 12:8*  
*Job 33:20–21*

*Romans 2:5*  
*Job 33:22*  
*Job 33:23*  
*Job 33:24*  
*Proverbs 28:13*  
*Job 33:25–26*  
*Job 33:27*

*Luke 11:52*  
*Job 33:28*  
*Matthew 10:28*  
*Job 33:29*  
*Luke 19:10*  
*Job 33:30*

*Job 33:15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;*

When men are at physical rest, the Lord will often use this time to reveal His will through dreams and visions in the night—that silent time when daily clutter is at its least and individuals are the most open to be taught spiritual truth.

If men lack the spiritual perception to recognize the Lord's voice in the day, then the Lord will often approach them at night, when deep sleep falls upon them, and they cannot suppress the Lord's Spirit from revealing divine will.

Dreams and visions, especially in the Old Testament, were a common means of imparting heavenly instruction. These divine methods of revealing the will of God were often able to make an even more indelible imprint on the soul than even the prophet's words. In fact, even the prophets themselves were instructed through dreams and visions in the night.

*Numbers 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.*

Dreams and visions are very intimate ways that the Lord speaks to men. They originate seemingly inside a man's mind, and as such, they appear to originate from the man himself.

A dream also can be as impactful on the soul as an actual physical experience, able to either build anticipation or dread of future events.

Unbelievers also, like Abimelech, were warned by God in dreams (Gen. 20:3). Pharaoh likewise experienced a vision from God in Joseph's day (though he was himself unable to interpret it [Gen. 41:32]) that warned him of seven plentiful years of crops followed by seven years of famine (Gen. 41:1-7).

By bringing up dreams and visions of the night Elihu is ready to instruct Job in three ways that the Lord speaks to men.

*Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Job 33:15*

Elihu now describes the first mode in which God speaks to man: He Himself comes forward as a witness in man's sleep, He makes use of dreams or dream-like visions, which come upon one suddenly within the realm of nocturnal thought (vid., Psychol. S. 282f.), as a medium of revelation—a usual form of divine revelation, especially in the heathen world, to which positive revelation is wanting. . . . In this condition of deep or half sleep, *revelat aurem hominum*, a phrase used of the preparation of the ear for the purpose of hearing by the removal of hindrances, and, in general, of confidential communication, therefore: He opens the ear of men, and seals their admonition, i.e., the admonition that is wholesome and necessary for them.

Through dreams, visions, and revelations which originate from above, the most restless and sometimes troubling nights can prove to be the most life-changing ones.

***Job 33:16–17 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,  
17 That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.***

The wise men who came to worship Jesus after His birth refused to return to Herod and chose another route home because a dream had warned them of impending danger (Matt. 2:11–12).

Joseph also was given revelation through a dream, and was divinely instructed not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife (Matt. 1:20). Later Joseph was warned by an angel in a dream to flee into Egypt in order to save Jesus (Matt. 2:13–21).

Hence, by dreams and visions believers are both warned and instructed in the Lord's will, just as clearly as if He had spoken to them while they were awake. By this process divine will is revealed, and there remains no doubt that it is the Lord, Who has opened men's ears.

By interceding in men's lives and revealing His will to them, the Lord seeks to prevent the great and dangerous consequence of men pursuing their own will.

It is because of pride that men pursue their own designs, but in the process depart from God's will and eventually even the Lord Himself.

Ultimately, man is his own worst enemy as the pride, lust, and self-will within him can easily lead him to depart from God, in an attempt to satisfy his carnal desires.

It is also common that if men get a taste for pride, thus develop an increasing appetite for it, then there is little that God can do to save them. It is for this reason that the Lord seeks to hide pride from man, lest man's continuing hunger for it, is certain to produce his own death.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:17*

*That he may withdraw man from his purpose*—Margin, "work." The sense is plain. God designs to warn him of the consequences of executing a plan of iniquity. He alarms him by showing him that his course will lead to punishment, and by representing to him in the night visions, the dreadful woes of the future world into which he is about to plunge. The object is to deter him from committing the deed of guilt which he had contemplated, and to turn him to the paths of righteousness. Is it unreasonable to suppose that the same thing may occur now, and that God may have a purpose in the dreams which often visit the man who has formed a plan of iniquity, or who is living a life of sin? It cannot be doubted that such people often have alarming dreams; that these dreams are such as are fitted to deter them from the commission of their contemplated wickedness; and that in fact they not unfrequently do it.

***Job 33:18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.***

This is the purposed result of God's warnings through dreams and visions; it is to keep men's souls from the pit and their lives from perishing.

It is impossible to place too great an emphasis on this great truth, that men are saved from the pit and future destruction only because the Lord has drawn them away from their pride.

Elihu also would not have addressed the issue of pride in speaking to Job, unless also it was applicable to him. Hence, just because men fear the Lord, does not mean that all human pride has been eradicated from their hearts.

Just because saints possess faith, does not mean that they do not also need to address some level of pride in themselves.

***Job 33:19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:***

Sickness and pain which force a man to his bed, can easily be a form of chastisement from the Lord. Those who insist on disregarding divine will often will be chastened with internal pain, consuming both their bodies and souls.

If the Lord's commandments are insufficient to draw men's hearts closer to His will, then bodily pain can be purposed to weaken the flesh, consequently warning of the great dangers of sin and rejection of divine will.

Thus, if truth cannot properly grab a man's attention when he is healthy and cause him to repent for his sin, then the Lord hopes that either physical or mental anguish might.

Undoubtedly, pain will weaken the pride of self-will, which is at the core of men abandoning divine will. Bodily affliction is the next divine means that Elihu reveals the Lord will employ to open men's ears, just as dreams and visions are purposed to do.

And though most view sickness, sorrow, and even suffering as punishment from the Lord, in truth it is often meant to be a spiritual deterrent, with the divine hope that if men experience a little of the fruit of sin, they will abandon both embracing and continuing to be governed by it.

*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Job 33:19–28*

Job complained much of his diseases and judged by them that God was angry with him; his friends did so too: but Elihu shows that they were all mistaken, for God often afflicts the body in love, and with gracious designs of good to the soul, as appears in the issue. This part of Elihu's discourse will be of great use to us for the due improvement of sickness, in and by which God speaks to men.

In hindsight we know that the Lord allowed Satan to inflict Job's body so that he might learn an even more important lesson, which is the discovery of a broken and contrite spirit, a spirit also which either through personal affliction or spiritual enlightenment, comes to understand what true humility before the Lord consists of.

Every true child of God must and will be chastened by Him, though the methods used will vary. Job's life is a historical biblical example of this.

***Hebrews 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:19*

Elihu now says, that affliction is a part of a disciplinary government; that it is one of the means which God adopts, when warnings are ineffectual, to restrain people and to bring them to reflection and repentance. This appears to have been a view which was almost entirely new to them.

*And the multitude of his bones with strong pain*—The bones, as has before been remarked, it was supposed might be the seat of the acutest pain; see the notes at Job 30:17; compare Job 20:11; Job 7:15; Job 30:30. The meaning here is, that the frame was racked with intense suffering in order to admonish men of sin, to save them from plunging into deeper transgression, and to bring them to repentance.

***Job 33:20–21 So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.***

***<sup>21</sup> His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out.***

The degree to which the body needs to be afflicted before the spirit is broken, and consequently open to repentance, will be determined by the level of stubbornness in the soul. Consequently, some will often need to endure much bodily pain and suffering before they will even remotely consider repenting for their sin.

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 33:19–28*

Pain is the fruit of sin; yet, by the grace of God, the pain of the body is often made a means of good to the soul. When afflictions have done their work, they shall be removed.

So stubborn is the pride and self-righteousness of sinners that sometimes they will even be willing to sacrifice their own physical lives in order not to have to abandon pride and self-will within their hearts. This was evidenced in Pharaoh, who allowed the destruction of an entire nation, and eventually even the loss of his own physical life, in order to remain holding onto the pride in his heart.

It is also worth noting that he who will not repent for his pride and remains resistant to divine will, is only storing up for himself even greater heavenly wrath and judgment in a day to come.

***Romans 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.***

***Job 33:22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.***

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 33:22*

*To the destroyers*; to the instruments of death or destruction, whether it be angels, whom God sometimes useth in those cases; or devils, who have the power of death. Hebrews 2:14; or diseases, which by God's appointment are ready to give the fatal blow.

The Lord often uses angels and heavenly ministers to warn men just as He uses these same celestial beings to carry out His judgments upon the earth.

***Job 33:23 If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness:***

There is no guarantee that God will send a *messenger* or an *interpreter* of divine will to assist the afflicted, but if it is done, it will always be a reflection of divine grace.

True messengers sent from the Lord are extremely rare, as Elihu reveals that they amount to only *one among a thousand*.

This is evidenced throughout biblical history, when similar in Elijah's day, for every one true prophet of the Lord, there remained four hundred fifty false prophets (I Kgs. 18:22).

Elihu also reveals to Job that there are a rare few who will both defend and uphold God's uprightness.

*Benson Commentary, Job 33:23–24*

*If there be a messenger with him*—If there be a prophet or teacher with the afflicted man; *an interpreter*—One whose office and work it is to declare to him the mind and will of God, and his design in this dispensation of his providence, and what is the sick man's duty under it. *One of a thousand*—A person rightly qualified for this great and difficult work, such as there are but very few; *to show unto man his uprightness*—Not man's, but God's uprightness; namely, his justice in inflicting these sufferings, and the sufferer's desert of condemnation and wrath; God's way of pardoning and justifying the penitent; his sincerity and faithfulness to his promises, and the necessity of acquiescing in his will without murmuring or repining, and of walking in the way of faith and holiness. *Then he is gracious unto him*—In that case, or upon the sick man's turning to God in true repentance and faith, God graciously pardons his sins, and saves him, probably from his dangerous disease and from death, but, if not, at least from going down to the pit of hell, and from everlasting destruction.

***Job 33:24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.***

If sinners heed the words of God's messengers, as Nineveh did with Jonah, their lives can be spared. Because also Job repented for his sin and prayed for his friends as God commanded, the Lord found both a ransom and a reason for ending his captivity.

Whenever then there is sincere and genuine repentance for sin, this allows the Lord's grace to save the sinner from hell and its eternal punishments.

Though it cannot be said for certain what the Lord looks for that can be deemed a ransom, it is quite possible that change in countenance, from pride to humility, is what is referred to here, where instead of defending one's sin, a penitent man confesses it.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:24*

*I have found*—That is, there is a ransom; or, I have seen a reason why he should not die. The idea is, that God was looking for some reason on account of which it would be proper to release the sufferer, and restore him to the accustomed tokens of his favor and that such a ransom had now appeared. There was now no necessity why those sufferings should be prolonged, and he could consistently restore him to health.

*A ransom*—Margin, or, "an atonement." Hebrew, כֹּפֶר *kôpher*. On the meaning of this word, see the notes at Isaiah 43:3. The expression here means that there was something which could be regarded as a valuable consideration, or a reason why the sufferer should not be further afflicted, and why he should be preserved from going down to the grave. What that price, or valuable consideration was, is not specified; and what was the actual idea which Elihu attached to it, it is now impossible with certainty to determine. The connection would rather lead us to suppose that it was something seen in the sufferer himself; some change done in his mind by his trials; some evidence of acquiescence in the government of God, and some manifestation of true repentance, which was the reason why the stroke of punishment should be removed, and why the sufferer should be saved from death. This might be called by Elihu "a ransom"—using the word in a very large sense.

When men come to know their sin, and consequently confess it, and no longer deny its existence, then the door is opened for divine forgiveness and mercy to be given to them.

***Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.***

What this teaches us is that for divine mercy to actually be given, there must first be both a confession and a forsaking of sin. Since it is only he who confesses and forsakes his sin, who shall be a partaker of the mercy of God.

For any true mercy to be given by the Lord, confession and acknowledgment of sin must precede it. Where repentance is not, neither shall divine mercy be found.

***Job 33:25–26 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth:***

***<sup>26</sup> He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.***

In speaking these words to Job, Elihu hopes to impart unto him seeds of hope—assuring him that through repentance his body could again regain its vigor and his soul discover a reason for hope.

So great then is the mercy and grace of God that when sin is repented of, and is no longer denied being committed, then spiritual joy can replace bodily and mental pain.

All that Elihu speaks to Job about concerning the effects of true repentance, are directly related to him acknowledging the Lord's uprightness.

Not until sin is repented of will the penitent confess that God, His laws, and His will for man are righteous, and thereby in the process admit his own naturally born unrighteousness.

***Job 33:27 He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;***

Before forgiveness and mercy can be granted, sinners must both without hesitation and without denial confess, *I have sinned, and perverted that which was right.*

Sin not only damages the one committing it, but it also perverts the right way of living, by influencing and encouraging others to follow the same ungodly behavior.

To sin against God, is to make crooked the way to God.

Thus, confession of sin demands not only personally confessing one's sin against the Lord, but also an admission of perverting the right way which the Lord demands all men should walk in.

***Luke 11:52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.***

Whenever there is a true and sincere repentance for sin, the Lord is justified, His ways are esteemed as right, and men agree with Him that they have broken divine will for their lives.

It is also the confession of sin which encapsulates the great spiritual lessons taught in the book of Job, as Job proved to be exactly the kind of repentant man whom the Lord looks for in the earth, a penitent who would confess his sin, admit his guilt, and in the same natural breath justify his God.

***Job 33:28 He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.***

When there is confession of sin, the Lord's promise is that the soul will be saved from death, and the confessor will see the light of God. This verse reveals the keynote theme of Elihu's reproof, that with sincere confession of sin Job would obtain mercy from God, and thereby come to perceive the true light of Him.

There is also no true path to heaven that does not first begin with confession of sin. This is testified throughout Scripture and evidenced in all whom the Lord has saved.

Thus, there is no true lasting mercy given to the sinner, which does not first require repentance before it is given.

It is also the soul of man, and not merely his body, that the Lord is most concerned with saving.

Jesus instructed His followers to not be fearful of those able to kill the body (man) but rather He Who is able to destroy both the soul and the body (God).

***Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 10:28*

*Them which kill the body*—That is, people, who have no power to injure the soul, the immortal part. The body is a small matter in comparison with the soul. Temporal death is a slight thing compared with eternal death. He directs them, therefore, not to be alarmed at the prospect of temporal death, but to fear God, who can destroy both soul and body forever.

***Job 33:29 Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man,***

This process of saving the soul from death, is something that the Lord *worketh oftentimes with man*.

Here we witness the divine agency of God in saving man, whereby the Lord both looks and searches for in the earth those willing to confess their sin, in order that He may deliver them from the pit and from certain eternal death. This truth is most vividly manifested in the ministry of the Son of God.

***Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.***

From this verse we see the twofold ministry of the Savior, first to *seek* the lost then to *save* them. Before men can be saved, they must be found.

Other translations of verse 29 add more insight into Elihu's instruction.

(ESV) "*Behold, God does all these things, twice, three times, with a man,*

(NKJV) "*Behold, God works all these things, Twice, in fact, three times with a man,*

(AMP) [Elihu comments,] “Behold, God does all these things twice, yes, three times, with a man,

(Holman Christian Standard Bible) *God certainly does all these things two or three times to a man,*

The manner in which God warns man and seeks to turn him from the pit has been listed by Elihu as: (1) by dreams and visions in the night, (2) by bodily chastisement and affliction, and (3) by the Lord sending a messenger to instruct the sinner as to the why of his affliction, and how through repentance and confession of sin, forgiveness can be granted. “So the Septuagint understands it, which rendered it, ὀδοῦς τρεῖς *hodous treis*—three ways, referring to the three methods which Elihu had specified.”

***Job 33:30 To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.***

Reiterating the truth of verse 28, Elihu reveals the Lord’s ultimate purpose for bringing chastisement and allowing affliction in the sinner’s life is to recover his soul from death. Hence, if this requires either pain or sorrow in the body, then the Lord deems it well worth it, if the soul can be saved.

The physical body of man is already doomed to inhabit the grave and return to dust; the soul need not be.

*Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary, Job 33:31*

Elihu shows that God’s great and gracious design toward the children of men, is, to save them from being for ever miserable, and to bring them to be for ever happy. By whatever means we are kept back from the [pit,] we shall bless the Lord for them at least, and should bless him for them though they be painful and distressing. Those that perish for ever are without excuse, for they would not be healed.

Session 14

*Elihu Addresses Job Speaking Without  
True Knowledge of God*

*Job Chapter 33:31–34:35*

*Scriptures*

<i>Job 33:31</i>	<i>Job 34:10</i>	<i>Job 34:16–20</i>
<i>Job 33:32</i>	<i>Job 34:11</i>	<i>Job 34:21–23</i>
<i>Job 33:33</i>	<i>Galatians 6:7</i>	<i>Job 34:24–30</i>
<i>Job 34:1–4</i>	<i>Job 34:12</i>	<i>Job 34:31–32</i>
<i>Job 34:5–6</i>	<i>Isaiah 26:9</i>	<i>Job 34:33</i>
<i>Job 34:7–8</i>	<i>Job 34:13</i>	<i>Job 34:34–35</i>
<i>Job 9:22</i>	<i>Job 34:14–15</i>	<i>Job 38:1–2</i>
<i>Job 34:9</i>	<i>Ezekiel 18:4</i>	<i>I Corinthians 8:2</i>

*Job 33:31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.*

There must be in the sinner a consideration of the messengers' words to prompt sufficient spiritual internal awareness, enabling him to then be taught by God. Because of this, Elihu instructs Job to hold his peace and listen carefully to the truth he is about to reveal. Because if there is thoughtful and careful consideration of what is said, Elihu assures Job that spiritual understanding will follow.

By hearkening to Elihu's words, Job would be readying himself to be later taught by the Lord Himself.

*Job 33:32 If thou hast anything to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee.*

If after Job had heard Elihu's correction and had observed error, then Elihu assures him that he would be given ample opportunity to defend himself. Because Elihu is interested in Job, and his ultimate justification before his three friends' unjust accusations, he will lay no sin upon Job above that which has been committed.

Hence, whereas Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar seemed intent on establishing nothing more than religious dominance over their friend, Elihu's inward heart's desire is to assist in his justification.

It is always the hope of those sent by God that men can be justified and not condemned because of their sin. But for this to occur, sin either cannot be found, or must be repented of.

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 33:32*

*I desire to justify thee.*—He wishes to justify Job before his friends, that is, to maintain that his afflictions are not on account of past sin, but as a preservative against possible future defection. This being so, he considers that Job's case may justly be defended, and Job himself vindicated against his friends.

*Job 33:33 If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.*

If Job has nothing to say in response to Elihu's words, then he is asked to hold his peace in order that true wisdom may be imparted to him.

No doubt there are some who improperly infer that it is arrogance that prompts Elihu's address, but if we are both objective and honest, and consider that neither Job nor the Lord corrects Elihu at any time in the book, then we must conclude that Elihu was again exactly whom he claimed to be—a messenger sent by God to aid in Job's deliverance.

Hence, if neither the Lord, nor Job expresses fault and error in Elihu's correction, then it is foolish that those greatly removed from a personal exposure to Job's situation should—wisely forming the conclusion that if the Lord never corrects Elihu, and if Job never refutes his words of reproof, then why should any who merely read the account do so hundreds, yea even thousands of years later?

*Job 34:1–4 Furthermore Elihu answered and said,*

<sup>2</sup> *Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.*

<sup>3</sup> *For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.*

<sup>4</sup> *Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good.*

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 34:4*

Elihu calls upon those present to decide with him upon Job's words. The plainest Christian, whose mind is enlightened, whose heart is sanctified by the Spirit of God, and who is versed in the Scriptures, can say how far matters, words, or actions, agree with true religion, better than any that lean to their own understandings.

Whenever a man is led by the Spirit of God, he can appeal to those who are also of the Lord and filled with His Spirit, knowing that they shall be able to discern and confirm the truth that is being brought forth.

In truth, we need not take any man's words alone, even the prophets', simply because God's Spirit, shall confirm when hearing someone who speaks God's Word, whether or not its true source is God.

Thus when the true Word of the Lord is being brought forth from those led by the Spirit, those with the Spirit shall both agree and humble themselves to Its message.

*Job 34:5–6 For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.*

<sup>6</sup> *Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.*

Job's words contain two highly naive and foolish assumptions: first, the certainty of his own righteousness, and second, the belief that his wounds are incurable. The Lord would eventually prove both of these assumptions false. Job was not nearly as righteous and innocent as he perceived himself to be, and the Lord did in fact heal his life, of what he at this time in the record feels are incurable wounds.

*Job 34:7–8 What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?*

<sup>8</sup> *Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.*

*Benson Commentary, Job 34:7–9*

*Who drinketh up scorning like water*—That is, abundantly and greedily: who doth so break forth into scornful expressions, not only against his friends, but, in some sort, even against God himself. The Hebrew may be interpreted, *What man, being like Job, would drink up scorning?* &c. That a wicked or foolish man should act thus, is not strange; but that a man of such piety, gravity, wisdom, and authority, as Job, should be guilty of such a sin, this is wonderful. *Which walketh with wicked men*—Although I dare not say he is a wicked man, yet in this matter he speaks and acts like one of the wicked.

Though Job was not himself directly wicked in uttering false charges against the Lord, he did to a degree walk in the company of the wicked. Job's exact words were:

***Job 9:22 This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.***

What this teaches us is that even if we are not evil, if we espouse the same thoughts as those who are, and claim injustice on the Lord's part, then we manifest some agreement with His enemies.

To therefore speak and espouse the same sentiments as the ungodly, undoubtedly reveals a level of walk and harmony with them.

***Job 34:9 For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.***

*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Job 34:9*

Job had nowhere used this precise language, though the idea is not an unnatural inference from much that he had said; comp. ch. Job 9:12, Job 21:7, Job 24:1, and ch. 21 throughout. This charge that a man is nothing bettered by being religious Elihu refutes in ch. 35, directing his attention in the meantime to the general charge of in justice so far as it bore on God Himself.

In short, Job had concluded, *What profit is there in serving God*, if he was punished in the very same way as those who had rejected God.

To foolishly believe that just because tragedy hits us that our previous walk of piety is worthless, is actual nonsense.

For this would presume that unless a man's spiritual walk is smooth, absent any bumps, hills, or obstacles, then the path of pursuing piety is not worth it, when the real truth is that the way to God will always be found to be both narrow and difficult, and a very blessed few, find it.

***Job 34:10 Therefore hearken unto me ye men of understanding: far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.***

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 34:10–15*

Elihu had showed Job, that God meant him no hurt by afflicting him, but intended his spiritual benefit. Here he shows, that God did him no wrong by afflicting him. If the former did not satisfy him, this ought to silence him. God cannot do wickedness, nor the Almighty commit wrong.

Elihu draws a strong spiritual line in the sand regarding the spiritual impossibility of God committing sin, through allowing unjust trials, by directly rejecting the foolish notion that the Lord could ever behave improperly or commit iniquity against man.

The sinner will often lay claims of what he thinks are the Lord's wrongdoings, in order that he may continue viewing himself as righteous.

Prompted by personal conceit, sinners will regularly charge the Lord with crimes of which it is spiritually impossible for Him to have committed.

It is man who is accustomed to sin, and has regularly proved himself to be a sinner—it is not God.

This truth Elihu seeks to make abundantly clear to all who hear his words: it is that God absolutely cannot, and shall not *do wickedness*, nor is He spiritually able to *commit iniquity* in any manner. It is beyond His divine nature to do so.

***Job 34:11 For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.***

The Lord's rendering to men exactly as they have sown proves that God is neither biased nor partial in His spiritual judgments toward man.

Ultimately, men determine their own fate, and the Lord only renders to them how they have chosen to live.

***Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 34:11*

*For the work of a man shall he render unto him*—He shall treat each man as he deserves—and this is the essence of justice. Of the truth of this, also, there could have been no question. Elihu does not, indeed, apply it to the case of Job, but there can be little doubt that he intended that it should have such a reference. He regarded Job as having accused God of injustice, for having inflicted woes on him which he by no means deserved. He takes care, therefore, to state this general principle, that with God there must be impartial justice—leaving the application of this principle to the facts in the world, to be arranged as well as possible. No one can doubt that Elihu in this took the true ground, and that the great principle is to be held that God can do no wrong, and that all the facts in the universe must be consistent with this great principle, whether we can now see it to be so or not.

***Job 34:12 Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.***

Job maintained that God had dealt with him unjustly, either by not hearing his pleas, or by improperly ruling before he could present his defense. Consequently, to maintain himself as righteous, Job had condemned both the Lord and His justice.

When sinners reap as they have sown and do not like the fruit they bear, they generally will transfer and lay blame upon God.

It is also by the Lord exercising spiritual judgment upon the earth's inhabitants and rendering the sinners as they have sown, which provides for them a divine chance to be instructed in God's righteousness.

***Isaiah 26:9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 26:9*

*For when thy judgments are in the earth*— ... The reason is, that the punishments which he [God] inflicted were intended to lead people to learn righteousness. The sentiment is expressed in a general form, though there is no doubt that the immediate reference is to the calamities which the Jews had suffered in their removal to Babylon as a punishment for their sins.

*Learn righteousness*—The design is to warn, to restrain, and to reform them. The immediate reference here was undoubtedly to the Jews, in whom this effect was seen in a remarkable manner in their captivity in Babylon. But it is also true of other nations; and though the effect of calamity is not always to turn a people to God, or to make them permanently righteous, yet it restrains them, and leads them at least to an external reformation. It is also true in regard to nations as well as individuals, that they make a more decided advance in virtue and piety in days of affliction than in the time of great external prosperity (compare Deuteronomy 6:11–12).

***Job 34:13 Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?***

All power that the Lord exerts and exercises on the earth, comes from the fact of His ownership of it. Because both the earth, and man are God's creation, it is His right and spiritual prerogative to do with both as He wills.

If the earth and those upon it were not the result of the Lord's creative power, then men could rightly claim sin on God's part concerning His dealings with them. But since the Creator possesses and maintains ownership of all of His creation, then He can do with it as He wills, and there is no injustice at all in Him doing so.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 34:13*

If the world were not God's property, as having been made by Him, but committed to His charge by some superior, it might be possible for Him to act unjustly, as He would not thereby be injuring Himself; but as it is, for God to act unjustly would undermine the whole order of the world, and so would injure God's own property (Job 36:23).

***Job 34:14–15 If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;***

***<sup>15</sup> All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.***

It is a spiritual reality that if God so willed it, He could choose to gather and return to Himself all the spiritual and breath life that He has imparted to His creatures. Because it is God Who has provided both natural and spiritual life, it is well within His authority and privilege to remove both if He ever deems it spiritually necessary.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 34:14*

The argument seems to be this. "If God wished such a thing, and should set his heart upon it, he could easily cut off the whole race. He has power to do it, and no one can deny him the right. Man has no claim to life, but he who gave it has a right to withdraw it, and the race is absolutely dependent on this infinite Sovereign. Being such a Sovereign, therefore, and having such a right, man cannot complain of his Maker as unjust, if he is called to pass through trials."

Elihu's position is this: do not question the Lord in His smaller judgments, lest He administer a far greater judgment. For if God set His heart on fully executing judgment for sin, then He could easily, and without any great difficulty, gather all life and return it to Himself. Indeed, life has its source in God, whether it has been breathed into men's bodies or imparted through the sending forth of the Lord's Spirit.

Thus, all life, either soul or spirit, can either be extended or shortened according to divine will. This is because the Lord deems all souls, His; consequently, if men sin, and continue to embrace it, and possess no spiritual remorse for committing it, then they shall die.

***Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ezek. 18:4*

*All souls are mine*—Man is not simply to ascribe his existence to earthly parents, but to acknowledge as his Father Him who created man in His own image, and who gave and gives him the spirit of life.

***Job 34:16–20 If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words.***

<sup>17</sup> ***Shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just?***

<sup>18</sup> ***Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly?***

<sup>19</sup> ***How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of his hands.***

<sup>20</sup> ***In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.***

Elihu argues the fact that God has a legal and just right to govern His creation. If worldly kings have this prerogative, does not He Who rules the universe?

This is also not only a very accurate observation, but a very profound one as well—that God, Who is both the world's and man's Creator, has full right to judge and administer justice as He sees fit.

The earth and creation surrounding it are the Lord's; they are the work of His hands, and man has absolutely no true ownership of anything, absent the Lord imparting it to him.

***Job 34:21–23 For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.***

<sup>22</sup> ***There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.***

<sup>23</sup> ***For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.***

Because God has universal sight of all worldly creatures and is able to see their goings, decisions, and motives throughout the earth, He is in a unique position to judge the earth's inhabitants righteously.

Because the Lord is able to observe all of man's goings, then it is impossible for Him to either incorrectly or improperly exercise unjust judgment upon either the sinner or the saint.

Because the Lord both knows and sees all, then every piece of vital and incriminating evidence is before Him, allowing Him to properly and without bias justly judge all men and the lives they have chosen to live.

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 34:21*

*For his eyes are upon the ways of man, . . .* This may denote all their inward thoughts, the workings of their mind, the imaginations of their heart; all their secret purposes, designs, and schemes; and all the desires and affections of their soul; and all these, whether good or bad:

*and he seeth all his goings;* the whole of his walk and conversation, conduct and behaviour; all his external ways, works, and actions; and these whether of good or bad men, see Psalm 139:1 [*O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.*].

*Job 34:24–30 He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.*

<sup>25</sup> *Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed.*

<sup>26</sup> *He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others;*

<sup>27</sup> *Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways:*

<sup>28</sup> *So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.*

<sup>29</sup> *When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only:*

<sup>30</sup> *That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.*

It is not within man's natural and earthly power to overthrow the will of God, nor within his fleshly ability to find the Lord if He so chooses to hide Himself from man. It is also the Lord Who retains and commands the power to overturn not only the leaders of nations, but also entire nations themselves. Because God knows the works of the mighty, and the hearts of those in the highest positions in the earth, and is fully aware if they turn back from Him, then all heavenly judgment descending from heaven is based on firm legal grounds.

*Job 34:31–32 Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more:*

<sup>32</sup> *That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

A variety of translations provides greater insight on these two verses.

(NIV) "Suppose someone says to God, 'I am guilty but will offend no more.

<sup>32</sup> Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again.'

(ESV) "For has anyone said to God, 'I have borne punishment; I will not offend any more;

<sup>32</sup> Teach me what I do not see; if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more'?

(NKJV) "For has anyone said to God, 'I have borne chastening; I will offend no more;

<sup>32</sup> Teach me what I do not see; If I have done iniquity, I will do no more'?

(AMP) "For has anyone said to God, 'I have endured my chastisement; I will not offend anymore;

<sup>32</sup> Teach me what I do not see [in regard to how I have sinned]; If I have done wrong (injustice, unrighteousness), I will not do it again'?

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 34:31*

It was to lead him to this that Elihu was sent. Though no hypocrite, Job, like all, had sin; therefore through affliction he was to be brought to humble himself under God. All sorrow is a proof of the common heritage of sin, in which the godly shares; and therefore he ought to regard it as a merciful correction. Umbreit and Maurer lose this by translating, as the Hebrew will bear, "Has any a right to say to God, I have borne chastisement and yet have not sinned?" (so Job 34:6).

For men to clearly understand their sin against God, then they need to seek divine enlightenment so that their transgression may become known, and subsequently be repented of. As with every man, including Job, there is darkness within him, which in order for hidden and undetected sins to be made known, the Lord must be sought, since He alone can reveal the depth and extent of sin in the human heart.

What God knows and can prove to be sin, is so much more than those who commit it.

It is also for this purpose of both revealing and judging men's internal hearts, that the Son of God shall be sent back to the earth, in order that divine justice and righteousness is fully executed upon it.

***Job 34:33 Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.***

Other translations of this verse read:

(NIV) *Should God then reward you on your terms, when you refuse to repent? You must decide, not I; so tell me what you know.*

(NKJV) *Should He repay it according to your terms, Just because you disavow it? You must choose, and not I; Therefore speak what you know.*

(Holman Christian Standard Bible) *Should God repay you on your terms when you have rejected His? You must choose, not I! So declare what you know.*

*Benson Commentary, Job 34:33*

*Should it be according to thy mind?*—Having advised and directed Job how to conduct himself, and what to say to God in his afflicted state, he now proceeds to enforce his advice with solid arguments; *should it*—Namely, God's chastening of thee, about which the great controversy was; *be according to thy mind?*—Or, as thou wouldst have it? Shall thy opinion or affection give laws and measures to God, that he shall afflict only such persons, and in such a manner and measure, and so long, as thou chooseth? Does God need, or should he seek for, thy advice how to govern the world, and whom and when to reward or punish? Dost thou quarrel with him because he chastises thee more severely and longer than thou expectedst?

If there is any quarrel or dispute with the Lord, then reconciliation will not be left to the terms of the transgressor, but must be met on the terms of God.

The sinner is therefore quite foolish to assume that God will either yield or comply with any of his standards for reconciliation.

It is not man who has set the standards for the Lord to walk in, but He man.

***Job 34:34–35 Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me. <sup>35</sup> Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom.***

Elihu's claims were not that Job was truly wicked, as his three friends had implied, but only that he was a man without true understanding of the Lord, who had also spoken many things concerning the Lord that he was provably ignorant of.

This is also the precise sin that the Lord charges Job with, that he had both spoken and uttered *words without knowledge*; that Job, though he had at great length spoken of God, had uttered words without any true understanding of Him.

Job was sincere in his faith and feared the Lord, but there was still much lacking in his understanding of God's ways and His dealings with man. Indeed Job had spoken at great length of the Lord, but had only in truth, darkened any true understanding of Him.

***Job 38:1–2 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, <sup>2</sup> Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?***

*Benson Commentary*, Job 38:2

Who is this that disparages my counsels, and darkens the wisdom of my dispensations with his ignorant discourses about them? This language becomes not a creature, much less a professor of the true religion. The person here intended is not Elihu, who spoke last, but Job, who had spoken most, as is manifest from the former verse, in which it is said, *The Lord answered Job*; and from Job 42:3, where Job takes the following reproof to himself, as also from the following discourse, wherein God convinces Job by divers of the same kind of arguments which Elihu had used against him. With a single question God shows the absolute emptiness of human abilities, strikes Job to the heart, and puts an end to the dispute.

Just because a man is sincere and authentic in his love and affection for God, does not mean that he truly knows God.

Hence, whatever a man may think he knows of the Lord is surely not equal to what the Scriptures reveal he should know. This is true of all men, including ourselves, with Job being revealed as one of the very first biblical examples of this.

***I Corinthians 8:2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.***

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, I Cor. 8:1–6

There is no proof of ignorance more common than conceit of knowledge. Much may be known, when nothing is known to good purpose. And those who think they know any thing, and grow vain thereon, are the least likely to make good use of their knowledge. Satan hurts some as much by tempting them to be proud of mental powers, as others, by alluring to sensuality. Knowledge which puffs up the possessor, and renders him confident, is as dangerous as self-righteous pride, though what he knows may be right. Without holy affections all human knowledge is worthless.

It is the humble man who continues to both pursue and seek a greater knowledge of the Lord; it is not the ignorant man, who foolishly believes he already possesses it.



Session 15

*Elihu Corrects Job for Speaking Without Wisdom*

*Job Chapter 34:35–35:16*

*Scriptures*

*Job 34:35*

*James 1:26*

*Matthew 12:36–37*

*I Peter 3:10*

*Job 34:36*

*Job 34:37*

*Job 35:1–2*

*Job 35:3*

*Hebrews 11:25*

*Acts 9:15–16*

*II Timothy 3:12*

*Job 35:4–8*

*Job 35:9–10*

*Acts 14:22*

*Job 35:11*

*Job 35:12*

*Proverbs 6:16–19*

*Job 35:13*

*Job 35:14*

*Job 35:15*

*Job 35:16*

*Job 42:3*

*Job 34:35 Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom.*

Job had spoken of himself as righteous and had said of God that He denied him justice. Both of these statements would be proven false.

All thoughts, like all spirits, must be tried, and it is only God's Holy Spirit Who can truly do this.

If men are quick to speak, and especially against the Lord, then they will very soon quickly find themselves ashamed.

A fool utters all his mind, and if a man does not carefully control his tongue, then his entire religion the Lord esteems as vain.

The tongue is an important member of the body, and as such it can either assist in securing a man's salvation, or potentially be grounds for his condemnation.

*James 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jas. 1:26*

*If any man among you seem to be religious*—Pious, or devout. That is, if he does not restrain his tongue, his other evidences of religion are worthless. A man may undoubtedly have many things in his character which seem to be evidences of the existence of religion in his heart, and yet there may be some one thing that shall show that all those evidences are false. Religion is designed to produce an effect on our whole conduct; and if there is any one thing in reference to which it does not bring us under its control, that one thing may show that all other appearances of piety are worthless.

*And bridleth not his tongue*—Restrains or curbs it not, as a horse is restrained with a bridle. There may have been some reason why the apostle referred to this particular sin which is now unknown to us; or he may perhaps have intended to select this as a specimen to illustrate this idea, that if there is any one evil propensity which religion does not control, or if there is any one thing in respect to which its influence is not felt, whatever other evidences of piety there may be, this will demonstrate that all those

appearances of religion are vain. For religion is designed to bring the whole man under control, and to subdue every faculty of the body and mind to its demands. If the tongue is not restrained, or if there is any unsubdued propensity to sin whatever, it proves that there is no true religion.

Nowhere is self-righteousness more exuberant and on public display more, than when men joyfully take pleasure in listening to the sound of their own voices.

In Christ's parable of the Pharisee and the publican, the Pharisee did not worship and praise God in his prayer; instead, he only self-righteously, with high personal praise, exalted himself (Luke 18:11).

This is also what Job's three friends had done, and Job's sin was not much different.

Loose lips, it has been said, sink ships, and the same is true of any who allow their tongue unrestrained activity without careful spiritual restraint.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and just as a man's heart and actions determine his destiny, so also, the Word of God states, shall his words.

***Matthew 12:36–37 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.***

***<sup>37</sup> For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.***

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Matt. 12:36*

*But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment*—They might say, "It was nothing: we meant no evil; we merely threw out a supposition, as one way of accounting for the miracle we witnessed; if it will not stand, let it go; why make so much of it, and bear down with such severity for it?" Jesus replies, "It was not nothing, and at the great day will not be treated as nothing: Words, as the index of the heart, however idle they may seem, will be taken account of, whether good or bad, in estimating character in the day of judgment."

Idle, careless, and uninspired speech will often cause injury to the one spoken of, as well as the one who speaks.

In Job's case, because of his narrow knowledge of the Lord, Elihu proclaimed Job's words to be injurious to Him.

In trying to defend and justify himself, Job had carelessly brought reproach upon the Lord.

No man also should foolishly believe that errant, misguided, and/or emotional words, especially when not inspired by God, will not directly affect his life.

***I Peter 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.***

*Benson Commentary, I Pet. 3:10–13*

*He that will love life*—That would make life amiable and desirable; *and see good days*—Namely, such as are prosperous and happy; *let him refrain his tongue from evil*—From railing, back-biting, tale-bearing, from all rash and provoking expressions; *and his lips that they speak no guile*—No deceit; nothing contrary to sincerity and simplicity. See on Psalm 32:2.

If a man hopes to see good days, as Job undoubtedly desired, then he must keep his tongue from speaking evil, especially if there is any insinuation that the Lord has committed it.

None also shall live a quiet and blessed life if the tongue is improperly used for anything other than sincere worship and praise of God while similarly pursuing the edification of our fellow man.

All speech therefore should be directed toward the godly intention of either praising the Lord, or the edification, instruction, and/or admonishment of other Christians, if a blessed and happy life is desired.

***Job 34:36 My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men.***

Elihu's desire was for Job to be tried because he had, if not intentionally, inadvertently provided ammunition for the wicked. This sin needed to be addressed, and Elihu desired that sufficient time be given for Job's words to be fully brought to light.

Job had sought an audience with the Lord in order to defend himself, and he would indeed be given one, but its real purpose would be to bring Job's ignorance to light and reveal no fault on God's part. Yes, Job's prayer would be answered, just not the way he originally envisioned.

All men, without exception, including ourselves, will have to give account for our words and will likewise need to undergo a similar heavenly inspection of what we have both thought and spoken in our life, just as Job is now needing to do.

***Job 34:37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.***

Though Job had successfully defended himself against the false accusations of his three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—he should not have had any assumption of gaining any true realistic spiritual victory.

It was accurate that he had refuted his critics' weak and unsubstantiated arguments regarding his spiritual integrity, but in doing so he had unintentionally indicted himself before the Lord.

*Benson Commentary, Job 34:37*

*He addeth rebellion unto his sin*—He sinned before by impatience under his afflictions, but now he is grown obstinate, and, instead of humbling himself for his sins, he justifies himself, and accuses the blessed God. *He clappeth his hands among us*—In token of victory, insulting and triumphing; *and multiplieth his words against God*—In effect, though not directly.

Job's heart rejoiced that his arguments had countered those of his friends, but in truth he had done nothing to help his broken condition. Winning any debate, especially with fools, surely does not guarantee release from personal bondage.

And though a self-righteous man may praise himself, thinking he possesses superior wisdom, what good is winning any biblical argument and/or religious debate without gaining spiritual freedom as a result? It is actually belief and trust in Christ which sets men free; it is not praise of self.

***Job 35:1–2 Elihu spake moreover, and said,***

***<sup>2</sup> Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?***

Though Job did not directly say this, and this is only a summarization of his words and inner thoughts, it is still accurate.

Whenever anyone accuses the Lord of injustice, there is an implication that human righteousness is greater than God's righteousness.

If men also believe that they are already on the same level as the Lord, it is a very small step to both think and believe that their own personal righteousness is equal or superior to His.

By questioning the Lord's way and doubting His sovereignty, Job had implied that the Lord had acted unrighteously, and that he, Job, alone remained righteous.

It is common in both sinner, and saint, to be tempted to believe that human righteousness is superior to divine righteousness. When men regularly and genuinely believe themselves able to govern the world, better than God.

***Job 35:3 For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?***

As evidence that Job had thought his righteousness greater than the Lord's, Elihu addresses his previous statement that there appeared to be no profit in living a godly life.

By challenging God's government, Job had unintentionally challenged the righteousness of the Governor, He also is the Ruler and Creator of all living and breathing things.

In short, Job was both angry and disgruntled by the way he thought the Lord had governed his life and had unjustly allowed the loss of possessions, family, and health.

What Job did not know was that no sin can be properly confessed, or atoned for, until it is first known.

If there is any ignorance of sin, there cannot be full and complete repentance for it.

It is also very foolish to judge anything as being right or wrong solely according to whether or not it is profitable to us, simply because the Lord has called many to suffer for His name, and surely this could never be calculated as sin on their part.

Moses was called to suffer affliction with the people of God, in his response to God's call for his life.

***Hebrews 11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.***

The apostle Paul likewise suffered persecution for the Lord's name, in order to proclaim the name of Christ.

***Acts 9:15-16 (NLT) But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel.***

***<sup>16</sup> And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake."***

What Job did not know, and what was lacking in his faith was the spiritual understanding that all who seek to live a godly life will be persecuted.

***II Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.***

Whenever saints then either fear or serve the Lord, they will open themselves up to religious and/or devilish persecution. Because Job feared the Lord, this prompted Satan's spiritual assault upon him.

To foolishly conclude if we are persecuted for our faith, that it is not worth pursuing, is to lack any true understanding of Christ's call in the first place.

The servant is not above his Master (John 13:16), nor is the believer above his Lord, and as such every true saint will need to undergo a degree of trial and persecution in his life.

*Job 35:4–8 I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee.*

<sup>5</sup> *Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou.*

<sup>6</sup> *If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?*

<sup>7</sup> *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?*

<sup>8</sup> *Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.*

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 35:7*

*If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?* By parity of reasoning, as our sins do not injure God, so our righteousness cannot benefit him. As David says, "My goodness extendeth not to thee" (Psalm 16:2). *Or what receiveth he of thine hand?* All things being already God's, we can but give him of his own. We cannot really add to his possessions, or to his glory, or to his felicity.

Men often overestimate what they think should be their reward for pursuing righteousness. Just as Job vastly overestimates what his fear of God should yield him, by presuming that the pursuit of righteousness, should prevent any pain and suffering.

But it is unwise to naively assume that our desire to walk righteously before the Lord, means that we will be kept immune to either earthly tragedy, or divine chastisement.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 35:8*

*Thy wickedness may hurt a Man as thou art*—That is, it may injure him, but not God. He is too far exalted above man, and too independent of man in his sources of happiness, to be affected by what he can do. The object of the whole passage Job 35:6–8 is, to show that God is independent of people, and is not governed in his dealings with them on the principles which regulate their conduct with each other. One man may be greatly benefited by the conduct of another, and may feel under obligation to reward him for it; or he may be greatly injured in his person, property, or reputation, by another, and will endeavor to avenge himself. But nothing of this kind can happen to God. If he rewards, therefore, it must be of his grace and mercy, not because he is laid under obligation; if he inflicts chastisement, it must be because people deserve it, and not because God has been injured. In this reasoning Elihu undoubtedly refers to Job, whom he regards as having urged a "claim" to a different kind of treatment, because he supposed that he "deserved" it. The general principle of Elihu is clearly correct, that God is entirely independent of human beings; that neither our good nor evil conduct can affect his happiness, and that consequently his dealings with us are those of impartial justice.

*Job 35:9–10 By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.*

<sup>10</sup> *But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night;*

At first glance, this is a difficult verse to understand. The Cambridge Bible helps with its interpretation:

*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Job 35:9*

Having laid down his principle Elihu now proceeds to clear away some anomalies which seem to support Job's contention. There are instances where godliness does not seem to advantage men, where oppressed innocence cries in vain for redress. The reason is that

the cry is merely the natural voice of suffering; it is no true devout appeal to heaven—none saith, Where is God my maker?

It is not enough to merely cry by reason of oppression if the cry is not directly lifted to the Lord, since many have lamented their personal suffering without sufficient faith in God to directly call upon Him for deliverance.

When men also experience the difficulties of religion, as Job did, they often incorrectly bring into question its validity, teaching us that when things are difficult and it appears that prayers have gone unanswered, it is not uncommon that men will question the profitability of faith.

The apostle Paul revealed that all Christians need to go through some form of tribulation to enter the kingdom, establishing the truth that the road to heaven will not always be an easy one.

***Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Acts 14:22*

*And that we must—καὶ ὅτι δεῖ kai hoti dei.* That it is fit or proper that we should. Not that it is fixed by any fatal necessity, but that we are not to expect that it will be otherwise. We are to calculate on it when we become Christians. Why it is proper, or fit, the apostle did not state. But we may remark that it is proper:

(1) Because such is the opposition of the world to pure religion that it cannot be avoided. Of this they had had striking demonstration in Lystra and Iconium.

(2) it is necessary to reclaim us from wandering, and to keep us in the path of duty, Psalm 119:67, Psalm 119:71.

(3) it is necessary to wean us from the world; to keep before our minds the great truth that we have here “no continuing city and no abiding place.” Trial here makes us pant for a world of rest. The opposition of sinners makes us desire that world where “the wicked shall cease from troubling,” and where there shall be eternal friendship and peace.

(4) when we are persecuted and afflicted, we may remember that it has been the lot of Christians from the beginning. We tread a path that has been watered by the tears of the saints, and rendered sacred by the shedding of the best blood on the earth. The Saviour trod that path; and it is enough that the “disciple be as his master, and the servant as his lord,” Matthew 10:24–25.

***Job 35:11 Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?***

Beasts do not know the reason for their afflictions or why they are led to slaughter. But having access to his Creator gives man a distinct advantage over the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of heaven. Yet, if sinners reject the pursuit of God, and choose to reject divine instruction and correction, then they will digress to becoming exactly like earthly creatures, who are themselves fully ignorant of the Lord, as well as their own absence of spirituality.

When sinners also refuse to seek the Lord in their trials, they reveal themselves to be as deficient in spiritual wisdom as the beasts of the field (Ps. 73:22).

***Job 35:12 There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.***

*Benson Commentary, Job 35:12*

*There they cry*—Or then, as the Hebrew particle here used often means; that is, in that time or condition of trouble; *but none giveth answer*—The reason that God doth not deliver them is, because, though they lie crying under their afflictions, they continue to be evil, wicked, and impenitent; proud and unhumbled for those sins, on account of which God brought these miseries upon them.

Here we see why sinners receive no heavenly assistance when they cry. It is simply because pride still maintains control of their hearts and lives. Elihu thus reveals to Job that the Lord will never hear those who possess and embrace pride as an acceptable way of living.

To live in pride, is to forfeit all spiritual assistance and aid from the Lord. If a man is lifted up with pride, then he will practically remove himself from receiving mercy from heaven.

This teaches us that not until sinners remove both pride and arrogance from their hearts, can they rightfully presume that God will both hear their prayers, and answer them in their time of need.

Pride is one of the six, yea seven things that the Lord hates, and as such, will never come to the aid of those walking in it.

***Proverbs 6:16–19 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:***

<sup>17</sup> *A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*

<sup>18</sup> *An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,*

<sup>19</sup> *A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

***Job 35:13 Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.***

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 35:13*

*vanity*—that is, cries uttered in an unhumbled spirit, Job 35:12, which applies in some degree to Job's cries; still more to those of the wicked (Job 27:9; Pr 15:29).

Where there is vanity there will not be humility; ultimately the Lord will never answer the prayers of the vain.

***God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.***

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 35:13*

1. Vain and light persons, that have no true wisdom or solid piety in them, but are wholly addicted to vain and worldly things, rejoicing immoderately when they have them, and crying out for want of them, as here they do. Or,

2. Vain cries, which proceed not from faith or piety, but only from self-love and a natural sense of their misery; which is common to them with brute beasts. The abstract is here put for the concrete, as wickedness is oft put for wicked men, and pride for proud persons, and the like.

*Neither will the Almighty regard it:* though God be able to help them, as this title of God implies, and though he be the Judge of the world, as the former name of God signifies, to whom therefore it belongs to right the oppressed against the oppressor, yet in this case he justly refuseth to help them.

If a man's heart is not right and is controlled by either vanity or vain things, God will neither hear his prayers, nor come to his aid, when he is in need of divine help.

The condition of men's hearts, greatly affects whether or not the Lord responds to their prayers.

***Job 35:14 Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.***

*Benson Commentary, Job 35:14*

Here Elihu answers another objection of Job's; and tells him that though God may, for a season, delay to answer, yet he will certainly do him right. *Yet judgment is before him*—Justice is at his tribunal, and in all his ways and administrations. *Therefore trust thou in him*—Instead of murmuring, repent of what is past, humble thyself under God's hand, wait patiently in his way till deliverance come, for it will certainly come, if thou dost not hinder it.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 35:14*

Elihu here says that though it is true in fact that God is invisible, yet this ought not to be regarded as a reason why he should not confide in him. The argument of Elihu here—which is undoubtedly sound—is, that the fact that God is invisible should not be regarded as any evidence that he does not attend to the affairs of people, or that he is not worthy of our love.

To trust God, especially in times of trial, is one of the most neglected and often forgotten elements of true faith. It is this counsel that Elihu wisely imparts to Job, that he should remain trusting in the Lord despite his affliction, simply because his trust would be eventually rewarded.

***Job 35:15 But now, because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger; yet he knoweth it not in great extremity:***

*Benson Commentary, Job 35:15–16*

*But now, because it is not so*—That is, because Job doth not acknowledge God's justice and his own sins, and wait upon God in a proper way for mercy; *he hath visited in his anger*—God hath laid grievous afflictions upon him, all which appear to be too little to bring Job to a compliance with God's will. *Yet he knoweth it not*—Job is not sufficiently sensible of it, so as to be humbled under God's mighty hand.

Men often commit sin that they are initially unaware of, similar to David's sin against both Uriah and Bathsheba. However, though sin may be committed in ignorance, this ignorance does not mitigate the Lord's anger towards it.

It has been said, and is true, that ignorance of the law is no excuse. The same holds true if men are ignorant of divine law.

Hence, though sin may be both unknown and even unintentional, still there must be spiritual consequence for committing it.

***Job 35:16 Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 35:16*

*Therefore*—In view of all that Elihu had now said, he came to the conclusion that the views of Job were erroneous, and that he had no just cause of complaint. He had suffered no more than he had deserved; he might have obtained a release or mitigation if he had applied to God; and the government of God was just, and was every way worthy of confidence. The remarks of Job, therefore, complaining of the severity of his sufferings and of the government of God, were not based on knowledge, and had in fact no solid foundation.

Job had spoken much, and much he had said was found to be in error. His words had been many, but the more he spoke, it became increasingly evident that he lacked any deep understanding of the Lord. We know this truth to be true, simply because Job confesses as much.

*Job 42:3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*



Session 16

## *Elihu Speaks to Job of God's Righteousness*

### *Job Chapter 36:1–22*

#### Scriptures

<i>Job 36:1–3</i>	<i>Job 36:7</i>	<i>Job 36:18</i>
<i>Job 36:4</i>	<i>Job 36:8–10</i>	<i>Job 36:19</i>
<i>Job 32:8</i>	<i>Job 36:11</i>	<i>Job 36:20</i>
<i>Job 36:5</i>	<i>Job 36:12</i>	<i>Job 6:8–9</i>
<i>Job 36:6</i>	<i>Job 36:13–14</i>	<i>Job 36:21</i>
<i>Job 21:7</i>	<i>Job 36:15</i>	<i>Job 36:22</i>
<i>Matthew 5:3</i>	<i>Job 36:16</i>	<i>Psalm 25:8–9</i>
<i>Isaiah 66:2</i>	<i>Job 36:17</i>	<i>Job 42:2</i>

*Job 36:1–3 Elihu also proceeded, and said,*

<sup>2</sup> *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.*

<sup>3</sup> *I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.*

Where Job's other friends had spoken things originating from their own opinions, experiences, and traditions, thus representing themselves, Elihu would speak *on God's behalf*. It is here we see the distinct difference between Elihu and Job's other three friends.

They had spoken from personal reason and experience. In spiritual contrast to this, Elihu reveals that he has searched for his knowledge *from afar*.

Elihu also assures Job that the wisdom he was about to bring forth did not originate from himself, but from above. He had not looked for the truth of Job's situation in his own mind, or through prior personal experience, knowing that to do so, would prove him just as ineffective in helping Job, as his other three friends. Instead it was from heaven that he sought understanding, and from heaven it would be given to him.

Because Elihu brings inspiration *from afar*, he reveals that he will *ascribe righteousness to [his] Maker*.

How rare are messengers such as this, who instead of seeking to justify themselves, and/or other sinners like themselves, rather have chosen that divine path which pursues justifying God and ascribing righteousness to Him.

*Job 36:4 For truly my words shall not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.*

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 36:4*

*For truly my words shall not be false, . . .* But strictly true; he would take the utmost care to say nothing but the truth, with the greatest impartiality and sincerity, so that what was said might be depended upon; truth spoken briefly, clearly, and on so important a subject as the righteousness of God, deserved attention;

Elihu assures Job that he would not err nor speak false words concerning Job's situation, as his other three companions had done.

This was because Elihu's source for wisdom was via inspiration of the Spirit. The Spirit is truth, and only He can reveal where sin actually abides and the real cause of it.

In his previous words to Job, Elihu revealed where he knew the source of all true wisdom resided, and it was not in himself, but rather in He, Who imparts His Spirit to man. It is from this Spirit, this Holy Spirit, Who descends from above, and originates from the higher spiritual realm, that divine knowledge is imparted to those who through mere natural birth lack it.

***Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.***

***Job 36:5 Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom.***

Elihu assures Job that the Lord does not despise men and cannot do anything unbecoming toward them beyond what they deserve.

Ultimately, the Lord is neither capricious, nor are His judgments concerning man erratic or haphazard.

Because of the Lord's great might and His distance from man, He is above all human vendetta and emotion.

Consequently, all the Lord's judgments will be fair, equitable, and deserved. The Lord's high and exalted position above creation allows this. Because He has no equal, God judges all men impartially, and as such, righteously.

***Job 36:6 He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.***

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 36:6*

*He preserveth not the life of the wicked.* There is no special providence over the life of the wicked, as Job had supposed, or pretended to suppose (Job 21:7; comp. Job 12:6). On the contrary, God "overturneth" wicked men "in the night, so that they are destroyed; he striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others" (Job 34:25, 26). *But giveth right to the poor.* The poor and afflicted, the meek and humble, God vindicates.

Assuring Job of God's justice, Elihu refutes Job's claim that the wicked become old and live long lives while simultaneously increasing in both influence and power.

***Job 21:7 Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?***

One needs only to observe the actual lives of sinners to know that no wicked man has a good end. Hence, even if the lives of evil men appear momentarily blessed, it is only for a time before they reap as they have sown.

Elihu also rightfully proclaims that the real blessed, are those who remain poor in spirit, who have humbled themselves before the Lord, and yielded to His sovereignty over their lives.

Because the Lord's deep affection has always been toward the humble and those contrite in spirit, it is foolishness to suppose that the same God Who adores and cherishes the lowly, would ever promote the proud. It is also not the wicked who actually live long lives, but the humble, who also by divine grace are given eternal life as a gift from God.

This is why sinners should never be envied or admired, simply because even abundant worldly prosperity is a small thing, compared to being loved by the Lord and given His eternal life.

It is the meek to whom God looks upon with favor, and bestows His blessings; it is not the proud.

***Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Matt. 5:3

To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; to be sensible that we are sinners, and have no righteousness of our own; to be willing to be saved only by the rich grace and mercy of God; to be willing to be where God places us, to bear what he lays on us, to go where he bids us, and to die when he commands; to be willing to be in his hands, and to feel that we deserve no favor from him. It is opposed to pride, and vanity, and ambition.

It is those who are truly poor in heart, and who genuinely possess a broken and contrite spirit, and tremble at God's Word, whom the Lord looks upon with favor.

***Isaiah 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Isa. 66:2

*But to this man will I look*—That is, 'I prefer a humble heart and a contrite spirit to the most magnificent earthly temple' (see the notes at Isaiah 57:15).

... The Septuagint renders it, *Ταπεινὸν Tapeinon*—'Humble;' not *πτωχόν ptōchon* (poor). The idea is, not that God looks with favor on a poor man merely because he is poor—which is not true, for his favors are not bestowed in view of external conditions in life—but that he regards with favor the man that is humble and subdued in spirit.

*And of a contrite spirit*—A spirit that is broken, crushed, or deeply affected by sin. It stands opposed to a spirit that is proud, haughty, self-confident, and self-righteous.

***Job 36:7 He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.***

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Job 36:7

God does not forsake the godly, as Job implied, but "establishes," or makes them sit on the throne as kings (1Sa 2:8; Ps 113:7, 8).

***Job 36:8–10 And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction;  
9 Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded.  
10 He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.***

Elihu reveals to Job that if the righteous find themselves bound in affliction, it is because of their own transgressions.

By the Lord's allowing sinners to reap as they have sown, it is hoped that they see the error of their ways, and humbly realize that their affliction is the result of divine discipline.

The aim of spiritual discipline is also not simply to punish past sins, but to prevent new ones from being committed.

Hence, personal chastisement for sin is not solely purposed to avenge the past, but hopefully to protect the transgressor from even greater future divine judgment.

*Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Job 36:9*

The fundamental thought of Elihu here once again comes unmistakably to view: the sufferings of the righteous are well-meant chastisements, which are to wean them from the sins into which through carnal security they have fallen—a warning from God to penitence, designed to work their good.

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 36:9*

This is Elihu's special doctrine, that God's chastisements are by way of discipline, to reform the future rather than to chastise the past.

Though most will almost universally disagree with this truth, Scripture clearly reveals that the Lord does use captivity, suffering, and affliction to open men's minds to the guilt of their sin, and to assist them to come to realize their need to repent for it. But if sinners do not repent, when they are being chastised by the Lord, then all hope for gaining salvation will be lost.

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 36:10*

God's chastisements are to be viewed as commands to men to "go and sin no more.

***Job 36:11 If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.***

Elihu instructs Job that it is obedience and service to the Lord, which produce a life filled with prosperity and pleasure. Thus it is through true and genuine subjection and service to the Lord, that men's lives are both blessed and prosper, ultimately allowing spiritual contentment to fill their souls.

***Job 36:12 But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 36:12*

*But if they obey not*—If those who are afflicted do not turn to God, and yield him obedience, they must expect that he will continue their calamities until they are cut off.

He who resists heavenly chastisement, Elihu reveals, will die without any true knowledge of the Lord.

It is not simply then that spiritual disobedience shall produce eternal death, but also that sinners will die without ever really being able to come to know the Lord.

To *die without knowledge* is to die without any true understanding of Him, Who is the source of all true knowledge.

***Job 36:13–14 But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.***

***<sup>14</sup> They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.***

Advancing his argument of the godless and how the Lord deals with them, Elihu now draws Job's attention to the hypocrite, who refuses to cry unto God even in his affliction, and as a result dies before his time.

Spiritual hypocrisy also has no other end, than storing up divine wrath, and ultimately being accounted in death, with the unclean.

A religious hypocrite therefore, though he professed to both know and follow God, but actually did not, shall have his lot cast with those who never even sought the Lord.

This includes being counted, and being numbered among what the Bible reveals are some of the most unclean and vilest of sinners, sodomites.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 36:14*

*And their life is among the unclean*—Margin, "Sodomites." The idea is, that they would be treated in the same way as the most abandoned and vile of the race. No special favor would be shown to them because they were "professors" of religion, nor would this fact be a shield against the treatment which they deserved. They could not be classed with the righteous, and must, therefore, share the fate of the most worthless and wicked of the race.

Every hypocrite is not merely a sinner; rather, he is one who compounds his sin by lying about his true inner thoughts and feelings towards God. For this sin, he shall both die and lie with the unclean.

To engage in hypocrisy, Elihu argues, is in God's eyes, likened as committing sodomy, which is one of the highest forms of human perversion.

***Job 36:15 He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.***

For the second time Elihu stresses to Job that through affliction men's ears are opened, in order that they may hear God's voice, and come to know His will for their lives.

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 36:15*

*He delivereth the poor in his affliction.*—The point of Elihu's discourse is rather that He delivereth the afflicted by his affliction; He makes use of the very affliction to deliver him by it as a means, "and openeth their ears by oppression."

The Lord's divine hope is always that sinners after experiencing adversity will be humbled enough to come to know their great need for subjection to divine will. For this reason affliction is just one of many means whereby the Lord continually attempts to save sinners from the pit, and from progressing even further towards eternal death.

***Job 36:16 Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness.***

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 36:16*

Elihu shows that Job caused the continuance of his own trouble.

How sinners deal with affliction in its beginning, will often determine the length of its duration. If they are not brought to come to know themselves, and the sin that lives within them, as the real culprit of their bondage, then it shall prove virtually impossible to escape it.

***Job 36:17 But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold on thee.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 36:17*

According to this the meaning is, that if Job held the opinions of wicked people, he must expect that these opinions would be rapidly followed by judgment, or that they would go together, and support each other. This seems to me to be in accordance with the connection, and to express the thought which Elihu meant to convey. It is a sentiment which is undoubtedly true—that if a man holds the sentiments, and manifests the spirit of the wicked, he must expect to be treated as they are.

When any man, even one who thinks himself righteous, aligns himself with the wicked, even if it is only in speech, he opens himself up for divine judgment. Job did fear God,

but by agreeing with the opinions of those who opposed Him, he had unknowingly opened the door to be treated exactly as them.

***Job 36:18 Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.***

If the Lord is continuously provoked by sin, and if even affliction does not turn the sinner away from it, then divine wrath is promised to quickly take him away.

***Job 36:19 Will he esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.***

Job had possessed both riches and wealth, yet none of his previous worldly abundance could prevent the Lord from allowing Satan to touch his life. Hence, just as worldly riches and honor could not prevent Job's affliction, neither would they be able to prevent Job's death if the Lord so willed it.

Whatever therefore a man possesses, be it wealth, honor, or privilege, will not prevent divine justice, if sin is neither accounted for, nor repented of.

Hence, not even great worldly prosperity and power can prevent the Lord's spiritual judgment, in rendering to men exactly as they have sown. To prosper in this life, is also surely not grounds for hope of gaining eternal life in the next.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 36:19*

*Will he esteem thy riches?*—That is God will not regard thy riches as a reason why he should not cut you off, or as a ransom for your forfeited life. The reference here must be to the fact that Job "had been" a rich man, and the meaning is, either that God would not spare him because he "had been" a rich man, or that if he had now all the wealth which he once possessed, it would not be sufficient to be a ransom for his life.

*Nor all the forces of his strength*—Not all that gives power and influence to a man—wealth, age, wisdom, reputation, authority, and rank. The meaning is, that God would not regard any of these when a man was rebellious in affliction, and refused in a proper manner to acknowledge his Maker.

***Job 36:20 Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.***

Job had desired death, which Elihu warns is never something the sinner should wish for. The reason for this is that there is a finality in death, which when entered into cannot be reversed.

In death the sinner can no longer repent, nor is there any more chance of him being reconciled to God.

It was death that Job had sought, which if actually entered into, could result in being eternally cut off from the Lord.

***Job 6:8–9 Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!***

***<sup>9</sup> Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 6:9*

The sense is, that Job wished that God would wholly finish his work, and that as he had begun to destroy him he would complete it.

***Job 36:21 Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.***

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 36:21*

*Regard not iniquity.*—Or, perhaps, the special sin of longing for death, for thou hast desired to die rather than bear thine affliction.

The sinner often hopes for a quick death, in order that he need not have to bear the full punishment for his sin. For this reason, when suffering the consequences of sin, death is often preferred by the transgressor of divine will, above life.

***Job 36:22 Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?***

Elihu now instructs Job that if there is to be deliverance from his captivity, it must require the Lord instructing him.

***Psalms 25:8–9 Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.***

In regards to pointing out and revealing sin committed against God, there is none who can instruct like God.

This relevant truth would very soon be apparent in Job's life, for immediately after Elihu's correction, the Lord begins His own spiritual chastisement of Job, by illuminating him not only to the error of his words, but also to his inward, and thought-to-be-hidden secret thoughts. The Lord would instruct Job, and some of this correction would be directly related to the accusative considerations Job had wrongfully assumed could be hidden in his heart.

***Job 42:2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.***

When this is understood, that the Lord's correction of Job was not solely based on merely his words against God, but also his inward murmuring against Him, then the book is far more easy to understand. To think evil, is the same in God's eyes, as committing it.



Session 17

*Elihu Speaks to Job of God's Greatness*

*Job 36:23–37:22*

Scriptures

<i>Job 36:23</i>	<i>Job 22:14</i>	<i>Job 36:31–33</i>	<i>Job 37:15–17</i>
<i>Proverbs 19:3</i>	<i>Exodus 13:21–22</i>	<i>Job 37:1</i>	<i>Job 37:18</i>
<i>Job 36:24–25</i>	<i>Deuteronomy 4:11</i>	<i>Romans 1:20</i>	<i>Job 37:19</i>
<i>II Corinthians 3:18</i>	<i>Revelation 14:14</i>	<i>Job 37:2</i>	<i>Job 37:20</i>
<i>Exodus 34:29</i>	<i>Job 36:30</i>	<i>Job 38:1</i>	<i>Job 37:21</i>
<i>Job 36:26</i>	<i>Psalms 97:4</i>	<i>Job 37:3–6</i>	<i>Exodus 33:20</i>
<i>Job 36:27–28</i>	<i>Psalms 144:6</i>	<i>Job 37:7</i>	<i>Job 37:22</i>
<i>Job 36:29</i>	<i>II Kings 1:10–12</i>	<i>Job 37:8–13</i>	
<i>Psalms 97:2</i>	<i>Revelation 11:19</i>	<i>Job 37:14</i>	

*Job 36:23 Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?*

At the core of all rebellion is the treasonous belief that men know how to rule the earth better than God. Consequently, sinners will rarely hesitate to bring charges against the Lord, simply because they believe they can govern the earth better than Him. Yet no mortal man, let alone a sinful man, has ever ascended so high in creation that he could counsel the Lord or ascribe sin to Him.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 36:23*

The idea is, that God is supreme and independent; no one has advised him, and no one has a right to counsel him.

Men are sinners; the Lord is not. Men transgress against the Lord; He does not against them.

Elihu thus declares that none have the right to say that the Lord has wrought iniquity, when in fact it is spiritually impossible for Him to do so.

*Proverbs 19:3 The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord.*

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Prov. 19:3*

A man's own self-will (Proverbs 1:7) overturns his way, stops his progress, whether in temporal or spiritual matters, and then, instead of blaming himself, "his heart fretteth against the Lord." (Comp. Isaiah 8:21; Revelation 16:10–11.)

Martha blamed Lazarus' death on the fact that Jesus was not there during his sickness (John 11:22). Israel blamed Moses for bringing them out of Egypt (Num. 21:5). Ahab blamed and hated Micaiah because he prophesied evil concerning him (I Kgs. 22:1–8). No doubt, they were all collectively in error concerning their accusations.

The point is that the righteous will often be blamed and accused of wrongdoing, when in fact they are actually purposing to help their fellow man.

It is also impossible to blame the Lord for anything unjust without directly sinning against Him, simply because it has been revealed, and is it certain, that he who unjustly blames or casts aspersions upon God, openly sins against Him.

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 36:23*

Let not Job continue his unjust quarrel with God and his providence. And let us never dare to think favourably of sin, never indulge it, nor allow ourselves in it. Elihu thinks Job needed this caution, he having chosen rather to gratify his pride and humour by contending with God, than to mortify them by submitting, and accepting the punishment. It is absurd for us to think to teach Him who is himself the Fountain of light, truth, knowledge, and instruction.

***Job 36:24–25 Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.***

***<sup>25</sup> Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off.***

By directing Job's thoughts to the Lord, Elihu sought to move them away from his own misery.

What men think upon greatly determines the opinion they have of their situations.

He also who is overly occupied with self, also considers himself to be a much higher creature than he really is. Elihu's antidote to this is to direct Job's thoughts off himself and onto God.

It is also by beholding the Lord and His works, thus abandoning self-obsession, which is the key to true spiritual transformation:

***II Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.***

What men dwell upon produces the greatest degree of influence on their character.

Moses' face shone after he came down from Mount Sinai, because of both being in, and beholding the Lord's presence. Through Moses' communion with the Lord, his own countenance and visage were actually changed.

***Exodus 34:29 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.***

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Exod. 34:29*

*The skin of his face shone.*—That an actual physical phenomenon is intended appears from the entire narrative, as well as from St. Paul's comment upon it in 2Corinthians 3:7–18. According to some commentators, a radiance like that here described was a part of man's original heritage, a feature of that "image of God" wherein he was created (Genesis 1:27). The gift was forfeited by the fall, and will not be restored generally until the time of the restitution of all things. But meanwhile, from time to time, it pleases God to restore to certain of His saints the physical glory, which is the symbol of internal purity and holiness, as to Moses on this occasion and afterwards to Elijah on the mount of transfiguration (Luke 9:31), and to St. Stephen when he pleaded before the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:15). A glory of the kind, but of surpassing brilliancy, belonged to the human nature of our blessed Lord, who concealed it ordinarily, but allowed it to appear temporarily at the transfiguration, and permanently after His ascension (Revelation 1:16; Revelation 10:1; Revelation 21:23; Revelation 22:5). The grant of the privilege to Moses was perhaps necessary to support his authority among a people of such materialistic leanings as the Israelites.

The glory of the Lord, which made Moses' face visibly shine, came after he had direct communion with God.

What is also observable in this record is that though the Lord's glory radiated from Moses' countenance, he was at least initially unaware of it—teaching us that a Christian's spirituality may be observed and recognized by others, though he may himself not be fully conscious of it.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Exod. 34:29

*Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him*—It was an intimation of the exalted presence into which he had been admitted and of the glory he had witnessed (2Co 3:18); and in that view, it was a badge of his high office as the ambassador of God. No testimonial needed to be produced. He bore his credentials on his very face; and whether this extraordinary effulgence was a permanent or merely temporary distinction, it cannot be doubted that this reflected glory was given him as an honor before all the people.

What a great spiritual lesson this teaches us, that those who do not know the Lord may be able, at least to a degree, observe Him in the countenance and visage of those who do!

***Job 36:26 Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.***

An important indicator of true religion is the humble admission that there is much to know about God that we do not and cannot know during this earthly existence.

Nowhere also is human pride more evident than when sinful men both presume and assume to know a God, Whom in fact they are completely estranged from.

***Job 36:27–28 For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof:***

<sup>28</sup> ***Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly.***

In truth, men do not have the power to grow or sustain anything without God providing the means through nature to have their needs met.

One of the natural evidences of this is when rain descends from the heavens, giving life to both the plants and creatures upon the earth.

Elihu thus directs Job's attention to the mystery of water in two of its three forms—vapor and liquid—to prompt him to consider that if even rain, the work of God, is so mysterious and wonderful, how much greater is its Sender?

***Job 36:29 Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?***

Another mysterious and powerful work of God is how clouds begin small and then expand, ultimately becoming great and severe thunderstorms.

Clouds are often associated in Scripture revealing the presence of the Lord:

***Psalms 97:2 Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.***

It seemed to be well known, even in Job's time, that clouds were a covering to God:

***Job 22:14 Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.***

It was also a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, which revealed God's presence remaining with Israel in their long journey to the promised land:

***Exodus 13:21–22 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: <sup>22</sup> He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.***

A cloud also revealed the Lord's presence when He descended upon Mount Sinai:

***Deuteronomy 4:11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.***

Scripture also describes Jesus as sitting, seemingly supported by a white cloud:

***Revelation 14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.***

By directing Job to observe the work of God concerning rain and clouds, Elihu begins the spiritual process of bringing Job to a greater awareness of the mystery that is God.

If Job looked up into the heavens and observed the great wonder and mysterious nature of the Lord's creation, then he could begin to realize that there were secrets of Him far beyond mere human and natural perception.

***Job 36:30 Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.***

Proceeding to enlighten Job to God's majesty and power, Elihu directs his thoughts to lightning and how it descends from the heavens, and even on the darkest night illuminates the vast expanse of the sea.

Like clouds, lightning is often associated with the presence and power of the Lord:

***Psalms 97:4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.***

Scripture also reveals that lightning originates, and can come from the Lord, as a means of divine judgment:

***Psalms 144:6 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.***

Through the startling display of lightning, the Lord conveys Himself as possessing sufficient spiritual power and authority to judge all sinners:

***II Kings 1:10–12 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.***

<sup>11</sup> ***Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.***

<sup>12</sup> ***And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.***

When the temple of God is opened in the book of Revelation, flashes of lightning will be among the strong natural forces that shall exhibit the Lord's presence within it:

***Revelation 11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.***

If men would actually consider that lightning, thunder, clouds, and rain are revelations meant to display God's glory and majesty, then they would soon realize that He is far closer and much more powerful than they ever imagined.

***Job 36:31–33 For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.  
32 With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt.  
33 The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.***

*Benson Commentary, Job 36:31–33*

*For by them he judgeth the people*—By thunder and lightning, and rain from the clouds, he executes his judgments against ungodly people. *He giveth meat*—By the same clouds by which he punisheth wicked men, he provideth plentiful showers to drop fatness upon the earth.

Other translations help to enlighten the meaning of verses 32 and 33.

(NLT) *He fills his hands with lightning bolts and hurls each at its target.*

<sup>33</sup> *The thunder announces his presence; the storm announces his indignant anger.*

(ESV) *He covers his hands with the lightning and commands it to strike the mark.*

<sup>33</sup> *Its crashing declares his presence; the cattle also declare that he rises.*

***Job 37:1 At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place.***

Elihu possessed a similar fear of the Lord as Job, if not actually greater. Understandably, it is true sight of God that produces fear of Him. Creation, in all its beauties and wonders likewise testify to God's eternal power and Godhead.

***Romans 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 1:20*

*Being understood*—His perfections may be investigated, and comprehended by means of his works. They are the evidences submitted to our intellects, by which we may arrive at the true knowledge of God.

The Lord has left such a mark on the universe that it still bears ample testimony to His eternal existence, glory, and majesty.

The Lord has determined that there is enough visible evidence of His power in creation, that this prohibits any excuse for men not to yield to His sovereignty and rule over their lives.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 1:20*

*So that they are without excuse*—God has given them so clear evidence of his existence and claims, that they have no excuse for their idolatry, and for hindering the truth by their iniquity. It is implied here that in order that people should be responsible, they should have the means of knowledge; and that he does not judge them when their ignorance

is involuntary, and the means of knowing the truth have not been communicated. But where people have these means within their reach, and will not avail themselves of them, all excuse is taken away.

***Job 37:2 Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.***

It is extremely probable and virtually certain, that while Elihu was speaking to Job about the glory of God in creation, thunder reverberated and shook the environment around him, both awakening and startling Job to the Lord's approaching presence.

The tempest that was brewing became firm evidence that God was near and was neither happy nor content with what He had been observing.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 37:2*

*Hear attentively*— ... It has been supposed by many, and not without probability, that the tempest was already seen rising, out of which God was to address Job [Job 38:1], and that Elihu here calls the special attention of his hearers to the gathering storm, and to the low muttering thunder in the distance.

*The noise of his voice*—Thunder is often represented as the voice of God, and this was one of the most natural of all suppositions when its nature was little understood, and is at all times a beautiful poetic conception; see the whole of Psalm 29:1–11. The word rendered “noise” (רָגַז *rôgez* (row-GEZ)), means properly “commotion,” that which is fitted to produce perturbation, or disquiet (see Job 3:17, Job 3:26; Isaiah 14:3), and is used here to denote the commotion, or “raging” of thunder.

The thunder and the great tempest containing God's presence approaching Job revealed to him two things.

First, it established the Lord's arrival in the situation.

Second, it revealed the Lord's displeasure with both Job's person and his words.

Because of this, it became evident that the Lord was ready to enter into direct conversation with Job.

***Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said . . .***

Ultimately, everything that Elihu spoke to Job—including his mention of the rain, clouds, thunder, and lightning—was now actually becoming manifest, and they would together testify to the presence of God.

The Lord has often confirmed His presence through powerful acts of nature, purposed also to reveal the legitimacy of those sent forth to speak in his name.

As a result, Elijah had his spiritual ministry confirmed as being sent from God through the approaching tempest and strong bolts of lightning descending from heaven (1 Kgs. 18:38). Joshua also had his ministry confirmed through the sun standing still, enabling him to win the battle in which he was engaged (Josh. 10:13).

At Jesus' crucifixion and subsequent death upon the cross, the earth did quake and the rocks were rent (Matt. 27:50–51), revealing the Lord's displeasure with the murder of His Son.

Hence, through the violent storm that was approaching, Elihu's message was being confirmed as having its source in God.

Elihu had spoken of the power and majesty of the Lord manifested throughout creation, and now Job was about to personally experience this reality for himself.

*Job 37:3–6 He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth.*

<sup>4</sup> *After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.*

<sup>5</sup> *God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.*

<sup>6</sup> *For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.*

As the Lord's voice rumbled in the approaching storm, it would soon be followed by His actual approaching presence. Indeed *he* [the Lord] *will not stay them when his voice is heard* (v. 4). Once the Lord speaks, and once His voice is heard, nothing can hold back His mighty presence from intervening in men's lives.

Jesus proved this when He cried and summoned Lazarus to rise out of his tomb (John 11:43–44). It was also the spoken word of Christ which preceded His healing of the man with the withered hand (Matt. 12:9–13).

Hence, once the Lord speaks, His power, presence, and glory are ready to be revealed and made known.

The sound of the Lord's heavenly voice, ultimately is a precursor to the arrival of His actual person.

*Job 37:7 He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work.*

Elihu now mentions God's supernatural ability, to stop men's hands from both labor and work and/or to shut them up because of the harsh and unbearable climate around them.

Thus, while men will often glory in the work of their own hands, it takes but a small act of God's intervention in nature to reveal that His hands are so much more powerful than any natural ability of man.

By this demonstration of heavenly power, sinners should be able to perceive that all true power, glory, and authority belong to God, and that there is no true governor upon the earth other than Him.

*Job 37:8–13 Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.*

<sup>9</sup> *Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north.*

<sup>10</sup> *By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.*

<sup>11</sup> *Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud:*

<sup>12</sup> *And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.*

<sup>13</sup> *He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.*

In reality, all acts in creation have their roots either in God's correction or His mercy.

*Job 37:13 (NIV) He brings the clouds to punish people, or to water his earth and show his love.*

How shallow are sinners' thoughts when they insist on spending countless hours discussing the weather, but are not even the least bit interested in Him Who rules it.

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 37:13*

Nature directs all creatures to shelter themselves from a storm; and shall man only be unprovided with a refuge? Oh that men would listen to the voice of God, who in many ways warns them to flee from the wrath to come; and invites them to accept his salvation, and to be happy.

***Job 37:14 Harken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.***

Elihu now instructs Job to stand still so that he could regain quietness in his heart and begin contemplating the wondrous works of God.

By Job being commanded to stand and cease from his own erring thoughts, room would be provided for him to hear directly from the Lord.

Mary also sat at Jesus' feet and remained still, enabling her to receive spiritual truth, which troubled an anxious Martha, because of her worldly preoccupation, forfeited (Luke 10:38–42).

***Job 37:15–17 Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?***

<sup>16</sup> ***Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?***

<sup>17</sup> ***How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind?***

*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Job 37:17*

*how thy garments are warm]* Rather perhaps, thou *Whose garments are warm, when the earth is still because of the south wind.* Job 37:15 referred to the storm cloud; Job 37:16–17 refer rather to the sultry summer cloud. ... “This sensation of dry, hot clothes is only experienced during the siroccos” (Thomson, *Land and the Book*). In reference to the *stillness* of the earth under such a wind, this writer says, “There is no living thing abroad to make a noise. The birds hide in thickest shades, the fowls pant under the walls with open mouth and drooping wings, the flocks and herds take shelter in caves and under great rocks, and the labourers retire from the fields and close the windows and doors of their houses.

Like cold and unforgiving weather, smothering heat is able to keep men indoors and force them to cease from all activity and labor.

Hence, through God's influence on nature, He can easily control even the routine movements of man.

Now Elihu proposes to Job a series of questions.

First, he asks him if he knows how God controls the clouds and causes the lightning to flash out of them (v. 15).

Second, he inquires of Job as to whether he really knows how the Lord balances the clouds and keeps them suspended above the earth (v. 16).

Third, he asks Job if he is aware of the hot and warm wind that quiets all living creatures and demands they take shelter until it passes (v. 17).

By asking Job questions concerning creation, which Elihu knows Job has no answers for, it is hoped that he will realize that if he does not know these answers concerning even the earthly climate, then how could he presume to so easily know its Creator?

***Job 37:18 Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?***

Elihu now directs Job to look at the sky and all that comprises the earth's atmosphere. Hence, just as there is wonder in those things that fill up the sky, so is there even greater wonder in beholding and marveling in the sky itself.

*Benson Commentary, Job 37:18*

Wast thou his assistant in spreading out the sky, like a canopy, over the earth? *Which is strong*—Which, though it be very thin and transparent, yet is also firm, and compact, and steadfast. *As a molten looking-glass*—Made of brass and steel, as the manner then was. Smooth and polished, without the least flaw. In this, as in a glass, we may behold *the glory of God*, and the wisdom of *his handiwork*.

***Job 37:19 Teach us what we shall say unto him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.***

There are many who have murmured against the Lord, who will be at a complete loss for words, and shall become exceedingly fearful, when they are summoned into the Lord's presence in heaven.

It is one thing for sinners to speak of God while it is thought they are outside of His observation, and quite another thing to attempt to defend themselves when being personally confronted by Him.

Could Job actually do such a thing as this, and properly order his words before the Lord? Elihu knew himself insufficient for such a task; was Job any different than himself?

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 37:19*

*Teach us what we shall say unto him*—This seems to be addressed to Job. It is the language of Elihu, implying that he was overawed with a sense of the majesty and glory of such a God. He knew not in what manner, or with what words to approach such a Being, and he asks Job to inform him, if he knew.

*We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness*—Job had repeatedly professed a desire to bring his cause directly before God, and to argue it in his presence. He felt assured that if he could do that, he should be able so to present it as to obtain a decision in his favor; see Job 13:3, note; Job 13:18–22, notes. Elihu now designs, indirectly, to censure that confidence. He says that he and his friends were so overawed by the majesty of God, and felt themselves so ignorant and so ill qualified to judge of him and his works, that they would not know what to say. They were in darkness. They could not understand even the works of his hands which were directly before them, and the most common operations of nature were inscrutable to them. How then could they presume to arraign God? How could they manage a cause before him with any hope of success? It is scarcely necessary to say, that the state of mind referred to here by Elihu is that which should be cultivated, and that the feelings which he expresses are those with which we should approach the Creator. We need someone to teach us. We are surrounded by mysteries which we cannot comprehend, and we should, therefore, approach our Maker with profound reverence and submission.

***Job 37:20 Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 37:20*

Elihu had designed to reprove Job for the bold and presumptuous manner in which he had spoken of God, and for his wish to enter into a debate with him in order to vindicate his cause. He now says, that if anyone should attempt this, God had power at once to destroy him; and that such an attempt would be perilous to his life. But other interpretations have been proposed, which may be seen in Rosenmuller, Umbreit, and Lee.

*Surely he shall be swallowed up*—Destroyed for his presumption and rashness in thus contending with the Almighty. Elihu says that on this account he would not dare to speak with God. He would fear that he would come forth in his anger, and destroy him.

***Job 37:21 And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.***

If men cannot even look at the brightness of the sun, then how could they possibly presume they can clearly see God, Who is Himself solely light (I John 1:5)?

(NIV) *Now no one can look at the sun, bright as it is in the skies after the wind has swept them clean.*

*Benson Commentary, Job 37:21*

Men are not able to look upon the brightness of the sun when it shines in the heavens, after the winds have swept away the clouds which before obscured the clear sky. And therefore it is not strange if we cannot see God, or discern his counsels and ways.

If the sun, which is but one element of God's creation, prohibits men from gazing upon it for any length of time, how can sinners presume that they could rightly observe the Lord, when He is so much more powerful and brighter than it?

***Exodus 33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.***

*Benson Commentary, Exod. 33:20*

*Thou canst not see my face*—The full display of my glory, that light inaccessible, before which the angels stand, but which would be insufferable to mortal eyes; this no man can see and live.

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Exod. 33:20*

The impossibility of the thing from man's weakness, which is such, that if God should display all the beams of his glory to him, it would certainly astonish, overwhelm, and destroy him.

***Job 37:22 Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.***

*Benson Commentary, Job 37:22*

*Fair weather cometh out of the north*—From the northern winds, which scatter the clouds and clear the sky. Elihu concludes with some short, but great sayings, concerning the glory of God. He speaks abruptly and in haste, because, it should seem, he perceived God was approaching, and presumed he was about to take the work into his own hands.

Just as the northern wind clears the air and removes the clouds so the sun can be seen, Elihu, now reveals that his time with Job is about to end. For soon the Lord will begin His own correction of Job, and consequently bring him into a spiritual awareness of his crimes against Him.

What this teaches us is this, that there is a time for messengers to speak on the Lord's behalf, and another more fearful and frightening time, when the Lord will directly speak for Himself.



Session 18

*God Demands Job Answer Him  
Concerning Creation*

*Job 37:23–38:36*

Scriptures

<i>Job 37:23</i>	<i>Job 38:6</i>	<i>Job 38:15</i>	<i>Job 38:29</i>
<i>Job 37:24</i>	<i>Job 38:7</i>	<i>Job 38:16–17</i>	<i>Job 38:30</i>
<i>Mark 1:3</i>	<i>Job 38:8</i>	<i>Job 38:18</i>	<i>Job 38:31</i>
<i>Job 38:1</i>	<i>Job 38:9</i>	<i>Job 38:19</i>	<i>Job 38:32</i>
<i>Psalms 29:3</i>	<i>Job 38:10</i>	<i>Job 38:20</i>	<i>Job 38:33</i>
<i>Job 38:2</i>	<i>Job 38:11</i>	<i>Job 38:21</i>	<i>Job 38:34</i>
<i>Job 38:3</i>	<i>Job 38:12</i>	<i>Job 38:22–23</i>	<i>Job 38:35</i>
<i>Job 38:4</i>	<i>Job 38:13</i>	<i>Job 38:24</i>	<i>Job 38:36</i>
<i>Job 38:5</i>	<i>Job 38:14</i>	<i>Job 38:25–28</i>	<i>Job 32:8</i>

*Job 37:23 Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.*

Though sinners through their own efforts cannot find out God, He can find out them.

In the context of the approaching storm, Elihu asserts that if nature itself is not fully understood, how could God and His ways with man be so easy and simple to then understand?

*Job 37:24 Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.*

Concluding his spiritual correction, Elihu finishes his discourse with Job with this strikingly simple, but yet profound spiritual truth, that God *respecteth not any that are wise of heart*.

It is this lesson that is the ultimate lesson which the book of Job, seeks to impart—that *he [God] respecteth not any that are wise of heart*. This was Job's sin, as well as his friends' sin, and neither had been hidden from God's sight.

Like John the Baptist, Elihu has now prepared the way for One greater than himself to speak and begin revealing even greater heavenly revelation.

The Lord's messenger has done his part, and now Jehovah will do His.

Elihu, like John, was a forerunner to One greater than himself. Like John, his ministry was purposed to prepare sinners for the Lord's own divine arrival.

This is the purpose of all true ministries sent by the Lord, and Elihu's ministry is one of the very first biblical examples of this.

*Mark 1:3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

This is in reference to Isaiah 40:3.

*Benson Commentary, Isa. 40:3*

*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.)* The idea is taken from the practice of the eastern monarchs, who, whenever they entered upon an expedition, or took a journey, especially through desert and unpractised countries, sent harbingers before them to prepare all things for their passage, and pioneers to open the passes, to level the ways, and to remove all impediments.

***Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,***

*(NIV) Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said:*

This magnificent display of God's power was intimidating, and His manifestation would be worthy of nothing less.

***Psalms 29:3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters.***

The Lord's creation both revealed and hid His presence, and Job could not doubt the seriousness that the change in climate was impressing upon him.

The atmosphere reflected the severity of Job's crime, for God spoke not in a still small voice, but out of a strong, powerful, and threatening whirlwind.

Nature showed its agreement with the Lord, and He has directed it to ready Job's heart for upcoming spiritual correction.

*Benson Commentary, Job 38:1*

*Then the Lord answered Job*—No sooner had Elihu uttered the words last mentioned, but there was a sensible token of the presence of that dreadful majesty of God among them, spoken of Job 38:22, and Jehovah began to debate the matter with Job, as he had desired; *out of the whirlwind*—Out of a dark and thick cloud, from which he sent a terrible and pestuous wind, as the harbinger of his presence.

***Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?***

This is what Job had done; he had darkened God's counsel by words without any true knowledge of God. This the Lord reveals is his sin, and he now must give account for it.

*Benson Commentary, Job 38:2*

*Who is this, &c.*—What and where is he that presumes to talk at this rate? *That darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*—Words proceeding from ignorance, mistake, and want of consideration. Who is this that disparages my counsels, and darkens the wisdom of my dispensations with his ignorant discourses about them? This language becomes not a creature, much less a professor of the true religion. The person here intended is not Elihu, who spoke last, but Job, who had spoken most, as is manifest from the former verse, in which it is said, *The Lord answered Job*; and from Job 42:3, where Job takes the following reproof to himself, as also from the following discourse, wherein God convinces Job by divers of the same kind of arguments which Elihu had used against him. With a single question God shows the absolute emptiness of human abilities, strikes Job to the heart, and puts an end to the dispute.

When men speak, they either reveal the Lord's true nature and character to others, or they distort His image. If not led by the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to speak of God without darkening Whom He really is.

Hence, whenever human reason, tradition, or experience replaces divine revelation, confusion will increase and the understanding of God's true character shall be tarnished.

Instead of bringing light to the situation, Job's lack of spirituality only darkened it.

Because Job spoke of things beyond his spiritual ability to understand, all he really did was darken the counsel of the very One he sought to please.

***Job 38:3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.***

Whenever men sin against God, they will be required to gird up their loins and ultimately stand before Him, needing to give a full account for their actions.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:3*

*Gird up now thy loins like a man*— . . . The idea here is, "Make thyself as strong and vigorous as possible; be prepared to put forth the highest effort." God was about to put him to a task which would require all his ability—that of explaining the facts which were constantly occurring in the universe.

Job was now required to stand before the Lord and give a full account of his previous words and thoughts.

The Lord demanded this of him, and it would prove impossible for Job not to give an account concerning his sin.

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 38:1-3*

Our darkening the counsels of God's wisdom with our folly, is a great provocation to God.

***Job 38:4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.***

Whenever men speak of God, there is an inference that they have both known God, and have been with Him. To this the Lord asks Job if he had been with the Lord in the beginning.

Since Job had presumed to know so much of the Creator, could he recall the celestial and awe-inspiring events of creation?

***Job 38:5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?***

It is one thing for a man to lay out the plans for a small earthly abode; it is quite another thing to be the Architect and Creator of both the heavens and earth.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:5*

The earth is represented as a building, the plan of which was laid out beforehand, and which was then made according to the sketch of the architect. It is not, therefore, the work of chance or fate. It is laid out and constructed according to a wise plan, and in a method evincing infinite skill.

***Job 38:6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;***

Since all buildings and structures must have a foundation to sit upon, what, then, is the earth's?

If Job could not answer this question concerning what the earth sat upon and where it had gained its beginning, then how could he be so confident in speaking of its Creator?

***Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?***

Whenever a great work is completed, it is reason for joy and celebration. The earth's creation was no different. The expression *shouted for joy* describes the angels' response to a moment of unparalleled beauty in the distant past, when after creation, all the creatures in it, shouted for joy, for the marvelous work they had observed being accomplished.

***Job 38:8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?***

We know that large aquifers in the earth contain huge volumes of water and that during the flood these aquifers burst open and filled the earth.

In 2014 scientists observed a body of water trapped in the earth's mantle that is three times the volume of all the oceans. Geophysicist Steve Jacobsen from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and seismologist Brandon Schmandt from the University of New Mexico, published "Dehydration Melting at the Top of the Lower Mantle" in the journal *Science*, their findings concerning a large reservoir of water under the earth's crust, showing "strong proof that Earth's water came from inside the planet."

This discovery also disputes those who have implied that there was never enough water upon the earth, to completely cover her during the flood of Noah's time.

The truth is, there is more than sufficient water within the mantle of the earth to do such a breathtaking act, and just now scientists are confirming this.

The Weather Channel summarized this research in the following article "Massive Ocean Found Hiding 700 Kilometres beneath Earth's Surface!"

Imagine an ocean vaster than all the water on Earth's surface combined hidden 700 kilometres beneath our feet. This is the mind-boggling discovery scientists at Northwestern University have unveiled, shaking our understanding of where Earth's water comes from.

For years, scientists have debated the origins of Earth's water. Comets were prime suspects, delivering their icy payloads through impacts, but this new discovery throws a wrench in that theory. Researchers, led by geophysicist Steven Jacobsen, stumbled upon a colossal water reservoir trapped within the Earth's mantle, a scorching hot layer beneath the crust. This hidden ocean, three times the size of its surface counterparts, is cradled within a mineral called ringwoodite.

Scientists deployed a network of 2,000 seismographs across the US, listening to the whispers of the Earth itself. By analysing the faint tremors from over 500 earthquakes, they noticed a curious slowdown in the seismic waves as they passed through specific regions of the mantle. This slowdown hinted at the presence of water, acting like a sponge within the rock.

This discovery completely rewrites our understanding of Earth's water cycle. It suggests water isn't just a surface phenomenon, but potentially exists within the mantle, migrating through cracks and crevices. Jacobsen emphasises the importance of this reservoir, stating, "Without this internal water source, Earth's surface would likely be a barren landscape, with only mountain peaks peeking out from a vast ocean."

The implications are far-reaching. Scientists are now eager to gather seismic data worldwide to see if this hidden ocean is a global phenomenon. This could revolutionise our understanding of how water moves within our planet, a fundamental process shaping Earth's history and potentially influencing the existence of life.

The Lord asks Job, "Who set the bounds of these watery eruptions so that they did not completely immerse the land above?"

***Job 38:9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,***

Continuing to liken the earth to a child, the Lord describes the clouds as its swaddling blanket.

*Geneva Study Bible, Job 38:9*

When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a {g} swaddlingband for it,

(g) As though the great sea was but as a little baby in the hands of God to turn to and fro.

***Job 38:10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,***

When we imagine the vast power of the seas in the early days of creation, when darkness lay upon the waters of the deep, we see why God asked Job if he knew Who put bounds upon them.

Who is this God Who can set even boundaries on the vast oceans of water that encompass the earth?

What heavenly and spiritual creature is so great that He could create a door strong enough to hold back the mighty seas?

Nations spend large amounts of financial resources on creating levees, but if a storm is sufficiently strong, it will easily, and with little effort, overcome anything that man has constructed.

Yet, God is sufficiently able to separate the dry land from the sea, so that each might fulfill its distinct purpose for man.

***Job 38:11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?***

Like a general, the Lord has commanded mighty and ferocious waves to seemingly halt, and proceed no farther than the shoreline. Regardless of how robust and proud the oceans may be, they cannot proceed beyond the boundaries the Lord has set for them.

Hence, not even the mighty oceans and seas of the earth can progress or extend themselves beyond the limits that divine will has set for them.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:11*

*And here shall thy proud waves be stayed*—Margin, as in Hebrew, "the pride of thy waves." A beautiful image. The waves seem to advance in pride and self-confidence, as if nothing could stay them. They come as if exulting in the assurance that they will sweep everything away. In a moment they are arrested and broken, and they spread out humbly and harmlessly on the beach. God fixes the limit or boundary which they are not to pass, and they lie prostrate at his feet.

***Job 38:12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;***

Every morning that has ever transpired upon the earth mimics the early days of creation, when the Lord commanded the light to shine out of the darkness.

None also are more removed from the Lord, than those who no longer acknowledge or believe in His role in creation, who ignorantly believe that something could arise out of nothing, yet cannot reasonably explain what this “nothing” consisted of in the first place.

***Job 38:13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?***

Here God reveals how both divine and natural light exposes wickedness upon the earth, and prompts it to scatter.

Where true light exists, and wherever the Lord chooses to send it, darkness is completely neutralized and maintains no power whatsoever to recover itself.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:13*

*That the wicked might be shaken out of it*—Out of the earth; that is, by the light which suddenly shines upon them. The sense is, that the wicked perform their deeds in the darkness of the night, and that in the morning light they flee away. The effect of the light coming upon them is to disturb their plans, to fill them with alarm, and to cause them to flee. The idea is highly poetic. The wicked are engaged in various acts of iniquity under cover of the night. Robbers, thieves, and adulterers, go forth to their deeds of darkness as though no one saw them. The light of the morning steals suddenly upon them, and they flee before it under the apprehension of being detected. “The dawn,” says Herder, “is represented as a watchman, a messenger of the Prince of heaven, sent to chase away the bands of robbers.” It may illustrate this to observe that it is still the custom of the Arabs to go on plundering excursions before the dawn. When on their way this faithful watchman, the aurora, goes out to spread light about them, to intimidate them, and to disperse them; compare the notes at Job 24:13–17.

***Job 38:14 It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.***

When we observe images of the earth from space, we realize the great distinction between where the sun shines and where it does not. When this light hits the earth, it is then seemingly transformed as clay would be when pressed upon by a seal.

Hence, whereas previously the earth in darkness seems flat and without any shape or form, upon exposure to the sun’s light, the beauty, shape, color, and contour of the earth is vividly and wonderfully exposed.

It is this seemingly miraculous transformation that the Lord speaks of, which occurs daily, continually revealing the power of light overcoming darkness.

***Job 38:15 And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.***

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 38:15*

*their light*—by which they work; namely, darkness, which is their day (Job 24:17), is extinguished by daylight.

*high*—Rather, “The arm uplifted” for murder or other crime is broken; it falls down suddenly, powerless, through their fear of light.

The Lord again draws a picture of how His light affects wicked men. Light is as dangerous to the sinner's plans and devilish schemes, as darkness is to the innocent.

***Job 38:16–17 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?***

***<sup>17</sup> Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?***

Even today it is true, that only a small percent of the world's oceans have been explored, and that eighty percent of the oceans has not been either mapped or explored by humans.

Just as men are ignorant of the mysteries of the deep, and the great vents and springs which lie under the oceans and seas of the world, so are they equally ignorant of what transpires at death. This door, the Lord reveals is locked, and none aside from Him really knows what lies on the other side.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 38:17*

Man during life does not even “see” the gates of the realm of the dead (“death,” Job 10:21); much less are they “opened” to him. But those are “naked before God” (Job 26:6).

The Lord asks Job these questions, in order that he might become more fully aware of his own spiritual ignorance.

In his previous responses, Job had manifested an air of religious arrogance, and the Lord now sought to remove this ungodly and unhealthy pride from him.

***Job 38:18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.***

Focusing on the size and breadth of the earth, the Lord now inquires of Job if he can truly comprehend the world he was born into.

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 38:18*

It is presumptuous for us, who perceive not the breadth of the earth, to dive into the depth of God's counsels.

We can never truly know the reasons for what God does, or for what He divinely allows to be done.

This wisdom is far beyond any man, and this lack of understanding should actually lead him to become more subject to divine rule—simply because if man cannot properly understand the Lord's works, he should be wise enough to refrain from questioning His ways and methods in dealing with man.

No doubt the sovereignty of God is far more mysterious and hidden from man, than even the hidden mysteries of creation.

***Job 38:19 Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof,***

In Job's day and according to man's understanding—or lack of it, rather—the true origin of light and darkness and where they originated from was virtually unknown, though each day and night upon the earth seemingly rotated, when also darkness and light took turns replacing the other.

***Job 38:20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:20*

The sense seems to be this: God asks Job whether he was so well acquainted with the sources of light, and the place where it dwelt, that he could take it under his guidance and reconduct it to its place of abode.

*And that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?*—The same idea is repeated here. Light has a home; a place of abode. It was far distant—in some region unknown to man. Did Job know the way in which it came, and the place where it dwelt so well, that he could conduct it back again to its own dwelling?

***Job 38:21 Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?***

The Lord knew Job could never answer His questions, so now He addresses how much pride must exist in Job to assume he had learned so much during his extremely brief existence on the earth.

Using irony and a bit of mockery, the Lord intends to reveal to Job his childish thoughts of possessing wisdom.

Hence, though Job was only a temporal creature of God, and had walked the earth but for a very short time, he still felt himself fully qualified to question the Lord's oversight of his life.

***Job 38:22–23 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,  
23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?***

The Lord likens the formation of both snow and hail as a treasure. There are so many natural occurrences in the earth, which men have become so accustomed to, that they have lost the great wisdom it required to bring them into being in the first place.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:23*

*Which I have reserved*—As if they were carefully treasured up to be brought forth as they shall be needed. The idea is, that they were entirely under the direction of God.

*The time of trouble*—Herder “the time of need.” The meaning probably is, that he had kept them in reserve for the time when he wished to bring calamity on his enemies, or that he made use of them to punish his foes; compare the notes at Job 36:31–33.

*Against the day of battle and war*—Hailstones were employed by God sometimes to overwhelm his foes, and were sent against them in time of battle; see Joshua 10:11; Exodus 9:22–26; Psalm 18:12–13; compare the notes at Isaiah 29:6.

Great battles have often been determined by freezing cold, great storms, or extreme heat, all of which the Lord states He frequently employs to stop the plans of evil men.

***Job 38:24 By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?***

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 38:24*

*is . . . parted*—parts, so as to diffuse itself over the whole earth, though seeming to come from one point. Light travels from the sun to the earth, ninety millions of miles, in eight minutes.

which scattereth—rather, “And by what way the east wind (personified) spreads (scattereth) itself.” The light and east wind are associated together, as both come from one quarter, and often arise together (Jon 4:8).

**Job 38:25–28** *Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;*

<sup>26</sup> *To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man;*

<sup>27</sup> *To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?*

<sup>28</sup> *Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?*

Progressing to rain and how it brings water to dry places upon the earth, even where men do not live, the Lord asks Job if rain has a father.

Ultimately, the Lord holds an endearing affection for all creation, and most notably the earth, and the wonderful processes which He has established to maintain her fruitfulness and abundance.

**Job 38:29** *Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?*

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:29*

*Out of whose womb came the ice?*—That is, who has caused or produced it? The idea is, that it was not by any human agency, or in any known way by which living beings were propagated.

*And the hoary frost of heaven*—Which seems to fall from heaven. The sense is, that it is caused wholly by God; see the notes at Job 37:10.

**Job 38:30** *The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.*

Not only did God create water, but He also designed it so that at low temperatures it would change its form to become like hard stone.

The transformation of water from liquid to then a solid, is directly attributed to the wisdom of God.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:30*

The formation of ice is thus appealed to as a proof of the wisdom of God, and as a thing which Job could not explain. No man could produce this effect; nor could Job explain how it was done.

**Job 38:31** *Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?*

Referring to the Pleiades, also spoken about in Job 9:9, which usher in the spring, and Orion, which foretells of winter, the Lord asks Job if he can bind either of them.

Ultimately, men have no power whatsoever to either contain or restrain the courses of the stars.

Yet, if men do not have the power to prevent the stars from appearing at their respective times, how could they ever presume to believe that they could stop God's will from being orchestrated upon the earth?

***Job 38:32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?***

The Lord now asks Job if he can make the stars and constellations appear in their respective seasons.

By providing specific names of the stars, the Lord reveals how intimately connected He is to the constellations and individual stars of heaven.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:32*

*He calleth them all by names*—This idea is also taken from a military leader, who would know the names of the individuals that composed his army. In smaller divisions of an army, this could of course be done; but the idea is, that God is intimately acquainted with all the hosts of stars; that though their numbers appear to us so great, yet he is acquainted with each one individually, and has that knowledge of it which we have of a person or object which we recognize by a name. It is said of Cyrus, that he was acquainted by name with every individual that composed his vast army.

***Job 38:33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?***

The heavens exhibit a dominion over the earth; they affect things like the ocean's tides and a great many seasonal weather patterns.

By this truth the Lord hopes to impress upon Job that heaven rules the earth, and surely not the men upon the earth, heaven.

***Job 38:34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?***

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 38:34*

*Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?* Thy gardens, fields, and farms; canst thou, in a magisterial way, call to and demand of the clouds to let down rain in large quantities, sufficient to water them and make them fruitful? no, thou canst not: thou mayest cry and call as long as thou wilt, not a cloud will stir, nor a drop of water be let down; rain is to be had in a suppliant way, through the prayer of faith, as by Elijah, but not in a dictatorial authoritative way: the clouds and rain are only at the disposal of the Lord; ask of him, and he will give them; but they are not to be commanded, Zechariah 10:1 [*Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.*]; see Amos 5:8.

***Job 38:35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go and say unto thee, Here we are?***

If Job cannot control the clouds and the manner in which they bring forth rain, is he in any better position to send lightning upon the earth?

***Job 38:36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?***

The Lord now asks Job, Who actually imparts both natural and spiritual wisdom into man?

What also is more beautiful and mysterious as the Spirit of God imparting wisdom into the hearts of those naturally born deaf and blind to spiritual things.

*Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.*

It is the Lord, Who illuminates the heart and prompts understanding to flow into it.

It is He, and none other, Who has imparted wisdom into the inward part of man, without which no man could know anything of God—either God's role in creation, or man's sin against Him.

It is undoubtedly the Lord Who is the true source of all understanding and wisdom, and those humble in heart shall joyfully and with sincere thankfulness openly confess this.



Session 19

*The Lord Speaks of the Complexities  
of Nature to Humble Job*

*Job 38:37–39:30*

Scriptures

<i>Job 38:37</i>	<i>Job 39:3</i>	<i>Revelation 19:11</i>
<i>Job 38:38</i>	<i>Job 39:4</i>	<i>Revelation 6:2</i>
<i>Job 38:39–40</i>	<i>Job 39:5–18</i>	<i>Job 39:26</i>
<i>Job 38:41</i>	<i>Job 39:9–12</i>	<i>Job 39:27</i>
<i>Psalms 147:9</i>	<i>Job 39:13–18</i>	<i>Job 39:28–29</i>
<i>Job 39:1–2</i>	<i>Job 39:19–25</i>	<i>Job 39:30</i>

*Job 38:37 Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven,*

Rain is the largest source of fresh water where rivers, lakes, streams, and aquifers are not accessible. All abundance, therefore, especially physical nourishment, comes from the processes that God has established to supply water to the earth. Mankind and the earth's creatures are only content, full, and satisfied because the Lord has furnished consistent natural laws of nature for them to be so.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:37*

*Who can number the clouds?*—The word here rendered clouds (שַׁחַקִּיּוֹם *shachaqiyim*) is applied to the clouds as made up of “small particles”—as if they were composed of fine dust, and hence, the word *number* is applied to them, not as meaning that the clouds themselves were innumerable, but that no one could estimate the number of particles which enter into their formation.

*In wisdom*—By his wisdom. Who has sufficient intelligence to do it?

*Or who can stay the bottles of heaven?*—Margin, as in Hebrew “cause to lie down.” The clouds are here compared with bottles, as if they held the water in the same manner; compare the notes at Job 26:8.

*Job 38:38 When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?*

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 38:38*

*When the dust groweth into hardness.* ‘*Aphar* (aw-FAR) (עָפָר) here, as often, means “earth,” or “soil,” rather than “dust.” When by the heat of the sun's rays the ground grows into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together, baked into a compact mass, then is the time when rain is most needed, and when the Almighty in his mercy commonly sends it. The consideration of inanimate nature here ends, with the result that its mysteries altogether transcend the human intellect, and render speculation on the still deeper mysteries of the moral world wholly vain and futile.

*Job 38:39–40 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions,  
40 When they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?*

Shifting from the heavens, the Lord now directs Job's attention to the creatures of the earth, which God cares for through divine providence.

The text mentions lions, which many consider to be the most regal of nature's creatures, to show that even their needs are provided for by the Lord.

Just as man cannot care for himself without an environment supplied by God, likewise he cannot care for or sustain the well-being of any other of the earth's creatures without the natural agencies that God has created to maintain the earth's inhabitants.

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 38:39*

Is it by thy care and providence that the lions, who live in desert places, are furnished with necessary provisions? This is justly mentioned as another wonderful work of God.

***Job 38:41 Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.***

It is not man but rather God Who provides food for the wild creatures such as the raven.

***Psalms 147:9 He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.***

It is the Lord Who sustains not only man but also all the other wild creatures far removed from him.

***Job 39:1–2 Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?***

***<sup>2</sup> Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?***

The Lord now asks Job what he knows about the wild goats that live in the uppermost mountains. If Job could speak very little about these majestic creatures who inhabit the loftiest regions of the earth, how could he know a God Whose habitation is heaven?

If he could not without great effort discern the ways of the mountain goat, which makes its home on some of the highest peaks of the earth, how could he so easily presume to understand the God of heaven, Whom no man can approach and is so much more a mystery than wild goats and their young?

***Job 39:3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.***

Continuing with the subject of the wild goats, the Lord reveals to Job how man has no role whatsoever in helping them bring forth their young since by divine providence they are born and survive in the harshest of wintry and barren environments without any assistance or help from man.

The Lord uses this to impress upon Job that unlike domesticated animals, many creatures of the earth do not depend on human aid whatsoever. They are God's creatures, they are under His care, and He abundantly supplies for them all that is critically needed for their survival.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 39:3*

*They bow themselves*—literally, they curve or bend themselves; that is, they draw their limbs together.

*They cast out their sorrows*—That is, they cast forth the offspring of their pains, or the young which cause their pains. The idea seems to be, that they do this without any of the care and attention which shepherds are obliged to show to their flocks at such seasons. They do it when God only guards them; when they are in the wilderness or on the rocks

far away from the abodes of man. The leading thought in all this seems to be, that the tender care of God was over his creatures, in the most perilous and delicate state, and that all this was exercised where man could have no access to them, and could not even observe them.

***Job 39:4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.***

Though born in harsh and dangerous conditions, the young kids of the goats seemingly grow and develop like domesticated animals that are fed with corn. All this speaks to the Lord's wisdom as He has adapted so many of His creatures to survive and even thrive in precarious and dangerous environments, which even men find it extremely difficult and challenging to live in.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 39:4*

*They go forth, and return not unto them*—God guards and preserves them, even when they wander away from their dam, and are left helpless. Many of the young of animals require long attention from man, many are kept for a considerable period by the side of the mother, but the idea here seems to be, that the young of the wild goat and of the fawn are thrown early on the providence of God, and are protected by him alone. The particular care of Providence over these animals seems to be specified because there are no others that are exposed to so many dangers in their early life.

If God provides for the survival and healthy development of young mountain goats, could He not also provide the necessary assistance and strength for Job to successfully overcome and gain victory in his trial?

And since He gives kids the ability to survive and flourish in the severest of habitats, could He not also provide for people the means to escape and gain victory over their temptations?

Just as harsh weather and rocky mountains cannot impede the birth or development of the mountain goat, so also is the Lord more than able to care for the needs of man, regardless of the challenging trials and temptations in his life.

***Job 39:5–8 Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?***

<sup>6</sup> *Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings.*

<sup>7</sup> *He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.*

<sup>8</sup> *The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.*

The wild ass spoken of here has no respect or desire for the bustling cities of man and is said to despise them. Instead, it prefers the mountains and the green and wide-open pastures that the Lord has provided not only for its survival but also for its solitude.

Some creatures the Lord has intended for domestication, and others, like the wild ass, He has established to be free from human servitude.

The Lord also delights in giving certain creatures freedom from domestication as much as He enjoys it when other animals provide both companionship and usefulness to man.

***Job 39:9–12 Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?***

<sup>10</sup> *Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?*

<sup>11</sup> *Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?*

***12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?***

If God has decreed that it is necessary that some animals need not be under either human dependence or governance, then there is nothing any man can do that will enable him to reverse their natural and genetic independence.

If any creatures have been set free by God, men shall never be able to reverse the natural and free instincts He has imparted to them, which remain also critical for their survival.

*Benson Commentary, Job 39:9*

*Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee—Canst thou tame him, and bring him into subjection to thy command? Or, abide by thy crib?—Will he suffer himself to be tied, or confined there all night, and kept for the work of the next day as the oxen are? Surely not. It is much disputed among the learned, whether this reem, which is the Hebrew name of the animal here spoken of, be the rhinoceros, or a certain kind of wild goat, called orix, or a kind of wild bull, which seems most probable, both from the description of it here and elsewhere in Scripture. Schultens inclines to this opinion, thinking it to be the Arabian buffalo of the bull species, but absolutely untameable, and which the Arabians frequently hunt.*

***Job 39:13–18 Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?***

***14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust,***

***15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.***

***16 She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not her's: her labour is in vain without fear;***

***17 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.***

***18 What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.***

Though God has deprived some creatures such as the ostrich of great wisdom, nevertheless He has provided for all creatures the necessary instincts for their survival.

And though some creatures are endowed with less intelligence, still the Lord has ensured that they possess other strengths and abilities to maintain their independence and freedom to live upon the earth as God has purposed that they should.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 39:17*

*Because God hath deprived her of wisdom . . . —That is, he has not imparted to her the wisdom which has been conferred on other animals. The meaning is, that all this remarkable arrangement, which distinguished the ostrich so much from other animals was to be traced to God. It was not the result of chance; it could not be pretended that it was by a human arrangement, but it was the result of divine appointment. Even in this apparent destitution of wisdom, there were reasons which had led to this appointment, and the care and good providence of God could be seen in the preservation of the animal. Particularly, though apparently so weak, and timid, and unwise, the ostrich had a noble hearing Job 39:18, and when aroused, would scorn the fleetest horse in the pursuit, and show that she was distinguished for properties that were expressive of the goodness of God toward her, and of his care over her.*

***Job 39:19–25 Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?***

***20 Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.***

***21 He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.***

<sup>22</sup> *He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.*

<sup>23</sup> *The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.*

<sup>24</sup> *He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.*

<sup>25</sup> *He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.*

The Lord now brings Job's attention to the war horse, with an emphasis on its fearlessness and readiness for battle. Few creatures on the earth are as powerful, athletic, and majestic as the horse.

The horse, and especially the war horse, is noble and worthy of great spiritual attention, as Scripture reveals that the Lord Jesus shall return on a white horse, signifying His readiness for battle to conquer both the devil and all those who have followed his lead, and therefore willingly become part of his confederacy.

***Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 39:19*

*Hast thou given the horse strength?*—The incidental allusion to the horse in comparison with the ostrich in the previous verse, seems to have suggested this magnificent description of this noble animal—a description which has never been surpassed or equalled. The horse is an animal so well known, that a particular description of it is here unnecessary. The only thing which is required is an explanation of the phrases used here, and a confirmation of the particular qualities here attributed to the war-horse, for the description here is evidently that of the horse as he appears in war, or as about to plunge into the midst of a battle.

The Lord reminds Job that He is the One Who has given the horse its strength and fearlessness to disregard its own well-being and therefore plunge into battle, unafraid and without hesitation. So confident is the war horse in its ultimate victory, that it seemingly laughs before the upcoming conflict. Neither the shouts of its rider, nor the commotion of anxious soldiers, nor the sound of the trumpet, have any negative impact on this majestic creature to either produce or prompt fear in its heart, regarding the fierce battle which lay ahead.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 39:25*

*And he smelleth the battle afar off*—That is, he snuffs, as it were, for the slaughter. The reference is to the effect of an approaching army upon a spirited war-horse, as if he perceived the approach by the sense of smelling, and longed to be in the midst of the battle.

What a stark contrast it is between Jesus Christ first entering Jerusalem on a donkey, and then returning in resurrected glory, riding upon a white horse, symbolizing His assurance of complete and total victory over the devil, the kings of the earth, and all others who have collectively risen up in defiance against God.

***Revelation 6:2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.***

*Benson Commentary, Rev. 19:11*

Many paid little regard to Christ when he came meek and lowly, riding upon an ass: but what will they say or think, when he comes forth upon his white horse, with the sharp sword of his mouth? The white horse, on which Christ is represented as riding, was intended to denote his justice and holiness, and also that victory and triumph should mark his progress.

***Job 39:26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?***

The Lord now inquires of Job whether the hawk has gained its extraordinary power of flight because of his, Job's, human, natural wisdom.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 39:26*

*Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom*—The appeal here is to the hawk, because it is among the most rapid of the birds in its flight. The particular thing specified is its flying, and it is supposed that there was something special in that which distinguished it from other birds. Whether it was in regard to its speed, to its manner of flying, or to its habits of flying at periodical seasons, may indeed be made a matter of inquiry, but it is clear that the particular thing in this bird which was adapted to draw the attention, and which evinced especially the wisdom of God, was connected with its flight. . . . The falcon, or hawk, is often distinguished for fleetness. One, belonging to a Duke of Cleves, flew out of Westphalia into Prussia in one day; and in the county of Norfolk (England) one was known to make a flight of nearly thirty miles in an hour. A falcon which belonged to Henry IV of France, having escaped from Fontainebleau, was found twenty-four hours after in Malta, the space traversed being not less than one thousand three hundred and fifty miles; being a velocity of about fifty-seven miles an hour, on the supposition that the bird was on the wing the whole time. It is this remarkable velocity which is here appealed to as a proof of the divine wisdom. God asks Job whether he could have formed these birds for their rapid flight. The wisdom and skill which has done this is evidently far above any that is possessed by man.

***Job 39:27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?***

The Lord now brings to Job's attention another glorious creature, the eagle, highlighting the spectacular wisdom necessary to create such a regal bird that make their nests in the heavens.

Like the goat, the eagle lives in the highest regions of the earth. No doubt the Lord chooses to speak of majestic creatures like the mountain goat and the eagle because their homes are high and lofty, far above the earth, and at times literally in the clouds.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 39:27*

The eagle has always been celebrated for the height to which it ascends. When Ramond had reached the summit of Mount Perdu, the highest of the Pyrenees, he perceived no living creature but an eagle which passed above him, flying with inconceivable rapidity in direct opposition to a furious wind. *Edin. Ency.* "Of all animals, the eagle flies highest; and from thence the ancients have given him the epithet of the bird of heaven."

***Job 39:28–29 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.***

***<sup>29</sup> From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.***

Keeping Job's attention and focus on the eagle, the Lord now mentions its astonishing natural sight. So great is the eagle's eye that scientists claim it can see four to eight times farther than the human eye. It is also said that with its acute vision, it can perceive an ant from a vantage point as far up as a ten-story building.

Hence, not only does the eagle have the glorious power of flight, and is the greatest and most glorious of all the earth's birds, but God has also endowed it with an extraordinary gift of natural sight.

*The Lord Speaks of the Complexities of Nature to Humble Job*

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 39:29*

Her sight is exceeding sharp and strong, so that she is able to look upon the sun with open eyes, and to behold the smallest prey upon the earth or sea, when she is mounted out of our sight; which when she spies, she flies to it with incredible swiftness, even like an arrow out of a bow.

***Job 39:30 Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.***

Because young eagles, like many other nestlings and fledgling birds, live in nests high above the earth and have no access to water, the Lord has ensured that the blood of their mothers' kill will aptly care for their thirst and then their continuing growth.

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 39:30*

*Her young ones also suck up blood, . . .* As well as herself, being brought up to it by her. The eagle cares not for water, but drinks the blood of her prey; and so her young ones after her, as naturalists report (w). And Aelianus says (x) the same of the hawk, that it eats no seeds, but devours flesh and drinks blood, and nourishes her young ones with the same. . . . Job was ignorant of the nature of these creatures and incapable of governing and directing them; any excellency they have is of God and not of him or of any man. So then, how unfit must he be to dispute with God, and contend with Him about His works of providence?



Session 20

*Job is Speechless after God Addresses  
His Pride*

*Job 40:1–41:34*

Scriptures

<i>Job 40:1–2</i>	<i>Job 40:8</i>	<i>Job 40:16–24</i>
<i>Job 38:2</i>	<i>Proverbs 30:12</i>	<i>Job 41:1–7</i>
<i>Job 40:3–4</i>	<i>Genesis 3:5</i>	<i>Job 41:8–9</i>
<i>Isaiah 55:11</i>	<i>Isaiah 14:12–14</i>	<i>Job 41:10</i>
<i>Job 40:5</i>	<i>Job 40:9</i>	<i>Job 41:11</i>
<i>Job 40:6</i>	<i>Job 40:10</i>	<i>Job 41:12</i>
<i>Job 40:7</i>	<i>Job 40:11–14</i>	<i>Job 41:13–32</i>
<i>II Corinthians 5:10</i>	<i>Job 40:15</i>	<i>Job 41:33–34</i>

*Job 40:1–2 Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said,  
2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.*

Here we observe even further the extent of Job's sin against God.

First it had been that Job had darkened God's counsel by speaking words without knowledge.

*Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

Now Job is accused of contending with the Lord and thinking himself able to both reprove and instruct Him in respect to His dealings in Job's life.

*Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.*

Job had wanted an audience with the Lord, and now he has it. It would not transpire as he had previously either hoped or suspected, however. And though Job had not previously believed his actions to be sinful, in the Lord's eyes they are now revealed, without question, as criminal.

Job had blurred the Lord's character, and now he thought himself able to question His justice. For this, God would demand that he give a full account and answer for his sinful words.

*Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Job 40:2*

With Job 40:1; Job 38:1 is again taken up, because the speech of Jehovah has now in some measure attained the end which was assigned to it as an answer to Job's outburst of censure. ... The question means, will Job persist in this contending with God? He who sets God right, as though he knew everything better than He, shall answer the questions put before him.

Job had questioned God, and now God requires Job to stand before Him and provide answers to the Lord's own questions.

Understandably the roles have been reversed, because now it is not the Lord who is being demanded to give an account of what He had allowed in Job's life, but rather it is Job, and what he has falsely said concerning God, which must be accounted for.

To contend with the Lord, and think oneself able to reprove Him is a great sin.

Even if this action originates through ignorance, it is still esteemed as rebellion, since to question the Lord and His dealings in our life, is viewed by God to be the very same thing as condemning Him.

Ultimately, the Lord determines no difference between internal murmuring and external rebellion.

It is not uncommon for sinners to contend with the Almighty and think themselves able to both instruct and reprove Him for how they ignorantly believe He has wronged them.

Not afraid of God's judgments, sinners will regularly condemn His ways and foolishly think themselves higher than Him.

***Job 40:3–4 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,  
4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.***

Job's demeanor now experiences an abrupt and dramatic change: thus, instead of continuing to maintain that he is personally righteous and without fault, he now confesses his own vileness.

Whereas before, Job falsely presumed God was at fault and himself righteous, now he views God as righteous and himself as vile.

The Lord's correction and display of heavenly wisdom has accomplished their purpose and has done exactly what God had designed they should, which was to put Job in his place, bring him to his knees, and cause him to perceive the arrogance of his heart.

Like all God's prophetic Word, when it is sent, it shall accomplish everything that God has purposed it should.

***Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.***

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 40:1–5*

After God had shown Job, by his manifest ignorance of the works of nature, how unable he was to judge of the methods and designs of Providence, he puts a convincing question to him; Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? Now Job began to melt into godly sorrow: when his friends reasoned with him, he did not yield; but the voice of the Lord is powerful. When the Spirit of truth is come, he shall convince. Job yields himself to the grace of God. He owns himself an offender, and has nothing to say to justify himself. He is now sensible that he has sinned; and therefore he calls himself vile. Repentance changes men's opinion of themselves. Job is now convinced of his error. Those who are truly sensible of their own sinfulness and vileness, dare not justify themselves before God.

***Job 40:5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.***

Job had spoken once—indeed, more than once—in an insulting manner, but now he sees his egregious spiritual error. Afraid that he might sin again, he refuses to speak anymore, without first a confession of personal unworthiness.

Job's words as well as his thoughts had gotten him into trouble, and now he desires not to compound the situation by continuing to speak and reveal even more misguided and unformed judgments of God. He had done it *once, yea, twice*, but he is both resolved and determined never to do it again.

If Job had not realized how important it was to restrain his tongue from speaking evil before, he surely does now.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 40:5*

*Once have I spoken*—That is, in vindicating myself. He had once spoken of God in an irreverent and improper manner, and he now saw it.

*but I will not answer*—I will not now answer, as I had expressed the wish to do. Job now saw that he had spoken in an improper manner, and he says that he would not repeat what he had said.

*Yea, twice*—He had not only offended once, as if in a thoughtless and hasty manner, but he had repeated it, showing deliberation, and thus aggravating his guilt. When a man is brought to a willingness to confess that he has done wrong once, he will be very likely to see that he has been guilty of more than one offence. One sin will draw on the remembrance of another; and the gate once open, a flood of sins will rush to the recollection.

***Job 40:6 Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said,***

The intensity of the situation has not lessened in the slightest. The Lord continues to speak out of a whirlwind to impress upon Job the great spiritual power that he has offended.

Hence, even after Job's confession of uncleanness and his desire to say no more lest he incriminate himself further, still the Lord continues His correction of this god-fearing, yet still relatively blind man.

***Job 40:7 Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.***

(NIV) *"Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.*

(NLT) *"Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.*

Every man will ultimately, like Job, have to stand and give an account of the life he has lived, the words he has uttered, and the thoughts he has entertained.

Thus, for all men there will come a day of reckoning, when each will be required to give a full and detailed account of the things done in their bodies, including all that has been both thought and said of God.

***II Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.***

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, II Cor. 5:10*

*That every one may receive the things done in his body.*—It would have seemed almost impossible, but for the perverse ingenuity of the system-builders of theology, to evade the force of this unqualified assertion of the working of the universal law of retribution. No formula of justification by faith, or imputed righteousness, or pardon sealed in the blood of Christ, or priestly absolution, is permitted by St. Paul to mingle with his expectations of that great day, as revealing the secrets of men's hearts, awarding to each man according to his works. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7) was to him an eternal, unchanging law.

***Job 40:8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?***

In this verse of Scripture we observe the primary reason for sinners both questioning and condemning God: it is so that they may believe themselves as both pure and righteous.

***Proverbs 30:12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.***

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Prov. 30:12*

*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes,....* Not in the eyes of God, who sees the heart, and all the impurities of it, as well as of life and conversation; nor in the eyes of others, though such may appear outwardly righteous before men; but in their own eyes, in their own conceit and imagination, trusting in themselves that they are righteous: but such have not their eyes opened or enlightened to see the plague of their own hearts, the spirituality of the law of God, the perfection of righteousness that requires; nor the righteousness and holiness of God himself; nor the imperfection and insufficiency of their own; did they, they would not seem pure and righteous to themselves.

(NIV) *"Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?"*

(NLT) *"Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just to prove you are right?"*

Without doubt, the primary cause of all human condemnation of God originates in the desire of sinners to justify themselves and think of themselves as gods.

But by questioning the Lord's judgments, sinners reveal they have reckoned themselves as the Lord's equal.

It is reasonable to perceive why the Lord deals so harshly with the pride and hubris of man, since both are the genesis of spiritual rebellion.

He who is willing to speak against the Lord and question His ways, has already, by his foolish actions, assumed a position of rebelling against Him.

To speak against anyone is to think ourselves above the person. To speak against God reveals that we inwardly believe ourselves as above Him.

***Genesis 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.***

Wherever and whenever men imagine themselves able to judge good and evil, apart from receiving divine revelation, they have already believed Satan's lie of being gods themselves.

Just as Satan first exalted himself above God, so does he now lead willing sinners to do the same, and this is always accomplished by leading them to disregard God's Word, to thus rely upon as grounds for the truth, human thought, reason, and opinion.

***Isaiah 14:12–14 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!***

<sup>13</sup> ***For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:***

<sup>14</sup> ***I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 14:14*

*I will be like the Most High*—There is a remarkable resemblance between this language and that used in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, in regard to antichrist: 'He, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.' And this similarity is the more remarkable, because antichrist is represented, in Revelation 17:4–5, as seated in babylon—the spiritual seat of arrogance, oppression, and pride. Probably Paul had the passage in Isaiah in his eye when he penned the description of antichrist.

***Job 40:9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?***

The discussion of God's *arm*, and his voice as being like *thunder*, are symbolic of divine strength and power and are meant to demonstrate that Job should not condemn a Being so much mightier in power than himself.

It is a simple yet profound question put forth to Job: If you think yourself as equal to God, can you do as He does?

It is often both necessary and essential that for men to be properly humbled before God, then God must reveal both His wisdom and power to them.

For not until the Lord reveals Who He truly is, in both wisdom and might, will the pretentious come to know exactly what they are not.

***Job 40:10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.***

There is no natural ability or any moral quality in men that would allow them to clothe themselves with the majesty that is the Lord's, nor to array themselves in the same manner, glory, and beauty as God.

*Pulpit Commentary, Job 40:10*

God is at all times "clothed with majesty and strength" (Psalm 93:1), "with glory and beauty" (Psalm 104:1). He "decks himself with light as with a garment" (Psalm 104:2). Job is challenged to array himself similarly.

Jesus' parable of the marriage of the king's son reveals the importance of wearing a heavenly garment worthy of God's presence (Matt. 22:1–13). This holy garment is revealed in Christ's parable as necessary for entrance into heaven, and is not a garment that any can make for themselves. Like with the priests who served the Old Testament temple, no natural nakedness or fleshly indecency was allowed to enter God's presence (Exod. 20:26).

What this teaches us is this, that unless the Lord provides a sufficient holy and heavenly garment, which is reflective and worthy of heaven, then habitation in heaven, will be refused.

To actually partake of heaven, sinners must be transformed by Christ, in order that they might share in the same spiritual nature as Him.

For the Christian this entails being transformed by divine power into the image of God's Son, and this is not a feat or ability that any can accomplish through their own natural power.

The Lord therefore desires Job to truly realize that it is impossible for any mortal creature to deck and array itself in the glory, beauty, and majesty of God. This great transformation, only divine power can accomplish.

***Job 40:11–14 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.***

<sup>12</sup> ***Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.***

<sup>13</sup> ***Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.***

<sup>14</sup> ***Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.***

The Lord brings up Job's insufficient spiritual ability to abase the proud, as grounds that he could never save himself.

Undoubtedly Job must have at least partially still believed in his individual ability to do so. For the Lord would never address Job's inability to save himself, unless it still remained an unresolved issue in Job's heart. Teaching us that the pride of men is such that they often only as a last resort will they yield to the divine reality that all true deliverance must come from the Lord, and cannot come from themselves.

Thus, not until all human hope and confidence in personal ability is lost, will most realize that only divine power, and not their own, can save them.

Not until also the sinner's pride and spiritual independence is broken, will he be ready to actually trust in the Lord.

The Lord also reminds Job of his inability to bring the proud low, which, in contrast to this, is exactly what the Lord has accomplished in Job's own life.

***Job 40:15 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.***

Attention is brought to the *behemoth*. Exactly what this animal actually was is open to conjecture. Some have supposed it to be the hippopotamus, others the elephant. If we had to choose between the two, the hippo would be the most reasonable choice. However, if we are to adhere to the strict interpretation of the Scripture, probably neither of these is the true identity of the creature spoken of. Very likely the great beast is now extinct. Like the hippo, its power lay in its loins.

***Job 40:16–24 Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.***

<sup>17</sup> ***He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.***

<sup>18</sup> ***His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.***

<sup>19</sup> ***He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.***

<sup>20</sup> ***Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.***

<sup>21</sup> ***He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.***

<sup>22</sup> ***The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.***

<sup>23</sup> ***Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.***

<sup>24</sup> ***He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.***

According to verse 19, the behemoth was considered the *chief of the ways of God*. This reveals that no other creature could match it in size or strength, indicative also of the Lord's own power and ability.

If sinners would never even remotely consider wrestling with a creature such as the one spoken of here, why should they so foolishly imagine that they could actually strive with the Lord, and hope to be successful?

If a beast of the field is so much greater in power and might than man, how foolish is it for any to believe themselves able to strive against the beast's Creator?

*Job 41:1–7 Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?*

<sup>2</sup> *Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?*

<sup>3</sup> *Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee?*

<sup>4</sup> *Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?*

<sup>5</sup> *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?*

<sup>6</sup> *Shall the companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants?*

<sup>7</sup> *Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears?*

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 41:1*

*Leviathan.*—There can be little doubt that by this is meant the crocodile or alligator, whatever may be the true meaning of behemoth.

The Lord now questions Job as to whether he could tame such a ferocious creature as the leviathan—the crocodile.

*Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?*

Since Job could never subdue and domesticate this large and ferocious reptile, how could he so foolishly believe himself equal to quarrel and contend with the Lord?

Hence, if Job could not domesticate the crocodile and make creatures such as it become subject to him, then how could he ever imagine that the Lord would ever surrender to Job's human will?

*Job 41:8–9 Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.*

<sup>9</sup> *Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?*

The Lord reminds Job that if he were ever to contend with the croc, a creature able to grow to over twenty feet in length, and weigh almost 2,500 pounds, and is the largest reptile on earth, then he would discover very quickly that he could never be physically able to ever do it again, since any attempt to engage in battle with such a dangerous, intimidating, and fierce creature as this, would result not only in certain death, but also experiencing an excruciating death as well.

(NIV) *If you lay a hand on it, you will remember the struggle and never do it again!*

(NLT) *If you lay a hand on it, you will certainly remember the battle that follows. You won't try that again!*

(NIV) *Any hope of subduing it is false; the mere sight of it is overpowering.*

*Job 41:10 None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?*

There are many creatures upon the earth, like the hippo, the elephant, the crocodile, the lion, the tiger, and even the North American grizzly, that men have the natural sense not to stir to anger lest their own bodily health be endangered in the process.

Yet, it is astounding how few sinners hold a similar fear and reverence for God, Who is so much more fierce and terrible than even these notorious predators.

The truth is also that though the croc can easily kill one man, or even perhaps a number of men, the Lord has proven His frightening ability to both extinguish and bring to virtual extinction, all mankind.

***Job 41:11 Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.***

*Benson Commentary, Job 41:11*

The apostle quotes this sentiment for the silencing of all flesh in God's presence, (Romans 11:35,) *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* ... Having said, and largely proved, that man could not contend with God in power, he now adds that he cannot contend with him in, or with respect to justice; because God oweth him nothing, nor is any way obliged to him: which having briefly hinted, to prevent an objection, he returns to his former argument, the description of leviathan.

***Job 41:12 I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.***

The Lord continues revealing to Job details of the leviathan's—the crocodile's—strength and natural power.

By considering the might of such a fierce and dreadful creature as this, whose domain anyone with reasonable sense would never enter into, it is hoped that Job can see his own foolishness of entering into contention with the Lord.

For the Lord's holy presence is far more threatening and dangerous to enter into, than even the crocodile's marshy, murky, habitat of the swamp.

The Lord's words, *I will not conceal his parts*, reveal that He is now ready to reveal in even more detail, why men should fear the croc, and even more importantly, Himself.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 41:12*

*I will not conceal his parts*— ... A description follows of the various parts of the animal, all tending to confirm this general impression, and to fill the hearer with a deep conviction of his formidable character. The words rendered, "I will not conceal," mean, "I will not be silent;" that is, he would speak of them. The description which follows of the "parts" of the animal refers particularly to his mouth, his teeth, his scales, his eyelids, his nostrils, his neck, and his heart.

***Job 41:13–32 Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle?***

<sup>14</sup> *Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about.*

<sup>15</sup> *His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal.*

<sup>16</sup> *One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.*

<sup>17</sup> *They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.*

<sup>18</sup> *By his needings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.*

<sup>19</sup> *Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.*

<sup>20</sup> *Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron.*

<sup>21</sup> *His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.*

<sup>22</sup> *In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.*

<sup>23</sup> *The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.*

<sup>24</sup> *His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.*

<sup>25</sup> *When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.*

<sup>26</sup> *The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.*

<sup>27</sup> *He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.*

<sup>28</sup> *The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble.*

<sup>29</sup> *Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.*

<sup>30</sup> *Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.*

<sup>31</sup> *He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.*

<sup>32</sup> *He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.*

The specific and threatening characteristics of the crocodile that are brought to Job's attention include his terrible teeth (v. 14); the compactness and density of his scales and protective armor (vv. 15–17); his penetrating and menacing eyes (v. 18); his fuming nostrils, mouth, and rancid breath (vv. 19–21); the great strength of his neck (v. 22); and the hardness of his heart, unable also to be swayed by either human reason or emotion (v. 24).

The crocodile also possesses such natural defenses that neither human spears, arrows, or darts can penetrate his rough and extremely dense exterior (vv. 26–29). With respect to the crocodile's movements, the Lord reminds Job that the creature makes the deep waters appear like a hot, boiling, and bubbling pot, especially when the creature is subduing its prey (v. 31). Today men refer to this as the crocodile's death roll, in which with rapidity and great physical force it rolls and twists, disorienting its victim, until it eventually drowns and consumes it.

*Job 41:33–34 Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.*

<sup>34</sup> *He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.*

Two verses in this chapter are distinctly important. The first is:

*None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?* (v. 10).

The second is:

*He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride* (v. 34).

Though both verses deal directly with creatures that God has made, their real emphasis is the Lord Himself.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 41:10*

*Who then is able to stand before me?*—The meaning of this is plain. It is, "If one of my creatures is so formidable that man dare not attack it, how can he contend with the great Creator?" This may perhaps be designed as a reproof of Job. He had expressed a desire to carry his cause before God, and to urge argument before him in vindication of himself. God here shows him how hopeless must be a contest with the Almighty. Man trembles and is disarmed of his courage by even the sight of one of the creatures of God. Overpowered with fear, he retires from the contemplated contest, and flees away. How then could he presume to contend with God? What hope could he have in a contest with him?

All of God's creation, including each of the creatures mentioned, reveal characteristics of the Lord's own distinct glory and might.

And though most may not initially understand the reason for the Lord mentioning a creature such as the crocodile, its innate beauty lies in its impenetrability, independence, and fearlessness. Like God, it has no equal, and fears nothing in its habitat.

The crocodile is king of its domain, as God is of His.

Since there is nothing that can rival it, or anything that can match its strength, it resembles the Lord's own independence, and inability to be either influenced or swayed by human judgments and/or criticisms.

*Job 41:33 (NIV) Nothing on earth is its equal—a creature without fear.*

Session 21

*Job Repents to God of Uttering Things  
He Understood Not*

*Job 42:1-6*

Scriptures

*Job 42:1*

*Psalms 32:5*

*Job 42:2*

*I Corinthians 14:25*

*Genesis 6:5*

*Job 42:3*

*I John 1:8*

*Job 42:4*

*Psalms 119:33*

*Job 42:5*

*II Corinthians 3:18*

*Job 42:6*

*II Corinthians 7:11*

*Isaiah 43:25*

*Job 42:1 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,*

Once a man has been sufficiently humbled by the Lord and confession of sin is made, all the previous agitation that has existed in his soul subsides.

Repentance for sin will produce for the penitent a spirit of peace entering into and abiding within his heart.

Where previously there was only contention and confusion because of sin's presence, once it is both confessed and repented of by the sinner, then God's spiritual rest will begin filling the soul.

This spiritual reality is now true of Job. He has recognized his sin, confessed it as wrong, and as a result has entered into sweet fellowship with the Lord.

How wonderful it is when erring and rebellious men confess their transgressions, admit their guilt, and recognize their sin against heaven!

And as a wonderful result, they are both forgiven and cleansed through the grace and mercy of God.

*Psalms 32:5 I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

The conflict, struggle, and contention between the Lord and Job has now ceased, and Job is more than willing to confess his spiritual ignorance.

*Job 42:2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*

Job's confession begins with his new spiritual understanding of God's power and ability not only to do everything, but that the Lord can also see everything.

Whereas previously Job had believed his inward feelings could be concealed from the Lord, now he knows they never could be.

As God has revealed, through both Elihu's and His own correction, that every thought of the sinner is not only observed but remembered.

No thought can be withheld from the Lord, and now Job understands this spiritual reality to be true concerning himself. What he had spoken and thought in secret, has now been made known publicly.

Not also until men spiritually perceive God's ability to detect the deep contemplations and intentions of the heart, will they realize that even thoughts they surmised able to be concealed, can be counted as sin against them.

Job's confession reveals his spiritual awakening that no thought can be hidden or undisclosed from the Lord.

Much of what both Elihu and God had spoken, dealt with the internal ruminations of Job's being, his hidden cogitations and un-uttered words.

It was this spiritual understanding that God can see all, knows all, and is aware of every thought in the human heart, that ultimately brought Job to his knees, prompting his spiritual repentance.

***I Corinthians 14:25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.***

Not only had the Lord heard Job's words, but He had also taken specific account of his internal spiritual dissatisfaction. No doubt, Job's thought-to-be-hidden presumptions were just deeper accusations against the Lord and extended even further than his erring words.

Practically, sin lies not merely in what sinners do, but is equally present and accountable in what they think.

And just as the inside of the cup is the most unclean, so also are the thoughts of the sinner far more evil and accusative of the Lord than even the incriminating words he outwardly voices.

***Genesis 6:5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.***

By divine standards, to think something in the heart is reckoned exactly the same as either speaking or doing it.

***Job 42:3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.***

Because of Job's spiritual ignorance his pride had blinded him to believe he knew more of the Lord than he really did. This temerity has resulted in his sinning against the very One Whom he initially thought to praise. Because of his new spiritual enlightenment, Job is now fully ready to take responsibility for his sin:

*Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

The emphasis is on "I": I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. The "I" is used with purposed and intentional design, simply

because Job had come to spiritually realize that he, and no other, was the source of his sin. He no longer blames his friends or his God.

It was he who had hidden God's counsel because of a lack of knowledge of the Lord, and he, who had uttered things concerning the Almighty, which he understood not.

Undoubtedly, by this time Job is fully aware that to wrongly blame others for sin, especially the Lord, is actually a denial of it.

None also can truly deny their sin and continue to possess the truth of God's Word living within their heart.

***I John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.***

The sinner's denial of sin is common, and is first observed in Genesis in Adam's attempt to transfer his sin to Eve, with Eve doing the exact same thing in regard to the devil (Gen. 3:11–13). Yet in the end Adam, Eve, and the devil were all spiritually judged for the sin they committed (Gen. 3:14–19).

King Saul also tried unsuccessfully to transfer blame to the children of Israel for his sin of disobedience to God's commandment (I Sam. 15:19–23).

Thus, though it was absolutely true that Job's friends had troubled him, and the devil had both tempted and assaulted him, Job was now fully aware that his own sin is what had produced conflict with the Lord, and ultimately could never be transferred to anyone other than himself.

As a further admission of his spiritual ignorance, Job confesses that there are many things concerning the Lord *too wonderful* to be known.

The Lord's plan had been intricate, far beyond human understanding, and well above Job's natural ability to comprehend its final godly purpose. God's wisdom, Job rightly confesses, is far above his own.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Job 42:3

*too wonderful*—I rashly denied that Thou hast any fixed plan in governing human affairs, merely because Thy plan was “too wonderful” for my comprehension.

History details that God allows certain events in men's lives so that His purposes can be fulfilled for them.

Joseph was sold into slavery not only because of the envy that lived in his brothers' hearts, but also, and most importantly, because this was part of God's plan for his life (Gen. 45:4–8).

Moses also was abandoned as a child (Exod. 2:1–6) for the singular purpose of being raised up in Pharaoh's court so that he might adequately be prepared to lead God's people out of Egypt (Exod. 14:21–31).

In what proved to be the case with Joseph, Moses, Job, and many others, when it seemed initially that they could be viewed as victims, actually the Lord was purposing a much higher and nobler design for their lives.

Ultimately, the Lord has a distinct and blessed purpose for every child of God. This purpose is always and without question to work all things for their final good. But if men fight against divine will, and foolishly accuse God of injustice, then they shall very

quickly find themselves in conflict with Him—simply because to complain against God's will for your life, and accuse Him of sinning against you, is to question both the sovereignty and goodness of God.

Job's journey was both lengthy and difficult to bear, but in the end his newfound wisdom and knowledge of God was priceless.

Whereas previously he had only heard of God, now he reveals that he has actually come to see Him (Job 42:5).

Job had learned much spiritually, which only a trial like this could accomplish. And although the journey was long, the spiritual illumination was indispensable, and would forever change his faith, his perception of God, and his opinions of himself.

***Job 42:4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.***

*Benson Commentary, Job 42:4*

The words which God had uttered to Job by way of challenge, Job returns to him in the way of submission.

Once the Lord has sufficiently humbled Job, he is now in a position to answer the Lord properly.

Whereas this servant of God had previously been afraid of offending God through his speech, now he feels fully confident to carry on a proper conversation with the Lord without any spiritual trepidation.

His confession had produced a clean conscience, a heart free from internal accusation, and a new holy, spiritual confidence.

Having been sufficiently humbled, and realizing the degree of his error, he now assumes the role of a penitent and teachable pupil.

***Psalms 119:33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.***

***Job 42:5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.***

It is one thing to hear of God *by the hearing of the ear* and quite another, and a more profound thing, to actually come to see Him: *but now mine eye seeth thee*.

Where previously Job had only heard of God and what others had said concerning Him, now, after his trial, he could actually see the Lord.

It is this result that is the purpose of divine trials, in order that those who successfully undergo them, are brought to the spiritual enlightenment of actually coming to see the Lord.

As with Job, and also with ourselves, divine trials are purposed to remove spiritual blindness.

So that if the Lord cannot be truly seen before the trial, He shall be able to be accurately perceived after it.

*Job Repents to God of Uttering Things He Understood Not*

*Benson Commentary, Job 42:5*

*But now mine eye seeth thee*—“It is plain,” says Dr. Dodd, “that there is some privilege intended here that Job had never enjoyed before, and which he calls a sight of God. He had heard of him by the hearing of the ear, or the tradition delivered down from his forefathers; but he had now a clear and sensible perception of his being and divine perfections; some light thrown in upon his mind, which carried its own evidence with it; and which to him had all the certainty and clearness even of sight itself.”

Nothing is as transformative to the sinner’s soul as when the Lord and His glory become visible.

It is this sight of God which is the very first step of being transformed by Him.

It is also the process of beholding the Lord’s glory which practically aids in transforming the sinner.

*II Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

*Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

Here we observe that Job no longer claims any personal self-righteousness. Whereas previously he had exalted himself, thinking himself able to question the Lord’s justice, now he abhors the very man he once defended.

Though Job now despised both his ignorance and uncleanness before God, the result in his heart was quite the opposite of what one might expect, simply because whenever there is sincere and genuine repentance for sin, a healing in self will be simultaneously produced.

All truth, even truth purposed for man’s contrition, if believed, sets men free.

There are two primary effects that will be evidenced when confession of sin is made by the penitent.

The first is an indignation and hatred for the sin committed.

This is not an ungodly reaction, but is actual proof of sincere remorse for committing sin.

The second is that there will be a renewed spiritual energy, to never again transgress in the same manner.

Because God forgives the penitent, the weight of sin shall be lifted, and a fresh new spiritual walk can begin.

Second Corinthians speaks of this process, when men experience true godly sorrow and then become spiritually energized to pursue a much holier life.

*II Corinthians 7:11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*

Barnes' notes on this topic are lengthy but worthy of consideration. They reveal how godly sorrow and repentance for sin, will produce true and lasting spiritual transformation in the soul.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Cor. 7:11*

*For behold this self-same thing*—For see in your own case the happy effects of godly sorrow. See the effects which it produced; see an illustration of what it is suited to produce. The construction is, “For lo! this very thing, to wit, your sorrowing after a godly manner, wrought carefulness, clearing of yourselves,” etc. The object of Paul is to illustrate the effects of godly sorrow, to which he had referred in 2 Corinthians 7:10. He appeals, therefore, to their own case, and says that it was beautifully illustrated among themselves.

*What carefulness*—(σπουδήν *spoudēn*). This word properly denotes “speed, haste;” then diligence, earnest effort, forwardness. Here it is evidently used to denote the diligence and the great anxiety which they manifested to remove the evils which existed among them. They went to work to remove them. They did not sit down to mourn over them merely, nor did they wait for God to remove them, nor did they plead that they could do nothing, but they set about the work as though they believed it might be done. When people are thoroughly convinced of sin, they will set about removing it with the utmost diligence. They will feel that this can be done, and must be done, or that the soul will be lost.

*What clearing of yourselves*—(ἀπολογίαν *apologian*). Apology. This word properly means a plea or defense before a tribunal or elsewhere; Acts 22:1; 2 Timothy 4:16. Tyndale renders it, “Yea, it caused you to clear yourselves.” The word here properly means “apology” for what had been done; and it probably refers here to the effort which would be made by the sounder part of the church to clear themselves from blame in what had occurred. ... The whole church was roused, and all felt, and all endeavored in the proper way to free themselves from the blame, and to remove the evil from among them.

*Yea, what indignation*—Indignation against the sin, and perhaps against the persons who had drawn down the censure of the apostle. One effect of true repentance is to produce decided hatred of sin. It is not mere regret, or sorrow, it is positive hatred. There is a deep indignation against it as an evil and a bitter thing.

*Yea, what fear*—Fear lest the thing should be repeated. Fear lest it should not be entirely removed. Or it may possibly mean fear of the displeasure of Paul, and of the punishment which would be inflicted if the evil were not removed. But it more probably refers to the anxious state of mind that the whole evil might be corrected, and to the dread of having any vestige of the evil remaining among them.

*Yea, what vehement desire*—This may either mean their fervent wish to remove the cause of complaint, or their anxious desire to see the apostle. It is used in the latter sense in 2 Corinthians 7:7, and according to Doddridge and Bloomfield this is the meaning here. Locke renders it, “desire of satisfying me.” It seems to me more probable that Paul refers to their anxious wish to remove the sin, since this is the topic under consideration. The point of his remarks in this verse is not so much their affection for him as their indignation against their sin, and their deep grief that sin had existed and had been tolerated among them.

*Yea, what zeal*—Zeal to remove the sin, and to show your attachment to me. They set about the work of reformation in great earnest. ...

*Job Repents to God of Uttering Things He Understood Not*

*In all things ...*—The sense of this is, “You have entirely acquitted yourselves of blame in this business.” The apostle does not mean that none of them had been to blame, or that the church had been free from fault, for a large part of his former Epistle is occupied in reproving them for their faults in this business, but he means that by their zeal and their readiness to take away the cause of complaint, they had removed all necessity of further blame, and had pursued such a course as entirely to meet his approbation. They had cleared themselves of any further blame in this business, and had become, so far as this was concerned, “clear” (ἀγνοῦς *hagnous*) or pure.

Whenever there is sincere recognition and repentance for sin, as evidenced with Job, spiritual transformation will be the result.

This includes indignation and hatred for the sin committed, a determination to never repeat it again, and a renewed holy desire to live more godly before God.

This was proven true concerning the Corinthians, true with Job, and it shall be proven true with us.

By acknowledging our sin, we can be both forgiven and cleansed from it, and consequently purified from all previous unrighteousness, which is an eternal testament to the manifold grace, mercy, and goodness of God.

***Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.***



Session 22

*Job Prays for His Three Friends and is Greatly Blessed by the Lord*

*Job 42:7-17*

Scriptures

*Job 42:7*  
*Job 42:8*  
*Job 42:9*  
*Job 42:10*  
*Job 42:11*  
*Proverbs 16:7*

*Revelation 3:9*  
*Job 42:12*  
*James 5:11*  
*Job 42:13-15*  
*Job 42:16*  
*Psalms 103:10-12*

*Job 42:17*  
*Job 33:29*  
*Isaiah 66:2*  
*Matthew 5:3*  
*I Corinthians 8:2*

*Job 42:7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*

Once He had sufficiently humbled Job, the Lord turns His attention to Job's other three friends. He singles out Eliphaz because he is the oldest and has taken the lead role in correcting Job.

It was Eliphaz who led the improper reproof, and now the Lord will make sure that he bears the brunt of the discipline. Undoubtedly, the Lord is angry, and He wants to ensure that Eliphaz and Job's other two friends are fully aware of the spiritual reasons for His anger.

Notice as well that God's demeanor toward Job has completely changed. Instead of spiritually correcting him, He now comes to his defense.

Because Job has confessed both his sin and ignorance of God, God has forgiven him, and as such, defends his faith.

Through confession of sin, Job has justified his God, and in the chain of events, has now spoken of Him that which was right. This was not true when Job had darkened God's counsel by words without knowledge, and had contended with the Almighty, but it is absolutely true now.

*Job 42:8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.*

Job's religious friends had once thought themselves superior to God's servant, but in the end they would need him for their forgiveness. Their pride had lifted them up, and the Lord wanted to make sure that they were adequately humbled by realizing their sin.

Job also would need to assume the role of a priest for Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, by praying for them, in order that they might, like himself, be forgiven by God.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 42:7*

Job uttered indeed, some improper sentiments about God and his government; he expressed himself with irreverence and impatience; he used a language of boldness and complaint wholly improper, but this was done in the agony of mental and bodily suffering, and when provoked by the severe and improper charges of hypocrisy brought by his friends. What "they" said, on the contrary, was unprovoked. It was when they were free from suffering, and when they were urged to it by no severity of trial. It was, moreover, when every consideration required them to express the language of condolence, and to comfort a suffering friend.

***Job 42:9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.***

Job's friends obediently did exactly as the Lord commanded them. Their submission reveals that though they had sinned against both the Lord and their friend, it was foolishness that had prompted their actions and not true malice. Because the Lord provided a mediator for their sin in the person of His servant, divine forgiveness could also be provided.

There were many sins committed in the book of Job, but what should never be forgotten, is that where sin abounded, mercy did much more abound.

Here the Lord's mercy is evidenced by Him providing a means for all sin against Him to be forgiven. Though sin was abundant, God's mercy was more.

This text parallels the believer's need for Jesus as his Mediator, since through Christ's suffering and spiritual trials, He is more than able to intercede and make full and complete atonement for sin.

None also will be better equipped to properly serve the Lord, than those who by faith have successfully overcome the spiritual trials that God has purposed for their lives. This was true of our Savior, it would be true of Job, and it shall be true for us.

***Job 42:10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.***

The praying and penitent heart will soon progress toward becoming the forgiven heart.

It is also not hard either to pray for, or to forgive others for their sins, if the Lord has first forgiven our own.

Ultimately, Job esteemed the sins and transgressions of his three friends, to actually be no greater than his own.

What the Lord had initially allowed Satan to remove from Job, He now restores to him double. What a wonderful truth this reveals, that when God permits loss in order to teach higher lessons of spirituality, His grace humbly provides even more blessings afterward!

It was also when Job humbly prayed for his friends, as instructed by the Lord, that he received full release from his own captivity.

***Job 42:11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.***

God's kindness is such that not only does He restore spiritual fellowship with Job, but He also returns many friends and family to come to his aid and assist in his healing. He had lost much because of Satan's afflictions, and the Lord knew that it was necessary to encourage him, in order to bring some balance to the pain and suffering he had endured.

No longer would Job need to sit alone in dust and ashes, and scrape himself with a broken potsherd, because now all his brethren, including his closest friends and relatives, had come to comfort him.

Undoubtedly, the Lord knows that human companionship is necessary for men to be fully blessed. Therefore, when sinners find peace through reconciliation with God, which can only happen when they discover true humility, then the Lord ensures that they also gain spiritual peace and sweet fellowship with those around them.

***Proverbs 16:7 When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.***

*Benson Commentary, Prov. 16:7*

*When a man's ways please the Lord*—The best way to have our enemies reconciled unto us, is for us first to be reconciled unto God; for such is the love which the Lord hath to pious and virtuous persons, that when all their designs and actions are such as he approves, he often inclines even those that were their foes to become their friends, disposing their hearts to kindness toward them.

The book of Revelation gives a striking illustration of God's power to bring even enemies of the gospel, to behold and acknowledge the Lord's love for the saved, just as we have observed how the Lord has wrought compassion in the hearts of Job's family and friends, to come to his aid, and acknowledge the Lord's love for him.

***Revelation 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rev. 3:9*

The truth taught here is, that it is in the power of the Lord Jesus so to turn the hearts of all the enemies of religion that they shall be brought to show respect to it; so to incline the minds of all people that they shall honor the church, or be at least outwardly its friends. Such homage the world shall yet be constrained to pay to it.

*And to know that I have loved thee*—This explains what he had just said, and shows that he means that the enemies of his church will yet be constrained to acknowledge that it enjoys the smiles of God, and that instead of being persecuted and reviled, it should be respected and loved.

By freeing Job and forgiving him of his sin, the Lord has publicly certified him as His own. This was exactly what Job had claimed; his faith and reverence for the Lord was proven sincere.

***Job 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.***

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 42:12*

The last days of a good man sometimes prove his best, his last works his best works, his last comforts his best comforts; for his path, like that of the morning light, shines more and more unto the perfect day.

In retrospect, Job's losses were only temporary, just as God had always intended them to be. In the end, the latter part of this God-fearing man's life was much sweeter and more blessed than even the beginning.

By this it is shown that God not only forgives the penitent, but that He also seeks to bless and prosper his life in so many other ways, after divine will has been accomplished.

***James 5:11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jas. 5:11*

*And have seen the end of the Lord*—That is, the end or design which the Lord had in the trials of Job, or the result to which he brought the case at last—to wit, that he showed himself to be very merciful to the poor sufferer; that he met him with the expressions of his approbation for the manner in which he bore his trials; and that he doubled his former possessions, and restored him to more than his former happiness and honor.

Though spiritual trials are necessary, still the Lord's pity will remain with the afflicted. After the Son of God's trial in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1–10), the Lord sent angels to minister to Him (Matt 4:11), teaching us that once divine trials are completed, He Who has purposed the trial, shall immediately and with great haste, come to the aid of those who have been tried.

***Job 42:13–15 He had also seven sons and three daughters.***

<sup>14</sup> ***And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.***

<sup>15</sup> ***And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.***

It is remarkable that before Job's trial none of his immediate family's names are revealed, but now the names of his daughters are recorded as a testament to the degree of blessing that the Lord has brought upon his life.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 42:14*

It is remarkable that in the former account of the family of Job, the names of none of his children are mentioned, and in this account the names of the daughters only are designated. "Why" the names of the daughters are here specified, is not intimated. They are significant, and they are "so" mentioned as to show that they contributed greatly to the happiness of Job on the return of his prosperity, and were among the chief blessings which gladdened his old age. The name Jemima (יְמִימָה *yemîymâh*) is rendered by the Vulgate "Diem," and by the Septuagint, Ἡμέραν *Hēmeran*, "Day." The Chaldee adds this remark: "He gave her the name Jemima, because her beauty was like the day." The Vulgate, Septuagint, and Chaldee, evidently regarded the name as derived from יוֹם *yôm*, "day," and this is the most natural and obvious derivation. The name thus conferred would indicate that Job had now emerged from the "night" of affliction, and that returning light shone again on his tabernacle.

Job's children, especially his daughters, reveal the great blessing and abundance that has now been given to him by God. Generally it is the males, and not the females, who are specifically named in relationship to a man's descendants. But, by mentioning and giving the names of Job's godly daughters, the great extent of the Lord's blessings to him is revealed. Job's daughters are described as fair and beautiful, reflecting also the changed condition of their father's new spiritual life.

*Job Prays for His Three Friends and is Greatly Blessed by the Lord*

*Benson Commentary, Job 42:16*

As God appointed to Adam another seed instead of that which was slain, Genesis 4:25, so he did to Job with advantage. God has ways to repair the losses, and balance the griefs, of those who are deprived of their property, or are written childless, as Job was when he had buried all his children, and was robbed of all his sheep and cattle by the Chaldeans and Sabaeans.

***Job 42:16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.***

Job had undoubtedly suffered the loss of time, so now the Lord mercifully rewards him with more time. Ultimately, Job's life proved to be long and fruitful, until also all the spiritual pain and suffering he had endured became a distant memory.

Job's time of blessing was much more than his time of affliction. The Lord's double blessing also demonstrated that the only thing that can rival God's justice, is His mercy.

***Psalms 103:10-12 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.***

<sup>11</sup> ***For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.***

<sup>12</sup> ***As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.***

***Job 42:17 So Job died, being old and full of days.***

After Job's long, full, and fruitful life, the Lord decided that his time on the earth was ready to come to an end. Little did this servant of God know that his fear of God, and the trials he had experienced, would become recorded biblical history.

By recording the events in Job's life, others could be instructed in words, what Job needed to undergo and learn through personal experience.

It is also important to impress upon the reader that Job's trial was not an isolated incident, and this is because the Lord oftentimes works such things with man.

***Job 33:29 Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man.***

The book of Job also finds its place in the canon as one of the most important books ever written. Because it is perhaps the oldest book in the Bible, it contains some of the most important biblical truths necessary for gaining fellowship with God—including the truth that men must repent for their sins, before they can be forgiven for them, and that not until the sinner's heart is truly humbled, can he enter into the blessed life that God has purposed for him.

Few can read and contemplate upon the great lessons in the book and not be eternally changed in the process—the most essential and critical point being, that God resists the proud but provides grace and favor to the humble.

***Isaiah 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.***

It is toward those truly humble in heart, whom the Lord looks upon with favor, those also who possess a contrite spirit, and tremble at God's holy Word.

It is also those humble and poor in spirit, whom God both forgives and makes His own, and whom the Son of God reveals shall ultimately be given the kingdom of heaven.

***Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 5:3*

To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; to be sensible that we are sinners, and have no righteousness of our own; to be willing to be saved only by the rich grace and mercy of God; to be willing to be where God places us, to bear what he lays on us, to go where he bids us, and to die when he commands; to be willing to be in his hands, and to feel that we deserve no favor from him. It is opposed to pride, and vanity, and ambition.

If we have learned anything in the study of the Book of Job, let it be this, that whatsoever we might think we know of the Lord, it is surely not nearly as much as we ought to know.

This is what Job learned through his trial, and we would be wise to learn the same lesson ourselves—that whatever we think we know of God, is not nearly as much as we ought to know, which, if believed, is a foundational key to the Lord blessing our own life.

***I Corinthians 8:2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.***