

THE BOOK OF JOB –

**A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A
TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD**

BY

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PREFACE

The Book that is named after its commonly main perceived character, Job, may be deemed a book of ‘dance’. That is said for several reasons; one of them being because of its intense nature, the pursuant (without arbitrarily surrendering either *his* intellect or *his* faith) will be well advised to ‘sway’ with the disturbing emotional content of the book. And, like a dance in which the participants, at one point move with elegance, grace and confidence, as they are enthralled by the ‘symphony’ playing so effortlessly, at another point those said participants could find themselves moving with awkwardness – ‘bouncing’ into other ‘dancers’ vying for the same ‘space’, because they’ve been thrown out of ‘rhythm’.

Here’s the first ‘dance’: we said that Job is the main character of the book; that will be redressed in the study, because, no offense intended, but Job isn’t; God is. And as simple as that may sound, paradigms begin to shift, perceptions are altered and the approach one would otherwise have taken now swings in a different direction.

Another ‘dance’ creeps in so subtly; because while Job falls in the category of the Wisdom Literature, filled with poetic and literary beauty, one soon discovers that it is highly academic and even plunges into greater spiritual depth. It is in a class all by itself.

One of the ‘dances’ comes from that unexpected moment the music changes, when some characters turn out to be less noble than we had previously esteem them, or conversely, we realize that up close and personal, some are actually better than the way they were marketed. It’s the Book of living, and like all life, we must navigate our way. It’s tedious job, from man’s perspective, but, if you can accommodate yet another analogy, God is ‘smiling all the way to the bank’ because, for Him, the whole process is a triumphant joy.

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[An in-depth analysis of a Book and the life of a man that leaves us in awe and admiration; yet simultaneously strikes us with a foreboding fear that even when all the ‘knobs’ on our ‘chess-board’ are pushed right, we can still end up getting ‘eat’ by forces way outside our grasp or control.]

Except otherwise indicated, quotations are from the New International Version of the Bible

George R. Frederick

LESSON I

INTRODUCTION

It is essential that the ground-work for this highly unusual Old Testament Book, which the experts put in the category of the poetic literature, be carefully laid out. The reasons for stating such are well established. If taken superficially, the Book of Job can seem as an *affront* to all that Systematic Theology teaches and upholds. (And there are those who would even give an initial spontaneous “*Amen!*” to that.) Also, without taking the whole Book – all forty-two chapters – into account, we can find ourselves ‘swimming’ – no, ‘drowning’ – in a sea of confusion as to whether, if parts of the Book should be taken seriously as authentic instructions by which our lives should be guided, much more governed, which the Word of God is intended to do.

Of course, too, we should be always wary of the fact that the Bible - all of it - is God’s in-breathed Word, which holy men were “*carried along by the Holy Spirit*” to speak and write the thoughts God thinks towards men, and for men (11 Peter 1:21). However, the Book of Job is not for the theologically faint-hearted. Because one can approach it with a pre-arranged frame of reference, only to have it ‘rudely’ overturned by some very profound utterance made by one of those engaged in the dialogue. At times, you could find yourself saying “*Aha! This is refreshing! This is deep! This is eye-opening!*” Only to later discover that you may need to re-dress that perspective in view of some extended revelation, or, above all, God’s verdict on the over-all statements.

Here are some genuine concerns that cannot be arbitrarily swept under the rug: The human author, date of writing, historical data, theme and other relevant factors will be dealt with, but, stepping back from the technical details and taking the general thrust of the Book of Job, (1) is the *interpretational value* and *method* of approach to be taken seriously. Is this a treatise on the issue of “Why does the Righteous Suffer”? And therefore, the extended dialogues are to be treated as mere incidentals or peripherals to the core meaning?

(2) How meaningful are the contributions made by Job’s three friends (Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite)? Should their sayings (which are unquestionably filled with exaltation, ecstasy, rebuke, good advice and errors of judgment - all combine) be accepted as one would accept the other areas of advice in the Book? Especially as God, in that final evaluation, said He was angry and rebuked them for what could be dubbed a *Theology of Inadequacy* (42:7)?

(3) Elihu, who came on the scene after Job’s friends would have exhausted their theological arguments, albeit his approach, though seemingly more perceptive than those who preceded him, carried with it an air of haughtiness; should he be given greater ‘respect’? Also, in view of the fact that God made *no reference* to him in His communication with Job; is that good or bad?

(4) The dialogues on a whole, is this a battle in literary genius of *Normative/Comparative/Superlative* – as to who would have delivered the ‘best’ poetic speech? For admittedly, there are times when it seems like nothing more than a *let’s-see-if-‘he’-can-match-what-was-just-launched-against-‘him’* contest. These, and other areas that the Book itself would unearth, are all part of the complexity that make up its pursuit.

(5) Then there is the big *hermeneutical question*: How in-depth should one go in [a] establishing an exegetical position and [b] making appropriate life applications? God’s Word, we know, is profitable for doctrine, for corrections, for rebuke, etc., and an attitude of receiving it with meekness, should be our rule, and not the exception. But let’s cut through the chase and pull one example: In 8:1-4, Bildad the Shuhite rebuts Job by telling him that his “*words are a blustering wind*. (Then proceeds to ask,) *Does God pervert*

justice? (The answer is an emphatic ‘No!’)” *Does the Almighty pervert what is right?* (That is an absolute Not! But went on to state) *When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin*” (which is not only a total misrepresentation of the reality, but a painfully insensitive accusation). “*But,*” he went on further (vv.5, 6,) to exhort the distraught patriarch by telling him) “*if you will look to God and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your rightful place* (which is well within nature of God’s character and the parameters of theological correctness).” So, accept this, reject that! Believe this, refute that! Indeed that would make for a faith that fits a roller-coaster.

We are not done with all the complex questions occasioned by the book, but more would understandably surface as the story unfolds and the text is expounded. For now, what we take is a quick philosophical glance of the Book that raises questions of which most carry the appearance of human travesty, but will be answered as the *Biblical theology* of them are examined. It would seem that when a person is:

- ‘*Called-in*’ (to the cosmic courtroom) without being *Consulted* (1:8; 2:3) seems to be traversing, what some popularly call, though grossly misunderstood, *Human Rights*.
- *Accused* even after having been *Acquitted* of all wrong-doing (1:8b-9a), seems to be traversing the *Principles of Justice*.
- *Stripped* of all material possessions and left naked (1:20-21), even after your sense of worth would have been *Submitted*, seems to be traversing *Spiritual Values and Virtues*.
- *Incited* by evil, and that is after you are given a clean bill of *Integrity* (2:3f), seems a violation on the *Moral Structure* of the universe.
- *Ruined*, and without a shred of logical *Reason* (2:3g) – that’s disrupting the *Orderliness in the Universe*.
- *Consumed* (2:7-9) at the flesh but there is no *Contamination* of the disease; that is sending ripples in the world of *Medical Science*.

- *Vindicated* (42:10-16) finally, after a prolonged time of being *Vandalized* that defies all established principles of *Obedience – eating the good of the land*.

While this might be the ‘belly’ of the Book; nevertheless, the Sovereign LORD is the heart of it. Apologist Ravi Zacharias once quoted an *Unknown Author* who left for us this moving piece of poetry (though without *his* signature):

“When God wants to drill a man.....

.....and thrill a man.....and skill a man;

When God wants to mould a man.....

.....to play the noblest part.

When He yearns with all His heart.....

.....to create so great and bold a man.....

That all the world might be amazed.....

Watch His methods; watch His ways.....

How He ruthlessly perfects...

.....Whom He royally elects.....

How He hammers him and hurts him.....

And with mighty blows converts him...

Into trial shapes of clay – that only God understands...

While his tortured heart is crying

And he lifts beseeching hands.....

How he bends, but never breaks.....

When his good He undertakes...

How He uses whom He chooses.....

And with every purpose uses him....

With mighty acts induces him.....

To try His splendor out.....

God knows what He's about..."¹

Of that there is no doubt; *God knows what He's about*. But in the case of Job and his friends, keep in mind that they were not privy to the background scenes of the cosmic drama that we now have at our disposal. So, to appreciate their dilemma, one must *walk* with them as they try to unravel the tenets of their faith-base with the reality that was unfolding before their eyes.

AUTHOR and DATE

It is not that the author of the Book and the date of writing are inextricably connected, but we merge them by virtue of the commonality they share. There is a vast amount of speculation surrounding both segments. From the situation of authorship, one could make the obvious assumption that due to the fact that the main character alluded to and spoken of in the Book bears the name, that Job himself is the author. But the *structure* of the Book, and the fact that the *main thrust* do not coincide with the revealed knowledge found in chapters 1 and 2, as to what was responsible for all the calamity, Job's ignorance is clearly implied. Elihu, who came on the scene after Job's three friends, could have done the work.

There are suggestions that it could have been Moses who would have lived at a subsequent period to the patriarchs; or the possibility that Solomon be put in the equation, since the style of some segments of the poetry resembles his style of writing, if we were to compare Job 28 with Proverbs 8. Even Hezekiah, Isaiah and Jeremiah have been possible suggestions. However, whoever that author really was, there are strong

¹ Ravi Zacharias, Plenary Conference Speaker at the CONGRESS on the EVANGELIZATION of the CARIBBEAN 1984, Kingston, Jamaica.

suggestions that *he* would have been Hebrew by *his* understanding and grasp of covenant and *his* references to “Yahweh” in the text. Then very noticeable is the fact that nothing was mentioned of the nation of Israel, which implies that this was an early documentation.

That has contributed to making the date of events and time of writing also uncertain. John MacArthur, in his *NKJV Commentary* thinks that “*The events of Job’s odyssey appear to be patriarchal. Job, on the other hand seemed to know about Adam (31:33) and the Noahic flood (12:15). These cultural/historical features found in the book appear to place the events chronologically at a time probably after Babel (Gen. 11:1-9), but before or contemporaneous with Abraham (Gen. 11:27ff.)*.”² MacArthur’s reason for stating the patriarchal bid would likely take Job’s final age (140 years – 42:16) into consideration, since that was reflective of the years the patriarchs lived. Not to be overlooked also is the case of dealing with the economic measurements of wealth that is factored in live-stock, which was also reflective of the patriarchs’ period.

THEME

It would not be fair to a proper textual analysis to suggest that the theme of the Book is ‘up for grabs’; by that we mean, one cannot just come up with whatever one thinks fits one’s fancy. But when a story like this is told in such a pictorial manner and with not the easiest of emotional and physical trauma (putting the spiritual in its own category) as described, it does not invite shallow commentary, or truncated, religious and philosophical questions like: “Why do Righteous people suffer?” For even at the conclusion of the book, the principal character is still not aware as to why he suffered so ignominiously. The Book of Job is disturbing, even to the stoutest hearts. And it would not be out of order for one to see the Book’s theme as: “**When God’s Character Comes under Challenge**”. For that matter, any meaningful Commentator would admit that it is difficult to deal with Job’s experience and not struggle to maintain objectivity, especially as the Book sets forth a divine platform from which God chooses to launch His

² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, Nelson Reference & Electronic, Nashville, Tennessee, USA, 2005. p. 563.

Sovereignty and utter His profound authority. In short, one is hard pressed to dogmatically state a theme in light of the Book's overwhelming theological posture.

LANGUAGE and LITERARY STRUCTURE

Differences in the *Translations* of Job are not uncommon; and that's not only applicable to the modern and recent ones. Zondervan NIV Study Bible states that "*Even the pre-Christian translator(s) of Job into Greek (the Septuagint) seems often to have been perplexed. The Septuagint of Job is about 400 lines shorter than the accepted Hebrew text, and it may be that the translator(s) simply omitted lines he (they) did not understand. The early Syriac (Peshitta), Aramaic (Targum) and Latin (Vulgate) translators had similar difficulties.*"³ There is even the question (and not a flippant one by any means) as to the value of a word by word textual analysis? The way the story is presented (as poetry – chapters 3–37 – sandwiched between the prologue (prose) – chapters 1 and 2 – and the epilogue (prose), chapters 42), is as if the author wants you sink your teeth into the theologically cosmic scuffle. First he unveils the plot behind the scenes that gives the reader the upper hand at interpreting the unfolding events. He then systematically walks you through the gaudy dismantling of the patriarch's life; invites the theological technocrats to expatiate themselves from their limited frame of reference, while Job virtually wheels a defense of the charges of sin, hypocrisy, foolish pride, among them, laid against him.

At chapter 27 the friends of Job have exhausted their religious arsenal, and therefore rest their case. In the meantime, it would seem that the author, in chapter 28 (led by the Holy Spirit, of course), took the opportunity to flavor the story with his own grasp of true wisdom that is wrapped up in really knowing the God who has etched that wisdom in the things He created and lodged them in places for man to un-earth.

Then enters a young, self-perceived 'stallion' in the faith, Elihu, who presents himself and his arguments (admittedly) a little more sound – and sensible – than his three seniors, whom he sought to extinguish any flicker of experiential (or conventional) wisdom they

³ Zondervan, *NIV Study Bible (Fully Revised)*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, 2002, p. 727.

had mustered. Elihu is not to be casually brushed aside; for while he does not *per se* accuse Job of the type of sin that would evoke God's wrath, he insinuates that God was 'pruning' Job. The stance therefore, he took was another segment of the same *systematic* arguments, that though, falling short of declaring the "whole counsel of God", cannot be treated as theologically irrelevant – somewhere in the mix God does use adversity to procure His children seeking to align themselves with His will.

THE CHARACTER IN THE 'CHRONICLES'

If anyone is of the view that Job may have been a fictitious character, and that there is no time and space in history to pin him down, *he* will be well advised to examine the Holy Writ. It is somewhat surprising, and that can in fact give the skeptics some leverage, that nowhere in the Gospels is Job either mentioned or alluded to – not even by Jesus. And that in all the Epistles, he is only mentioned by James (5:10-11), and not necessarily completely singled out. His *perseverance* is included among an unmentioned numbered of prophets who were *examples of patience in the face of suffering*, but *spoke in the name of the Lord*.

But using what would be considered 'scant' information to try and justify fiction becomes self-defeated by virtue of, not the quantity of what was said, but the quality. The appearance of just one all-white penguin is all it would take to destroy any theory that all penguins are black and white in plumage. The fact that Job is included among the authentic ancient prophets is sufficient 'evidence'. However, while not given author's credit, the Apostle Paul, on two occasions alluded to his sayings: (1) in unmasking the façade and emptiness of secular Greek philosophy, quoted from Job 5:13 the exact words in 1 Cor. 3:19. (2) Also, in Rom. 11:35, he paraphrases Job 41:11. Today, we may say that the apostle is guilty of plagiarism; but that would be of little importance here. What is of greater importance is that, in the field of intellectual discipline, Paul would not use a fictitious character's quote to unseat the current philosophical frame of reference in Grecian thinking. He knew that both history and the sacred canon of Scripture held Job to be authentic.

What actually ‘seals the deal’ on the matter, however, is the fact that in OT Scripture, the name of Job was included with two other true to life characters, Noah and Daniel (Ezekiel 14), because of their proverbial righteousness. And the context into which it was used, and repeated, tells of the high esteem which God held him (Job) and the others – their righteousness would have delivered them from impending judgment.

CONCLUSION

There is a sense in which the Book of Job invites you, the reader, to “come fly with me”; if you are ready for the challenge, that is. Your questions cannot be trite, and the answers are not for one to indulge in intellectual or theological ‘bull-dozing’. Job requires prayer – much prayer -; it calls for a responsible approach in one seeking what exactly the Eternal God had in mind when He invited Satan to challenge – not so much Job but – His character.

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EXERCISE ON LESSON I

1. What can likely happen if the Book of Job is read or taken superficially?
2. If we were to see the Book of Job as a mere treatise on the issue of *Why does the Righteous Suffer?* How are we likely to treat the extended dialogues?
3. In God’s evaluation of the arguments of Job’s friends, we see that He was angry with them and therefore, rebuked them. Why was this so?
4. What was the big hermeneutical question?
5. List one of the mentioned philosophical positions that carry an appearance of human travesty?
6. List another?
7. To be *vandalized* for a prolonged period (though later to be *vindicated*) seems like a violation of what Biblical principle, in the interim?
8. Job’s friends were undoubtedly in a theological dilemma; how can we still get some value from reading them?
9. In light of the Book’s overwhelming theological posture, what does that do to finding a theme?
10. What about the Book of Job or the character himself would one find surprising?

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LESSON II

GOD – IS HE THE ETERNAL ENTREPRENEUR, OR THE GREAT ENIGMA?

God-talk is metaphysically meaningless.

(Wittgensteinian - Agnostic)

...Total agnosticism is self-defeating because it assumes some knowledge about reality in order to deny any knowledge of reality.

(Norman L. Geisler - Christian Apologist)

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Job would not likely hit the big silver screen. The film producer would say that the plot is badly structured: it unveils the mystery in the *Prologue*, thus defusing the suspense needed to keep the audience on the edge of their seat. We are instantly thrust into the realm of cosmic transactions that our domain could only access through divine revelation. And lest there is any ambiguity hanging around, let's state it matter-of-factly, that it would have had to take an initiative on God's part to let us know what transpired (and perhaps continues to transpire) beyond this physical reality.

But this is not a movie, and the characters are not paid celebrities. They (and us) are all captured in the *book of living*, maneuvering through the *chapters of consequence*. Sometimes the pages are bursting with light and ecstasy, exhilarating with praise and adoration. Other times the lines and the paragraphs seem badly written, as the *readers* must careen their way through seemingly dark and unending tunnels of despair, as things, no doubt, intending to be complex in design, become an oasis of complicated images.

Immediately, the self-perceived guardians of logic jump to the defense of sanity – or vanity – thinking it's their bounding duty to cross every 'T' and dot every 'I'. "Whose fault is it," they ask, "that we should be wallowing in such ignorance of the unknown?" Not even listening to the irony of their own statement. And with subdued, perplexed

countenance, those of us who search for genuine answers bow our heads to hide the tinge of guilt we feel for not knowing – at least fully.

Mortal man, of good intent, and with no pretense of knowing it all, asks himself – if not God -: “What is it that the Judge of all the earth – who does *only* right - had in mind, when He not only took a chance on man whom He created, but on His own very character and Being?” The Book of Job is about God not being afraid to risk His own eternal Substance on a creature, who, because of the *Fall of man*, has become, at his best state, “lighter than vanity” (Ps. 62:9 *KJV*). This is the crux of all we will discover.

What we know of Job

1:1-5 ...*The land of Uz*, where *Job* was from was located in the SE on the Dead Sea. In Lamentation 4:21, we would see that from Hebrew parallelism, it was also called Edom; though some think it included Edom. His name remains uncertain, because its Hebrew derivative means “*persecution*”, while it’s the Arabic word for “*repent*”.

The character reference of him as being *blameless and upright*, stated by the author, is not to be understood as *sinless-ness*, but rather as a man who was spiritually and morally upright. Because later in 6:24 where he defends his integrity, he also in 7:21 admits that he has sinned.

Some may attach significance to his family numbers, *seven sons and three daughters*; but these, in and of themselves, have little value to the story, except to say that Job had a large family. The same could be said of his livestock, by which wealth was determined in that day that indicated he was wealthiest *man among all the people of the East*.

Not to be ignored however, was the quality of his family relationship – at least as a father -, and how that was engrained in his now grown children. Though likely having families of their own, he still maintained a fatherly-priestly supervision over them. Worship was a priority, for *early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering* on their behalf, taking his and their human and moral frailty into consideration – a *regular custom*. This is where the first ‘signs’ of theological disturbance start showing: there not

many people who might fit that character analysis. From a human purely human standpoint, Job was par-excellent – spiritually, morally and socially.

Is All Life Doomed to ‘Murphy’s Law’?

1:6-22 If the product has passed the test and is certified the ‘Bureau of Standards’, legitimately bought and paid for, accepted with its due warranty, set up by the company’s qualified technician according to the manual’s specifications, then why is the appliance mal-functioning? Job had it right! So from his, and the on-lookers standpoint: What went wrong? There are certain things that this account triggers that many of us are even afraid to voice. Among them is the assertion of the Wiseman, Solomon, when after observing that “*a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked man living long in his wickedness,* (went on to advise) *Do not be overrighteous, neither be overwise – why destroy yourself?”* (Eccl. 7:15+16). Of course, to come away thinking that it doesn’t pay to be righteous, would be doing a disservice to the context of that passage; but taken instantly without examination, can seem to be saying something of the sort. But what follows in the life of Job, one would not wish on their worst enemy. Are we now to start getting nervous anytime we feel ‘settled’ in God and the material circumstances around us look okay? Is it here where the warning of the prophet Amos (6:1) becomes applicable: “*Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria*”?

Verse 6 is loaded with questions: *One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD...* Is this a period of angelic *evaluation*? Is it a cosmic *council* meeting, as the Zondervan *NIV Study Bible* footnote implies?⁴ Does it carry the *regularity* as Job and his children had? What circumstance existed then that Satan could be in God’s presence with a measure of comfort to be *engaged in dialogue*? For one thing it would be difficult to casually accept the Zondervan’s suggestion of a council meeting (knowing that a council would involve parties of negotiable and consultative interests) and Satan would be a part of it. In fairness to them 1 Kings 22:19 was cited in support, as a time when

⁴ Zondervan, *NIV Study Bible (Fully Revised)*, p. 731.

Micaiah the prophet said he “*saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him...*” Among those who offered suggestions were “*lying spirits.*” There is that school of thought that the prophet was using *pictorial language* to convey God’s message to the churlish King Ahab, so that he got it – unmistakably – that his time was up. He first used *sarcasm* (v. 15); then *simile* (v. 17); followed by *satire* (vv. 19-23, which gave rise to the concept of God having a council). God does not, as a method of His operation, have consultation meetings with angelic beings; He dispatches them to do His bidding. That’s why this “meeting” where Job’s name was *called in*, does create some difficulty in interpreting its purpose. What is important though is that it did happen. And it happened again (2:1).

We are not into the subject of *Angelology* or *Demonology*; so our primary purpose here is not to underscore Satan’s limitations. The fact that he was asked by *the LORD...* “*Where have you come from?*” indicates his inability to be in more than one place as the same time. But, as his answer states, he’s been *roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it*. Give me a break; this universe is vast! There are Zillions of stars, planets, galaxies, Billions upon Billions of light years away. They are gigantic in size, making the earth with its 8000 miles in diameter, an insignificant speck. Why not go and roam those that would be equally interested as earth? But no, earth has ‘something’ that is of special interest to Satan; it’s got Job – and us -; and together, that *accuser* knows that “*whoever touches (us) touches the apple of (God’s) eye*” (Zechariah 2:8).

Wait, is God Himself having one of those euphoric moments? Did He, from His great *Omniscience*, just uttered to the devil the same words stated of Job earlier? Why would He do that? He is not in the business of showing off? Is He still doing that today?

Before we even attempt to deal with Satan’s opportunistic actions, we must explore the implications of this “God-euphoria” about His children, lest we get ‘lost’ in the details of the ensuing pain. First notice that the words were similar, but not the same: In verse 1 the character-reference on Job is written in the Past Tense: “*This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.*” When God Himself says it in verse 8, He uses the Present Tense: “*There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil* (emphasis mine).” It is one thing to have your peers do a

character analysis on you and give you, not just a clean bill of health, but an excellent rating, when it is God Who is saying this, and declaring it as an on-going reality, it deserves more than a wow! God does keep references on us, not just the hairs of our head he numbers. That surely affects both my perception of Him and my desire to please Him in who I am.

Second, it is quite clear that it was God Who introduced Job's name into the picture. The respected Matthew Henry notes that in Satan's answer concerning his movements could not account for doing anything good (since he is incapable of such), but was careful not to hint what bad he must have been seeking (which he is constantly walking about the earth to do (1 Peter 5:8), seeking to devour the unsuspecting). But God is ahead of the game. He brings up the 'subject' about Job. And one notices how quickly Satan is able to identify and relate to the Job question-statements; because he would have launched the accusation against him anyway. So it became as a breath of fresh air to Satan that God spared him the trouble...no, the character-trait.⁵

Third, might an intent, albeit a secondary or tertiary one, motivating what looks to us like madness that is void of any method, be that the Sovereign LORD thinks on us and of us infinitely far more detailing than we could ever be imagining, and wants us to know? It's just that our present, temporary frame (which often competes with dust) cannot contain all this infinity of care, so what we see through a glass dimly are occasional blurry images of the people who we truly are in Christ. Especially when one considers that the environment in which we live, our own specie, with an attitude of hostility, are forever trying to devalue us, marginalize us and trying to make us irrelevant. Comparing us with the amoeba, the monkey, the apes (of which we are only supposed to be a sophisticated version), or sometimes nothing more than an evolved blob of organized protoplasm. And what is sad is that too many of us have bought into it.

Francis A. Schaeffer, in *A Christian Manifesto*, bemoaned the reality of man's twisted view of his fellow-man. He says, "*They have reduced Man to even less than his natural*

⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary On the Whole Bible*, (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Edinburgh, London, 1960), OT., pp. 515-516.

finiteness by seeing him only as a complex arrangement of molecules, made complex by blind chance. Instead of seeing him as something great who is significant even in his sinning, they see Man in his essence only as an intrinsically competitive animal, that has no other basic operating principle than natural selection brought about by the strongest, the fittest, ending on top."⁶ Well, God seemingly wants to redress that imbalance. Why does He not simply thunder out and exterminate all these dissenting voices and let His Name and His intent be established once and for all? But He doesn't. He, because He knows the end of the matter from the beginning, has *all the patience in the world* (a gross understatement, of course). He knows that there are far greater, far deeper things to make known, so silencing the competition would not serve His divine purpose. So, in a proactive way, He encourages the competition.

The out-working of all this is where *we* have the problem. We are feverishly trying to grapple with adversity whirling all around us. Pain and suffering inundate us; and we are at our wits-end trying to make sense of it all. The 'eternal optimists' are ringing their bells loudly; telling us it's all a state of mind. One of the ways it is often uttered is:

*Two men looked out from behind bars;
One saw mud, the other saw stars.*

And you cannot just join the pessimists' club and shout back: nonsense! Because at the end of the day you would have done nothing more than increased the human frustration. As a matter of fact, if you take the sons of Jacob on their sojourn to Egypt, upon the death of their father, they feared Joseph's revenge and anger for what they did to him. Joseph however, told them no, God allowed what happened to save them and their generation (Genesis 50). On the other hand, one can behave with the arrogance and presumption of Samson: fool around and then feel that God will always bail him out; that was when "*he did not know that the LORD had left him*" (Judges 15:20).

The adversity issue goes on; not all the ancients fully grasped it (as we shall see in the next lesson), and not all of us moderns grasp it either. Author and television preacher

⁶ Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, Fourth Edition, Crossway Books, Nims Communications Pub., Ill. USA, 1982, p. 26.

Charles Stanley, did a very caring treatise in his book *How To Handle Adversity*. Essentially Stanley says that adversity can be had from one of three sources: (1) He states clearly, as in the case of the man born blind (John 9) that “it is possible that adversity can originate from God” (pp.11-15). That (2) “Oftentimes adversity comes as a result of our own doing (pp. 16-20); and that (3) adversity can come from the adversary: Satan (pp. 20-25, using the Job scenario as his strongest point).⁷

While of course, Stanley remains one of my favorite television pastors, I still think that he, and many of us, forget a fourth source of adversity – that being that natural breaking down of the complex things in life to the simple: aging, accidents due to human error, misdiagnosing an ailments, ignoring dangers picked up by the senses: sight, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting; and not to be omitted from this list (though not a natural part of it) is the discerning skill released by the Holy Spirit that we, at times, ignore, or even the less reliable, and more subjective, human intuition that pulsates from the heart.

A man has too large a family, so he has to be constantly working overtime, double shifts, second jobs – sometimes a third – just to keep his family fed and clothed; his body collapses under stress; he comes down with *acute fatigue syndrome*; he becomes a human vegetable; his family falls apart. That is not necessarily because of personal sin; Satan did not have to engineer anything; and God has said that a man must handle what his ‘quiver’ could carry. Or, it could have been his wife, who while trying to handle all eleven children – from the one at her breast to the first and second ones just turned teenagers – didn’t know that the two year-old had sneaked outside un-noticed to play in the tub of water, caught for washing the family laundry, his foot slipped and he never was able to cry for help, as his mouth took in great gulps of water before he finally drowned.

- That being said however, Job’s situation was one that we are all aware of its origins, and the ‘architect’ behind the human tragedy. What might be classified as strange comfort is that in his case, apart from what our Lord Jesus Christ had to endure in providing the Atonement for redemption, what Job experienced could be considered Satan’s most vicious assault. He would have pulled the entire

⁷ Charles Stanley, *How to Handle Adversity*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, USA, 1989, pp. 11-25.

arsenal he has under his belt. So we can ‘safely’ say that that he has nothing worse with which to hurl and anyone for that matter. James (5:11 *KJV*), regarding Job’s testing, says that what we have heard (or read) of Job tells us that we “...*have seen the end* (Gk. *telos*, the ultimate) *of the Lord.*” Hell’s fury was unleashed:

- First, his *oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing...and the Sabeans attacked and carried them off*, and, in turn killed all the servants, except one who bears the bad tidings.
- Second, while still in shock, *another sole surviving messenger came and reported that lightning* (of a very vicious sort) *struck and burned up the sheep and the servants.* It begs the question, how wide a span did that lightning (fire of God) to consume so much in one blow?
- Third, by now bad reporting has become a habit; *the Chaldeans* not only took off with all of Job’s *camels* but exterminated all the workers. This time Job is ruined financially.
- Fourth, the last messenger came and reported that *all of Job’s sons and daughters* were instantly killed, in the eldest brother’s house that collapsed by what might have been a tornado or cyclone. What can be more devastating to a parent than such terrible news? Job’s family (except his wife) is gone.

How long did all this take is uncertain, except for the repeated phrase: “*While he was still speaking.*” But we would see that it was at another interval, *on another day*, that God *again* extended a challenge to Satan *again* over Job. Only this time the attack is on Job’s physical and no doubt psychological frame. *Skin for skin* was Satan’s relentless line of argument. (One thing we know that he does not take defeat easily.) And Job’s body becomes an emaciated wreck. In so much that Job’s wife offers, what she sees as the best, most logical human advice possible: though she affirms his *integrity*, to which she says he was clinging, she tells him to *Curse God and die.* This is a strange, if not awkward expression from Job’s wife. While we know that, as he did to Eve, Satan is using her cause Job to do what he had challenged God would

happen in **1:11** and **2:4**, the word “curse” here (Heb. Barak) is used euphemistically to bless”, that’s bid farewell to God and let Him do the final act on him.

If this is Satan’s most feared weapon, and we are told that to this end, God’s purpose would come forth, then the question is: what might that purpose be? It is that God is ‘trying’ to prove that He is the greatest Risk-taker? Or that He is the greatest ‘Jig-saw Puzzle’ awaiting to be unraveled? Taking a great risk is no doubt a part of the equation, but the puzzle is coming from our department.

CONCLUSION

We would sometimes wish that our understanding of God would match what we experience of God at all times. But that’s just not wishful thinking, it is dangerous thinking! Because for that to happen would mean that we have God all figured out in our limited frame of reference. We must settle it that He and He alone, is God. And, from a human standpoint, *His ways are past finding out*. However, because God is immense – in size, character and performance – He doesn’t fit into our understanding of taking risk. He didn’t just take a risk on His servant, Job; He went all the way and put His own Being on the line. The idea is, after doing that, is there anything that God would not do?

***THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO
GOD***

EXERCISE ON LESSON II

1. What consequence has resulted from the Fall of man?
2. What are we to understand by the character-reference on Job being “blameless and upright”?
3. What fatherly-priestly practice Job would exert over his children?
4. What pragmatic but unspiritual advice that Solomon gave in light of the seeming common consequence that happens to both the righteous and the wicked?
5. What unusual circumstance existed as the angels came to present themselves before the LORD?
6. Satan said he was roaming the earth. Why there and not the other areas of the vast universe?
7. Though seemingly negative on the surface, what is a positive perspective that would stimulate our desire to want to please God, even as He is seen selecting Job for a terrible ordeal?
8. Sticking to the pure facts, how was Job brought into this conversation between God and Satan?
9. To redress the imbalance, God could have done something unusual, but He chose not to. What was that?
10. Adversity could come from God, from Satan, and from one’s own undoing. What is a fourth source?

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

LESSON III

“TESTING, TESTING...ONE...TWO...THREE”

“All the adventures we have ever had will end up being only ‘the cover and the title page’.

Finally we will begin ‘Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has read, which goes on forever;

In which every chapter is better than the one before.” **C. S. Lewis**

“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.

You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.

It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.” **Psalms 119:67-68, 71**

INTRODUCTION

Barrages of questions are being hurled from virtually every quarter on the planet. Some frivolous and have mischief in their intent; some serious enough to hang some people’s faith, if not their life, in the balance. And the questions won’t go away; because with every new experience – particularly disastrous and tragic ones – a new paradigm emerges that demands a response. Part of the lingering occurs for the simple reason that much of the disaster and/or tragedy we incur – and mainly those that are personal – are handled so subjectively by most of us, that we do not create a fabric of the experiences from which we can construct any meaningful purpose.

Not helpful to the equation is the fact that oftentimes, many of the so-called answers we receive from those who feel a compulsion to ‘say something’, are so annoyingly superficial, that their emptiness is easily perceived even by those untrained in psychology or any meaningful discipline. “Why did God take my only child?” screams a hysterical mother. Or, a Christian business goes into Receivership, though the owners were sending significant sums of money to struggling missionaries on foreign soil. “How could that have happened?” asked a former confused employee. “Where was divine protection when that madman went on that shooting rampage of innocent students of that college?”

This was the question coming from angry parents, frightened students and confused faculty members combine.

Philip Yancey in his book *Where is God When it Hurts* paints the picture of Job's ordeal very vividly, in which he confronts the big question:

“Job is the most righteous, spiritual man of his day. He loves God with all his heart. Remarkably, God even uses him as an example to prove to Satan how faithful some humans can be. If any man doesn't deserve suffering for his actions, it is Job.

But what happens? Incredibly, Job undergoes a wretched, unfair series of calamities. Raiders, fire, bandits, and a great wind take turns assaulting his ranch. Of all Job's great family and possessions, only his wife remains, and she is scant comfort!

*...The capricious suffering doesn't square with his belief in a loving, fair God...Each of Job's friends fills the air with erudition. Boiled down, their arguments are virtually the same...Job can't accept either choice. **He knows that what has happened does not correspond to justice.** In total despair, he even toys with the idea that God is a Sadist, who 'delights in the calamity of the innocent' (Job 9:23 emphasis mine).”⁸*

The painfully strange thing about the Book of Job is that it drifts you in and out of paradigms. There would be a time when you think you've just gotten your finger on the pulse, and you are breathing a silent, satisfying “aha!” only to realize that at another time, you are thrown right into the quagmire of theological uncertainty.

For instance, if it were not for God's verdict (in chapter 42) of Job's friends' statements, one would agree with them and even glean insights from their speeches (and who is to say that they haven't said things of value?). At another time, Job's speeches seemed to be exactly what ‘the doctor ordered’. He's

⁸ Philip Yancey, *Where is God When it Hurts*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, 1977, pp. 67-68.

insightful; he's thorough; he's well trained. Yet a young man enters the stage and virtually rebukes Job and corrects him with seeming success. So do we blank all the others and cling to his? Then God appears and 'extinguishes' all arguments. Is He intended for us to treat them as mere poetic meanderings? What exactly did God have in mind?

David did say at one point (Ps. 139:6), that there is a "*knowledge (that) is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.*" It will do us a world of good to always keep that on the 'front burner' of our thinking. The very thought that the Almighty God allows us a window into Himself, so that we don't go mad (and this is not frivolity here) in an attempt to make sense of what's happening around us. The problems begin at the point of our thought-processes. We are of the view that when we hear the word "Testing", we immediately confine it to either appliances, machines, or human beings – especially Christians. We very rarely, if ever, think that while God, in fact, allows His own to experience severe testing, He, the Sovereign LORD of the universe, would subject Himself to His own 'mechanism'. Naturally, we identify with Job and feel his pain. But have we ever stopped to think that, in this context, without losing sight of reality, that Job might only have been the *casualty of a cosmic war*? That the test was really an attack on God's Person – nature and attributes?

Testing, testing...One...

God is good – and even the devil knows that! He looks after His own, "as a father has compassion on his children" (Ps. 103:13). As a matter of fact, the whole of Psalm 103 is a treatise on how God carefully provides, prunes and protects those who belong to Him. Let's not kid ourselves: serving God does have "nuff" benefits; though they are not all plunged in material things. His Word abounds with the Law of Reciprocity: you live well, you will eat the good of the land; you live rebelliously, you will experience being devoured, ultimately. Even the devil knows that! That goodness however, cannot go unchallenged.

So Satan attacks the goodness and benevolence of the Almighty God. A paraphrased version would run like this: “You say You are this immense quantity of goodness itself; how are we to know that? After all, don’t You deal with them according to *their righteousness*, according to the *cleanness of their hands* You dish out rewards. To the *faithful*, You show yourself faithful (Ps. 18:21, 23). You say Job is blameless and upright, so he cashes in on Your heavenly ‘goodies’. But I am putting it to You, remove all of that and he will curse You to Your face.” His aim is to see if he can show up God’s goodness as being merely conditional, circumstantial and situational.

Now don’t be too conclusive too quickly. Let’s asked the hard question: If there weren’t benefits to be derived from serving God, including a heaven to gain and a hell to shun; and throw in the peace of mind, and a cleansed conscience, among others, would most of us be serving God? Sometimes I (author) dread the answer. Satan was, in effect, telling God that neither Him, nor us, have pure motives. Many of us, without being aware of it, feed the devil with ammunition to bring accusations against us. We treat the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as though He is our Executive Errand Boy: “God come here!” “God do this; or do that!” “God give me this, or give me that!” “God I want this; I need to have that!” And sometimes we even attach ultimatums to our demands; as though God is going to be less than God if He doesn’t comply with our miscellaneous and often self-serving wishes. I need a prayer of repentance at this point; how about you?

Now God could simply have shut Satan up. He’s God; He’s not obligated to answer anyone. However, remember it was God who invited the challenge, and as the Zondervan Introductory Notes says:

“The accusation, once raised, cannot be ignored, and it cannot be silenced – not even by destroying the accuser; it strikes too deeply into the very structure of creation and is rooted too deeply in the human condition within that structure. So God lets the adversary have his way with Job (within specified limits) so that God and righteous Job may be vindicated and the accuser silenced. From this comes Job’s profound anguish,

robbed as he is of every sign of God's favor so that God becomes for him the great enigma. And his righteousness is also assailed on earth through the logic of the orthodox theology of his friends. Alone he agonizes. But he knows in the depths of his heart that his goodness has been authentic and that some day he will be vindicated.”⁹

Testing, testing...one...

But don't move away just yet, for while there is this unseen battle going on, we can, whether deliberately or inadvertently, lend assistance to the prevailing powers that be. Not identifying the real source of our pain, we in turn lash out on one another, in the meantime handling the spiritual 'irritability' caused by growth taking place within either our lives, our home and family, our local assemblies, or the ekklesia (the church, the living organism). In addition to the unseen tension, which is only on the devil's part, of course, John White, in his book so aptly titled *The Fight*, points out the reality of the tensions we live with inescapably:

“Do not be surprised then to discover tensions within your heavenly family. Your brothers and sisters in Christ are not perfect. After the first happy glow, during which you may idealize them, you will be shocked to discover bitterness, bickering and overt hostility in the Christian family.

You will discover that some Christians are stupid, ornery, tactless; ‘stuffed shirts,’ prudes, hypocrites and so on...some will slurp their soup or have bad breath...You must also be charitable enough to admit that there may be unattractive features in your own personality. You don't wear robes and sandals yourself.”¹⁰

We would do ourselves and others a great deal of good if we keep that bigger picture in mind, so that we take the fight to the real source, and stop boxing our own shadow.

⁹ Zondervan *NIV Study Bible*, p. 728.

¹⁰ John White, *The Fight*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill., U.S.A., Sixth Printing, 1979, pp. 15-16.

Testing, testing...one...two...

A heavier battle is being waged simultaneously. With the uncharacteristic removal of God's favor from the life of Job, he must now face that which we most fear, *the Silence of God*. Many, if not most expositors, who have zeroed in the Job's scenario with some depth, are of the view that *this* second area of testing is no less deep than the first. The academic component of this study is in no way being slighted or undervalued, but it is virtually impossible for this author not to punctuate it with a personal, albeit a subjective view that, indescribably painful as Job's first area of testing is, it pales in significance to *this* reality he has to grapple with. Again, this does not disrupt any theological position, so there's no need for anyone to lose sleep over it. It is simply that we are all mentally 'positioned' differently, and therefore, are impacted in different ways.

Satan, the one making the accusation, having unleashed his infernal venom on Job with no success from his standpoint, watches the saga unfold; looking to see where God would 'slip up' in overtly coming to Job's rescue, or looking to see if Job himself might eventually "curse God and die."

And while there are those among us who 'nervously' read the Book and feel that we have a God-given obligation to protect Job's integrity (something he is quite capable of doing for himself), are often afraid to state the simple fact. The fact is that, "*In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing*" (1:22), or "...*in what he said*" (2:10), but he came perilously close to doing so; except we are not reading Job with 'open eyes'. The period of Job's suffering, as we indicated earlier, is uncertain. There is the possibility that it could have taken several months, by virtue of his own insinuation in 29:2, "*How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me...*" But during this period where Job's life has disintegrated – physical and otherwise, his children are all dead, he's estranged to his wife, and his friends are exacting every fiber of his theological resolve – there is no sign of God being around or even listening to his cry.

This is frightening, because it's one thing to be tested *beyond limit*; but once God's presence is there assuring that you are not an 'abandoned master of your fate'; that His guiding eye is watching over you, gives some measure of comfort and strength. But this

is not to be in Job's case. Those dreaded words are stated in the Zondervan's Introduction of Job: "*For the test that sprang from Satan's accusation to be real, **Job has to be kept in the dark** about the goings-on in God's council chamber. But Job belongs to a race of creatures endowed with wisdom, understanding and insight (something of their godlikeness) that cannot rest until it knows and understands all it can about the creation and the ways of God (emphasis mine).*"¹¹

Scriptures abound with different individuals attempting to grapple with these furious sounds of God's silence:

- David cries out, "*Why, O LORD, do you stand afar off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?*" (Psalm 10:1)
- "*How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?*" (Psalm 13:1)
- "*You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me?*" (Psalm 43:2)
- Another Psalmist calls: "*Why have you rejected us forever, O God? Why does your anger smolder against the sheep of your pasture?*" (Psalm 74:1).
- Yet another, "*Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again?*" (Psalm 77:7)
- We could include the predicament experienced by Jeremiah when he felt that he was "*deceived*" by the LORD (20:7).
- Habakkuk was no less intense: "*How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen*" (1:2).

Amazingly, when all of that is put together, there is yet a realm that, just saying it dwarfs all else, is grossly understating the fact – it's the test of all tests.

¹¹ Zondervan *NIV Study Bible*, p. 728.

Testing, testing...one...two...three

The removal of God's *favor* is a vault of pressure, unbearable in itself. The *silence* of the Almighty in the midst of that dark abyss, is nerve-racking to say the least; but when God does in fact show up, then "*Woe to me...I am ruined*" (Isaiah 6:5).

It may appear a little presumptuous to say that these levels of testing, which in themselves are directed at God in an indirect way, through His children, are the *arrows* pointing from Satan to God, with mankind being the blade, shaft and tail of those arrows. But there is a level that must be met, faced head-on – God entering into the equation of man's dilemma. There is that point where, at the end of all this, we must confront the fact that God is God and He always will be God. And while He does allow us to 'rant and rave', for some time, we must never forget that He is "*the Potter*" and we are but "*clay*".

Job is exasperated to the point where his faith swaggers. He was so traumatized that at one point he literally asks God to stay away from him, implying that God had become the enigma: "*Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me so I can have a moment's joy*" (10:20). In 1988, C. S. Lewis' popularly quoted book, *A Grief Observed*, 1961, was prefaced by Analyst Crosswicks, who was so helped by it that he admitted: "*I am grateful, too, to Lewis for having the courage to yell, to doubt, to kick at God with angry violence. This is a part of healthy grief not often encouraged. It is helpful indeed that C. S. Lewis who has been such a successful apologist for Christianity should have the courage to admit doubt about what he has so superbly proclaimed.*"¹² Then came the dreaded words in 38:1: "*Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm.*" The real question is: who can abide in His presence? Job is stripped away of all self-righteousness and brought to a place of complete trust and recognition of the awesomeness of the indescribable God.

Job didn't realize that, amid all the multitude of his questioning, he was only darkening God's *counsel with words without knowledge* (38:2). When the cosmic curtains are drawn, and we peak into the show-room of the Uncontainable One, nothing on this

¹² In 1988, Analysts Crosswicks prefaced Clive Staple Lewis', *A Grief Observed* 1961, Harper Collins Publisher, New York 10022, Amazon.com, p.10.

planet, or any other planet for that matter, seems to hold in argument. At some point, we each must be impacted by that which is bigger than ourselves. It puts all our queries, uncertainties and doubts into the corner of insignificance. Paradigms are positively and permanently shifted. And, like Job, we'll have to say: "...*Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know*" (42:3).

CONCLUSION

Several years ago, when you were early for an event (they are somewhat correcting it now), you had to endure some disorganized planners trying to set up their amplified instruments at annoyingly late moments; and so you were bombarded with the irritating "*testing, testing...one...two...three...testing*". The principle is no different when you buy a car; you should take it on a "*test-drive*". Or, they sell you an appliance with a warranty period, with the understanding that, when put to work in the 'real world', it should stand up under testing – at least for a period of time. Something similar could be said in the world of academic pursuit. Most people don't mind the class lectures, participate in the discussions, even do the group studies and run the assignments; but would wish that the examination period would vanish off the radar screen – because it is *testing* the cognitive skills and application ability of the participants in relation to what they've learned.

Well, if we are in fact an authentic people of faith, the authenticity of that faith will be tested at various points: Adam's *Innocence*, Noah's *Endurance*, Abraham's *Faith*, Moses' *Meekness*, Job's *Perseverance*, David's *Commitment*, Solomon's *Wisdom*, Samson's *Strength*, Nehemiah's *Resolve*, Daniel's – and the three Hebrew boys – *Dedication*, Peter's *Anointing*, Paul's *Intellect*, Jesus' *Person and Mission*; and the list goes on. This is where Jesus completed the words uttered in the Ecclesiastes (9:11) that "*the race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong...*" "*But he that stands firm to the end...*" (Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13).

What is mind-blowing in all this is that Creator of the Universe Himself would allow His own Character and Being to undergo testing (and by Satan at that) so as to validate the immutability of His divine attributes: (1) If He is in essence a good God, then He must show that He can procure genuinely good children – their love and worship cannot be

simply because He dishes out abundant blessings on them; so He removes His favor, then hell breaks loose. (2) Painful, more so to Him, is that He must seemingly function out of character (knowing He promised His presence always), and keep us in the dark while our lives are being ransacked by the prince of darkness. But (3), at the end of it all, is the test of our confrontation with the Presence of the Yahweh of Judah, Who not only reigns in the heavens but also rules in the kingdom of men (Daniel 4:17, 25, 32 *NKJV*): How can mere mortal presume to contend with the Sovereign Lord of all.

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

EXERCISE ON LESSON III

1. What about the Book of Job that can at times throw you in a quagmire of theological uncertainty?
2. Where does this kind of problem begin?
3. What is the connection with the Law of Reciprocity and the Word of God?
4. What is it that many of us do to give Satan ammunition to work against us?
5. What are we instructed to do as we see the bigger picture of our lives?
6. With the favor of God uncharacteristically removed, what is even worse than that we face?
7. Yes, God at times, allows us to ‘rant and rave’, but what should we always keep in mind?
8. While Job’s life was disintegrating, what was his worst encounter?
9. What will put all our queries, uncertainties and doubts into the corner of insignificance?
10. What else would likely happen to our paradigms?

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

LESSON IV

“JOB’S THREE ‘KNIGHTS’: The TEMANITE, the SHUHITE & the NAAMATHITE”

Alas! What can they teach, and not mislead;

Ignorant of themselves, of God, much more:

John Milton - Poet

INTRODUCTION

Let us first hear what the advice of Scripture is when assessing and evaluating teachings, doctrines, concepts, philosophies, anything for that matter that constitute thinking. It says in Proverbs 27:17, “*As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another,*” which in a most profound way, says that like minds – and spirits – can help others and be helped by others in areas that may have been inadvertently overlooked. Also in Proverbs 11:14, we are admonished that even “*a nation*” could fall if there is no one to guide it, whereas, on the contrary, “*...many advisers make victory sure.*”

Now, in the human arena, we throw in our idioms and later turn back and counteract them: “Many hands make light work,” is one of them, but we come back and say “too many cooks spoil the broth.” Whatever it is however, we all need the wisdom and experience of others to help us get through the ‘jungle of life’. Job would have had his buddies whom he would rub shoulders with, and no doubt, ‘bounce off’ certain theological and philosophical issues. There is another scary challenge called *The Peter Principle*, that’s where it is said that “we tend to rise to the level of our incompetence.” And this could very well have been the case with Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. They hail from the school of good thinking, no doubt; but theirs was the *Theology of Inadequacy*.

This reminder needs to be punctuated every now and then, that we have the complete script at our disposal; but neither they, nor Job, were that fortunate. So to analyze them intelligently, we must see them from where they were at. What is even more pertinent – and relevant – is the fact that *their* approach is still being used today – indiscriminately.

This is why it makes good sense to *critique the critic*. Yes, it is one of those things that a person can push even to the point of mockery (“assess the assessor”, “analyze the analyst”, and it can go on and on until it sounds ridiculous); but it still stands that if one takes upon oneself to critique another, they of themselves must earn that right. Otherwise mad people could be telling us that we need psychiatric evaluation, and we simply comply without question. Who were these friends of Job, and what were they about? Were they equivalent to the three cackling witches that pointed *Macbeth* to a life of vanity and destruction? Or were they costume angels sent to give Job a necessary scolding? So let’s examine the ‘tale of the tape’.

We see the first of the three; Eliphaz is identified as a Temanite. The question arises: “Did Teman of whom this Eliphaz is associated have any connection with the lineage of Esau, as his grandson *per se*? Genesis 36:10-11 points out that an *Eliphaz*, the son born to Esau and his wife Adah, had a son named *Teman*. If they were to follow that tradition, that grandson should have been referred to as ‘Teman the Eliphazite’; but instead in Job, we have Eliphaz the Temanite. The association is too close to ignore.

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew name for *Eliphaz* could possibly mean “*God is fine gold*”. He hailed from Teman where, traditionally it was noted to procure wise men (See Jeremiah 49:7).¹³ Now that bit of data surely causes us to take another view of this, the first of Job’s three comforters. If he hails from a tradition of wise people, it stands to reason that we should expect a measure of wisdom emanating from him. He made three speeches; but let’s hold him in abeyance for the moment as we examine the other two.

Bildad, the second mentioned “comforter”, is distinguished as a Shuhite. Many are of the view that Bildad could very likely hailed from Shuah, a son of Abraham from his wife, Keturah; and that from him came a tribe of Arabs that lived near Uz, the birthplace of Job; though their exact location is uncertain.¹⁴ Checking his line of reasoning, unlike

¹³ J. D. Douglas/Merrill C. Tenney, *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, Regency Reference Library, Zondervan Publishing House, 1987, p. 306.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 158, 941.

Eliphaz who ‘appealed’ to the spirit-world for answers (4:12-21), he calls for the knowledge of the traditionalists (8:8-10). He, too, made three speeches.

Zophar the Naamathite is the last mentioned of the *three friends*. His place is uncertain; probably north Arabia seems likely. Though we don’t know much about him, what distinguishes him from the other two is “*the brutality of his commonsense position*”¹⁵ His two speeches represent the least utterance of the spokespersons (apart from Satan). There is the reality, too, that he could have contributed to chapter 27:13-23, or Job himself may have been simply echoing his words in 20:29.

That information is by no means exhaustive, but it does give us something to work with in relation to our critiquing these critics that initially had “*heard about all the troubles that had come upon (Job), (and had) set out from their homes...met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him*” (2:11). On hindsight, one wonders if they were indeed “friends”, why was it necessary for them to meet together by agreement (or “appointment” *KJV*) before they go to offer sympathy; if nothing else, the man’s ten children had all died suddenly and violently. A committee meeting in these circumstances is really in bad taste. Or was it that they had to discuss their line of theological approach? Give them credit though, they did sit “*on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights*” without uttering a word, “*because they saw how great his suffering was*” (3:13). This was undoubtedly one of the times when their ‘knighthood’ shone through, for one must bear in mind that Job would have been awfully smelly; and they sat for one whole week – in silence.

When the Silence is Broken

What some anonymous person said may not be very friendly in its initial sound, but could help serve as a guide: “*It is better to be silent and be thought a fool, than to open your mouth and prove it.*” But we should not be unkind to think of Job’s friends as fools; for certainly, that they’re not. However, after Job broke the silence, which might have been

¹⁵ New Bible Dictionary, Second Edition, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Ill., USA, 1982, p. 1282.

extremely awkward for all present (Chapter 3), the ‘knights’ felt at ease to voice what was probably plaguing them all along.

These men made utterances that were superb in value, and, at times, supreme in virtue. There is evidence that they were well schooled – schooled in theology, philosophy and the social sciences, among others. Their statements cannot be written off as casual fabrication – they have spoken things that we will do well to apply in our daily lives. But if we stop at that point, we would miss the salient point of their assessment. There is no doubt, that in the exchange between them and Job, there were times it not only became heated, but ugly. At one point in Bildad’s second speech (18:2-3), he accused Job of not being **sensible**, so that meaningful conversation could take place. Then proceeded to ask (possibly in a shouting tone): *Why are we regarded as cattle and considered stupid in your sight?* These dialogues were not little miscellaneous chit chat – they were bitterly confrontational. There were even times when Job had seem to step out of character when he slumped into a “competition of credentials’ (12:3; 13:2; 15:9), and felt threatened in his own sense of security.

This Lesson is about ‘assessing the assessors’, so the focus should really be pointed in their direction. But since we know that they eventually came up short, we might as well look for that which is commendable. For one thing they were not quite as ‘a pain in the neck’ as Job, no doubt out of frustration, tried to make them out to be. Job had gotten weary (as indicated in 16:2-3), even after their first round of speeches. He saw them all as *miserable comforters*, who were delivering *long-winded speeches that never end*. But the raw data suggested that up to that point they (collectively) had spoken a total of **125 verses** over and against Job’s total (singly) of **247 verses**. Up to that point, he had spoken almost twice as much as all three of them combine. The complete picture of their entire **8 speeches** combine totaled **211**. Job’s direct response to them totaled **366 verses**; then when one adds his indirect speeches (chapters 27- 31, that’s **147 verses**), he would have spoken **513 verses** altogether. So it is a little amusing that *he* calls them long-winded. We are not to lose sight however, of the fact that Job is under the most horrendous ordeal of his life, and it’s understandable that situation could look somewhat blurred between reality and perception.

Eliphaz (in 4:8-9) says:

“As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it.

At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger they perish.”

Could anyone argue with that? Certainly not from the general insight!

Bildad (in 8:3) boldly asserts, rhetorically:

“Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right?”

One simply has to agree – it can't happen.

Zophar (in 11:7-8) probes even deeper:

“Can you fathom the mysteries of God?

Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?

They are higher than the heavens – what can you do?”

And we are dumb!

The question remains: How can one just gloss over such awesome pronouncements and simply moves to the next point? We would be doing ourselves a serious injustice indeed; yet, this is nothing short of a stark reminder that we can have our theological information down to a “T” and yet miss God. Their theology emerged from the “system” of vast, organized body of information about God; rich, deep, good, but lacking in *revelational* infusion. It is more than possible that the men on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, to be able to regurgitate all that information they were ‘packing in’ as Jesus unfolded the whole program and purpose of God (from the OT) as fulfilled in Himself. But not until He vanishes from their sight, they recall: *“were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us.”* The Scriptures were opened, yes, but their hearts were not! And that accounts for the difference with theology in a *museum* and theology on *fire*.

Timothy Keller in his recent New York Times Ten Bestseller, *The Reason for God*, expresses this type of theological dilemma very aptly:

“Religion and the gospels also lead to divergent ways of handling troubles and suffering. Moralistic religion leads its participants to the conviction that if they live an upstanding life, then God (and others) owe them respect and favor. They believe they deserve a decent, happy life. If, however, life begins to go wrong, moralists will experience debilitating anger. Either they will be furious with God (or ‘the universe’) because they feel that since they live better than others, they deserve a better life. Or else they will be deeply angry at themselves, unable to shake the feeling that they have not lived as they should or kept up to standards. The gospel, however, makes it possible to escape the spiral of bitterness, self-recrimination and despair when life goes wrong. They know the basic premise of religion – that if you live a good life, things will go well with you – is wrong. Jesus was the most morally upright person who ever lived, yet he had a life filled with the experience of poverty, rejection, injustice and even torture.”¹⁶

We would have to conclude that neither Job’s friends nor Job himself, for that matter, understood what Keller explains in his book; for if they were privy to that level of the understanding in the gospels, their approach would have been very different. This is the reason the term is coined a *Theology of Inadequacy*. It is one that paints the picture, but lacks dimensions. It presents the play but hides the plot. It’s like a song that is etched with professionalism to the ear of the audience, but it has no soul to move them to tears.

This whole business of *adequacy* is one that would not go away, because God – His Being, His Person, His Mind, His Ways, His Dealings – is too much for us to think that He flows only by the route of *general revelation*. The heavens do declare His glory, yes; the skies do proclaim the work of His hands (Psalm 19:1), yes; and in Romans 1:20, His invisible qualities are clearly seen through His creation. We often forget that *that* said God of Creation makes Himself known through *special revelation*. The question is: “How special is this special?” There are those who have erroneously gone off on

¹⁶ Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, England, 2008, p. 182.

tangents, reducing God to little manipulative gimmicks; and of such we should be wary. On the other hand though, there are those among us to whom that special revelation has lost its specialty. It's like frozen words, void of power and authority.

William Paul Young, in a most unusual satire, captured in his book, *The Shack*, Mack, the main character, attempting to make sense of a world that's falling apart around him, encounters God in a triune glory, one that's very, very different from the theologically trivial concept he had of Him. He gives a vivid lesson for us when he said:

*“In seminary he had been taught that God had completely stopped any overt communication with moderns, preferring to have them only listen to and follow sacred Scripture, properly interpreted, of course. God’s voice had been reduced to paper, and even that paper had to be moderated and deciphered by the proper authorities and intellects. It seemed that direct communication with God was something exclusively for the ancients and uncivilized, while educated Westerners’ access to God was mediated and controlled by the intelligentsia. Nobody wanted God in a box, just in a book...”*¹⁷ This is very sad indeed.

Job's friends leave us somewhat uncomfortable; because we are forced to do that which we would rather avoid, that is, to open up within our own assumptions. The guys were good; 'knights in shining armor' that glittered against the bright noon-day sun, but when comes the unexpected overcast or darkness, the glitter fades, and they are left with the empty, but dangerous clashing of the tin and steel armory, as 'knights' bump into each other in a morass of confusion, not being able to see what's ahead or what's on them.

What does all this mean? Are we implying that the 'knights' get rid of their 'armory' (extending the analogy somewhat)? By all means no! It is necessary that we be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks us a reason of the hope within us (1 Peter 3:15). But so that we understand that God makes Himself known to all mankind, on a general, day to day basis; but had reserved an avenue for those who seek Him to find Him when they search for Him with all their heart (Jeremiah 29:13).

¹⁷ William Paul Young, *The Shack*, Windblown Media Publishers, California, USA, 2007, pp. 65-66.

This 'finding' of God is not to be understood as some people being given special privileges or techniques to God's secret chamber. Rather it's built around an attitude (of the heart). Through the prophet Isaiah, He rebuffs stubborn Israel; chides them for their superficiality of worship and contrasts them with the Gentiles who were not as spiritually endowed. It was in this context He declares His desire to make Himself known:

"I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me

I was found by those who did not seek me.

To a nation that did not call on my name, I said,

'Here am I, here am I.

All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people,

Who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations –

A people who continually provoke me to my face, offering sacrifices

In gardens and burning incense on altars of brick..."

Isaiah 65:1-3

God wants to make Himself known. He initiates plans and purposes so that He can be known; but man must pick up the 'slack' and respond to God's divine overtures. So essentially, what we are saying is if anyone does not know God – beyond His general revelation – that responsibility for not knowing Him in a special should be borne by man. That inadequacy on the part of Job's friends is their choice and undoing – not God's.

But you must give them credit though, their psychology is good. They open their speeches with carefully chosen words; as if not to offend. Eliphaz is the first to reply to Job: *"If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? But who can keep from speaking? (A compliment follows) Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. (He presses his point) Your words have supported those who stumbled; you (Job) have strengthened faltering knees"* (4:2-4). But it is evident that the first 'knight' slips into sarcasm: *"But now trouble comes to you, and you are*

discouraged; it strikes you, and you are dismayed. Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways your hope?” (4:5-6). He then drives home his first theological position: “Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?” (4:7) Eliphaz wastes no time with his insinuations: “As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it (simply put: Job you are reaping what you have sown). At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger they perish” (4:8-9).

Eliphaz moves from the theological and begins to relay “a hair-raising mystical experience mediated through a dream” (4:12-21).¹⁸ How much attention should we pay to people’s mystical experiences? It is an authentic way in which God speaks to men? Whether Eliphaz was having a nightmare (because he did indicate reaction as though he encountered a zombie), or an unusual method God had chosen to communicate to him, is uncertain. What we see is that this *spirit that glided past his face, causing the hair on (his) body to stand on end* (v. 15), spoke a sure word, in the clearest of language: “*Can a mortal man be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker?*” (v. 17)

Bildad did not have the privilege of reading Psalm 73, otherwise he would not have uttered what he said in his first speech to Job in 8:20: “*Surely God does not reject a blameless man or strengthen the hand of evildoers.*” You are right! In the normal throes of life, He does not. But to showcase His splendor, He may choose to, now and then, for a specified time, at least, remove His hand of protection, provision, and planning.

Zophar is no less relenting; he goes straight to what he thinks is Job’s problem. He must be sinning for all this calamity to have come upon him: “*If you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then you will lift your face without shame; you will stand firm and without fear*” (11:14-15). This doesn’t even need a response since God had already given Job a ‘clean bill of health’. Zophar missed it!

¹⁸ Zondervan *NIV Study Bible*, p. 734.

CONCLUSION

Jesus made a statement to Nicodemus, Israel's teacher, in John 3:11, "*I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify of what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.*" And that speaks volumes. Job's friends may have had some noble intention – at least at first, mourning with him in silence for seven days and nights. But when the silence was broken a comingling of good and bad things came out.

An approach that might be appropriate in dealing with Job's friends' speeches, treat them as being loaded with virtue and vices, and ensure that we carefully dissect them, dealing with every statement on its own merit; knowing that God would have allowed even the inaccuracy to teach us something.

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

EXERCISE ON LESSON IV

1. What Scripture is helpful when we are involved in the assessing others' concepts teachings, etc.?
2. Job's friends may have meant well, but what term is used to show their level of theology?
3. If tradition has it that Eliphaz hailed from a land of wisdom, what should we then expect?
4. What appeared to be in bad taste when Job's friends initially came to meet with him?
5. What time did they feel at ease to start voicing what was probably plaguing them?
6. What did Bildad say (in 8:2-3) that showed up some of the possible heated tension?
7. Considering the sheer volume, Job's friends spoke a total of 211 verses, Job 5:13; what accusation did Job make on his friends that could be interpreted as funny?
8. What is the underlying point with the kind of knowledge Job's friends had of God that we should be wary of?
9. What did Timothy Keller point out as the basic premise for religion?
10. What discomfort did Job's friends leave us that most of us would rather avoid?

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

LESSON V

ELIHU – A PLAUSIBLE PERSPECTIVE, TAINTED WITH INSENSITIVITY?

“Job scratches himself and moans. The capricious suffering doesn’t square with his belief in a loving, fair God.”

Philip Yancey

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Job in its literary style is comprised of four cycles of *dialogue-dispute*: one between God and Satan (chapters 1 -2); and three between Job and his friends (chs. 3 – 27), and three *monologues*: Job’s (chs. 29 – 31; 28 seems to be the author’s own insertion), Elihu’s (chs. 32 -37) and God’s (38:1 – 42:6). It offers enough challenges of its own to fit the rank and file theological niche. Now a fourth counselor enters the ‘fray’, which is difficult to find an appropriate adjective to describe. *Elihu*, whom we have not met before, and were not aware that he was present, listening in intently to the whole conversation, has precious little (though he said much) for us to run with. And most of what we know of him came from his own lips. The Hebrew meaning of his name is: *he is my God*. That, at least, should give us some form of comfort.

The author says he is the *son of Barakel* (whose name in Hebrew, *barakh’ el*, means *God blesses*, giving us further assurance that we’re in ‘safe hands’) *the Buzite*. Was this Buz the “*nephew of Abraham...the second son of Nahor (Genesis 22:21)?*” Based on the New International Dictionary of the Bible, Buz’s “*family apparently settled in Arabia...The word means ‘contempt’ and probably illustrates an Eastern superstition of giving a baby an unpleasant name so as ‘to avert the evil eye.’ One belonging to this region was a ‘Buzite’...*”¹⁹ Buz’s first brother’s name was Uz, whose meaning is uncertain; might this account for a tradition that *superstition* was merge with the belief in the One True God? So, in an attempt to ‘document’ Elihu, one must assemble these pieces of information to see if we can identify his theological/philosophical disposition.

¹⁹ J. D. Douglas/Merrill C. Tenney, p. 178.

Various views of Elihu have been forwarded by commentators; some in his favor; others not favorable; and still others are ambivalent, and therefore, non-committal. Matthew Henry pre-empted Elihu's speeches in chapter 32, by stating that "*the stage is clear, it is therefore seasonable for a moderator to interpose, and Elihu is the man. (He notes) the apology he made for his bold undertaking to speak to a question which had been so largely and learnedly argued by his seniors. (He carefully defends him by noting how) he pleads, 1. That though he had not the experience of an old man, yet he had the understanding of a man, ver. 6-10. 2. That he had patiently heard all that they had to say, ver. 11-13. 3. That he had something new to offer, ver. 14-17. 4. That his mind was full of all this matter, and 5. That he was resolved to speak impartially, ver. 21, 22. (Of course, coloring it with his own bias, ended the preface by stating emphatically that) ...he did speak so well that Job made no reply to him, and God gave him no rebuke.*"²⁰ There is no doubt as to how Henry perceives Elihu. He didn't even take into consideration the fact that by the time Elihu spoke, Job might have been exhausted; also, that the silence of God may not necessarily have been 'golden'. But we prod on.

Roy B. Zuck was equally defendant of Elihu. In his *Commentary*, he notes: "*Since the debates stalemated and since God said nothing, a fifth person then entered the ring. Elihu, a young bystander, angered at both sides of the debate, took advantage of the silence and rose to defend God's justice and sovereignty. Elihu's sensitivity on Job's needs contrasts with the harsh words of the three. His views reflect greater insight into Job's situation than the three antagonists possessed. For this reason it is wrong to call Elihu a brash, heartless, young fool, as do some commentators.*"²¹ Zuck, no doubt has Elihu as his favorite – after God that is -, if we are allowed the luxury of having favorites. He further pointed out that some who think the Elihu's speeches were the author's addition, use four arguments (which he stoutly defends): that they were added "*years (even centuries) after the original version was written: (1) He is not mentioned elsewhere*

²⁰ Matthew Henry, p. 559.

²¹ Roy B. Zuck, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, OT, Victor Books of SP Publication Inc., Wheaton, Ill., USA 1986, p. 754.

in the book. (2) (His) style and language differ. (3) (His) views add nothing to the argument. (4) Job did not answer (him).

(In Zuck's rebuttal, he notes that) (1) Elihu need not have been mentioned earlier...since he was a silent onlooker...and was not condemned by God...along with Eliphaz and his two companions probably because he was closer to the truth...(2) Admittedly (his) style differed than the other four debates. He used 'el for God more...19 uses...compare with Job's 17, Eliphaz 8, Bildad's 6, and Zophar's 2...(3) (His) view of suffering differed from that of the three. They had claimed that Job was suffering because he had sinned, but Elihu said that Job was sinning (in the attitude of pride) because he was suffering... (And) pointed out that God can use suffering to benefit people (33:17, 28, 30; 36:16). (He felt that he had) put his finger on Job's wrong attitude of complaining against God (33:13; 34:17) and suggested that Job humble himself before God (33:27; 36:21; 37:24). (4) True, Job did not answer Elihu. But this may be because Elihu's words silenced him. Perhaps Elihu's suggestions hit home, causing Job to reflect... ”²²

Zuck is quoted extensively, due to the fact that he is well respected by many of his colleagues, and a seasoned Bible Commentator; and this author has benefitted from his great insight in the past. However, it would be lacking if we left his thoughts unchallenged (and hope that we are not falling prey to the same 'disease' of Job and his counselors turned critics). We should all keep in mind that while suffering does not give anyone license to sin, it is always easier for us to pontificate and speak from the 'balcony' position, when it's *not* all of our income and investments and pension that is wiped out in one 'tsunami'; when it's not our whole family – all ten children – killed with one devastating blow; when it's not disease that is causing our body to 'melt away' and it's not us who sit alone scraping our scruffy sores, repelling all those around us, including the most intimate person in our life.

We would agree that Elihu's analysis of the situation shows more depth than the three 'knights', who by this time have lost their 'shining armor'. Though younger, he perhaps had the privilege of a better training. His concept that God was teaching Job a lesson in

²² Ibid, p. 754-755.

‘pruning’ and molding character, could also be a part of the package – albeit an ostensible one -, since God’s ways are higher than ours, as are His thoughts. With all the profound things said, except by Satan and Job’s wife, Elihu’s were perhaps *more* profound than the other three. And lest it be misunderstood that Zuck’s work is treated lightly, we will capture some detailed quotations he has documented that Elihu made from Job later. But we should all keep in mind what God had said about Job; about that dialogue that transpired in the cosmos between God and Satan; and what was at stake in the ‘eternals’.

There are those who feel compelled to ‘protect’ Job, so that God’s character assessment of him doesn’t show up as flawed on God’s part; the implication of which is far too inconceivable. As such, they would go at lengths to ‘defend’ him. Job did make some serious allegations against God. The question is: Why does the Sovereign LORD of heaven and earth allow us mortals to vent so profusely what we do not understand? Is a marvel all of its own. At least it shows He’s neither thin-skinned, nor does He feel threatened by our ‘excesses’. That is rather re-assuring indeed! To know that He just doesn’t go around zapping us out, all because we express our limited, human selves. Job came close to, but the Scripture must prevail: *“In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing”* (1:22). How does one reconcile some hard things Job said with that verse? Even Zuck himself recognized that *“Job followed adversity with adoration, woe with worship. Unlike so many people, he did not give in to bitterness; he refused to blame God for wrongdoing.”*²³

There are others who feel it is their ‘bounding duty’ to find some flaw in Job – after all, he can’t be that good? And so, they mildly agree with the three friends (with a lot of reluctance, based on what God subsequently said of them), but whole-heartedly embrace Elihu, because his analysis sounds ‘safer’, more spiritual, more like God’s. Zuck says that there are those who would label Elihu *“a brash, heartless, young fool.”* We are not on that bandwagon. But it is difficult not to detect a measure of excess in his speeches. After he rebukes Job’s friends in *Chapter 32*, he turns ‘on’ Job in **33** onward:

“My words come from an upright heart” (v. 3a) that’s him commending himself.

²³ Ibid, p. 721.

“...My lips sincerely speak what I know” (v, 3b). No comment!

“Answer me then, if you can; prepare yourself and confront me” (v. 5). Is there not a tinge of arrogance there?

“...a man may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in his bones, so that his very being finds food repulsive and his soul loathes the choicest meal. His flesh wastes away to nothing, and his bones, once hidden, now stick out. His soul draws near to the pit, and his life to the messengers of death” (vv. 19-22). Are we missing something? Is Elihu looking at a distressed man and mocking him?

Job is not perfect in the true sense of the word, but neither is Elihu. Nevertheless, he must be credited for an insightfulness that might have been beyond his years (though we didn't know how youthful he was, it was alluded to often enough). And it is against that background that we borrow from Zuck's assessment of the thinking of Elihu:

Overview of Elihu's Speeches	
Job's Complaints	Elihu's Answers
1. God is silent; He does not respond to me (13:22; cf.33:13).	1 st speech: God does speak-through dreams and pain
2. God is unjust; He does not relieve me of my suffering	2 nd speech: God is just (chap. 34).
3. God is unconcerned; He does not reward me for my innocence.	3 rd speech: God is sovereign (chap. 35).

24

And Zuck's noting of Elihu's quotes of Job:

Elihu's Quotations of Job	
In Elihu's First Speech	
33:9a	“I am pure” (cf. 6:10; 9:21; 10:7; 12:4; 31:6).
33:9b	“Without sin” (cf. 13:23; 23:11)
33:9c	“I am clean and free from guilt” (cf. 9:20-21; 10:7; 27:6).

²⁴ Ibid, p. 756.

- 33:10a “God has found fault with me” (cf. 10:6).
 33:10b “He considers me His enemy” (cf. 13:24; 19:11).
 33:11a “He fastens my feet in shackles” (cf. 13:27).
 33:11b “He keeps close watch on all my paths” (cf. 7:17-20; 10:14; 13:27).

In Elihu’s Second Speech

- 34:5a “I am innocent [righteous]” (cf. 9:15, 20; 27:6)
 34:5b “God denies me justice” (cf. 19:6-7; 27:2).
 34:6a “I am right” (cf. 27:5-6).
 34:6b “I am guiltless” (cf. 10:7; chap. 31).
 34:6d “His arrow inflicts an incurable wound” (cf. 6:4; 16:13).
 34:9 “It profits a man nothing when he tries to please God” (cf. 21:15)

In Elihu’s Third Speech

- 35:2 “I will be cleared by God” (cf. 13:18; 23:7).
 35:3 “What profit is it to me, and what do I gain by not sinning?” (cf. 21:15)

In Elihu’s Fourth Speech

- 36:23 “You [God] have done wrong” (cf. 19:6-7)

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In Elihu’s four speeches (32:1 – 37:24), he rebukes Job’s friends (32:8-9), and he rebukes Job himself (38:8-13). As was indicated earlier, we agree with the commentators who say that he comes across with a greater degree of accuracy than Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar – the senior counselors. His presentations carry a greater level of adequacy, and his insights were undoubtedly deeper. His postulation was that God was teaching Job a lesson, in humility, through his suffering. And if even that were the case, which the ways of God are beyond us, one finds it extremely difficult not to see an absence of compassion in Elihu’s approach. Maybe we could call his the *Theology of the Insensitive?*

²⁵ Ditto, p. 758.

But he must be credited with the fact that he got his fundamental theology right. He speaks unashamedly of the God whom he claims is orchestrating all that's happening around us; for in a very real sense, He really is the Architect of it all. He appeals to the senior men:

“So listen to me, you men of understanding.

Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong.

He repays a man for what he has done;

He brings upon him what his conduct deserves.

It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice.

Who appointed him over the earth? Who put him in charge of the whole world?

*If it were his intention and he withdrew his spirit and breath, all mankind would perish
together*

And man would return to the dust” (34:10-15).

To be sure God does ‘repay a man for what he has done, (and) brings upon him what his conduct deserves’; but it is the “how” and the “why” of His executing these instruments of His *justice*, which is ‘supervised’ and ‘monitored’ by His *love*, that we, oftentimes, are not able to exactly pin down. In the next Lesson, we will show how Philip Yancey captured that divine ‘phenomenon’, where God’s justice and His love seem to sometimes ‘clash’. But admittedly, Elihu is waxing eloquent. He is doing so in his remarkable declarations of God, which leaves one in an attitude of sheer praise and worship:

“God is mighty, but does not despise men;

He is mighty, and firm in his purpose” (36:5).

“God is exalted in his power. Who is a teacher like him?

*Who has prescribed his ways for him, or said to him, ‘You have done wrong?’ (36:22-
23).*

“How great is God – beyond our understanding!

The number of his years is past finding out” (36:26).

“God’s voice thunders in marvelous ways;

He does great things beyond our understanding” (37:8).

But, in an effort to accommodate his ‘brand’ of theology – a better one, yes -, it is necessary for him to draft Job in his frame of reference. Elihu is like a bottled-up volcano; he needs to vent (or he might explode). In his own words: *“I must speak and find relief; I must open my lips and reply” (32:20)*. That compulsion is what likely caused him to overstate Job’s spiritual and moral condition. He says, *“What man is like Job, who drinks scorn like water? He keeps company with evildoers; he associates with wicked men” (34:7-8)*. Is that a fair accusation? Much less a true one? He levied a serious charge against Job: *“Job speaks without knowledge; his words lack insight (which is true – from God’s standpoint, but not from man’s, and certainly not from Elihu’s)” (34:35)*.

There, in one of Elihu’s expression’s in which he refers to himself as *perfect* (36:4), he comes back and uses the same expression about God being *perfect* in (37:16). The experts seem to differ on this. *Young’s Analytical Concordance* documents that it’s the same Hebrew word, *tamin*, used in both instances, which means, “perfect, plain, whole, complete.”²⁶ The *Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, views it differently; seemingly in defense of Elihu, it states: *“Here Elihu applies the phrase to himself, while in 37:16 he applies it to God – thus appearing to make himself equal to God. But the Hebrew for ‘knowledge’ is not quite the same here as in 37:16. Elihu is probably referring to his ability as a communicator, i.e., he claims perfection in the knowledge of speech.”*²⁷ Even if the Zondervan’s commentary is right, would Elihu not have stepped out of line to insinuate that he is perfect? Might he himself not have been guilty of the same “*pride*” of which he accused Job?

²⁶ Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, 1977, p. 745.

²⁷ *Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, 769.

CONCLUSION

This author must be careful that he is not trying to force a point – a case *against* Elihu -, as seems to be the trend with several experts who are feverishly *defending* his turf. The Scripture stands sure, while our opinions and perceptions, and concepts, will all at some point change. God’s Word remains that compass to guide us, the shield to defend us, the light to show us the way. No effort, concerted or not, should be made on anyone’s behalf to arbitrarily or vehemently, undermine or idealize the characters in the Bible, so as to foster a particular agenda. There is no doubt that God has used them as examples that we could be admonished and learn from their abundant experiences. But, at the end of the day, they are humans like all of us – we all have our strong points and our weaknesses. Elihu was a remarkable youth indeed, deep in his assessment of Job’s situation. But Job not answering him, nor God making any response should not be taken as him having silenced Job, because you will have to equally say, that he also silenced God.

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

EXERCISE ON LESSON V

1. What is the meaning of the Hebrew name for Elihu?
2. Roy Zuck, in his defense of Elihu says that critics level four main arguments; what are they?
3. Suffering, regardless to how intense, does not give us a certain license; what is that?
4. Of all of Job’s supposedly friends and counselors, whose was the most profound in declaration?
5. Some people feel compelled to ‘protect’ Job; what are they afraid of?
6. What about the Sovereign that is a marvel all of its own?
7. There are other people who are bent of showing up Job as flawed, what’s the underlying motive?
8. At the end of it all, neither Job, nor Elihu, nor any of us could say what?
9. What was Elihu’s main postulation over Job’s situation?
10. What in all this is difficult for us to understand and explain?

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

LESSON VI

SATAN - IS HE WORTH THE RECOGNITION?

“And there was war in heaven...The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or

Satan, who leads the whole world astray..., the accuser...has been hurled down...

But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you” (Rev. 12:7-12).

INTRODUCTION

In preparation for this Lesson, anticipating the likely nature of its content, I revisited some material I had both read and studied years ago. Among them were two books belonging to my wife, that I remembered enjoying, had become popular almost 2 decades ago, Frank E. Peretti's, *This Present Darkness* (1986) and its sequel, *Piercing the Darkness* (1989). In a very unapologetic way, Peretti drew you into the world of the unseen, and discusses events (particularly mishaps), on *this* side of reality that were engineered by the agents of darkness; and at times by the *prince of darkness* himself, with the angels of light intervening, or intercepting. What was indelibly etched in my memory was the natural way this *seen/unseen* interaction transpired, as though one (mainly the seen) was the obvious outcome of the decisions made by the other (the unseen).

At times, I had to remind myself that I am enjoying a novel, written with very dramatic scenes, in very colorful language, with the intent of appealing to the reader's curiosity; and not a textbook treatise on a given subject. And with no intention in being unfair or unkind to Peretti, material of this nature can help to sensitize readers to the reality of the other world, but, if not properly guided and grounded, can also make people feel they might be sneezing out demons, if they contacted the flu.

We are not just talking the proverbial balance here, but there is evidence that too many of us are either engaged in giving Satan far too much credit (much to his delight, of course), sometimes to the point that we could be unconsciously worshipping him with all the 'accolades' we shower on him. Or, many down-play the reality of his existence and the

nature of his being, much to our hurt. Quite frankly, if there is a chapter in this study in the Book of Job that this author would wish did not have to be, it would be this one. But mere wishing doesn't cause it to vanish; and its omission from the study would leave a huge gaping hole needing to be filled. For when all is said and done, we do have an *enemy* to face; one perhaps, if Job had him factored into his theology, he might have been able to put the pieces of the puzzle of his distressed life together much sooner. So let's lay aside the sentiments and spooky misgivings and deal with a situation that is as real as our existence.

Ed Murphy in his *Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*, made some interesting findings (though, that too, must be studied keeping the 'whole counsel of God' in view, since sometimes he seems to stray or contradict himself). He notes that:

*“Satan’s first recorded appearance by name is found in 1Chronicles 21:1. This passage reveals his attempt to draw David, a man of God, into disobedience to God. It suggests a pattern of operation against humanity found all through Scripture, disobedience throughout history, and experienced by believers and unbelievers everywhere in our day. In it we find Satan’s main strategy, his primary target, and his essential purpose.”*²⁸

Murphy is careful to note that *that* was the first time Satan was identified *by name*, and had stated earlier stated:

“We cannot begin with Genesis 3 because the serpent who tempted Eve is nowhere called a supernatural being in the Old Testament. (Really? His name may not have been mentioned then, but the nature of his being was already on full display. But continues) The New Testament, however, clearly identifies him as the Devil and Satan (2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:3). (Then he added) One point is certain:

²⁸ Ed Murphy, *The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tenn., USA, 1992, p. 19.

at least by the intertestamental period, when Genesis 3 was read and explained to Jewish listeners by Jewish teachers, the serpent was identified with Satan.”²⁹

Ed Murphy quoted Jeffrey Burton Russell from his book, *Satan: the Early Christian Tradition*, as saying that it was the Gnosticism (heresy) that “*forced the fathers to devise a coherent diabolology, which had been lacking in New Testament and apostolic thought. Gnostics emphasis upon the power of the Devil caused the fathers to react by defining his power carefully; Gnostics stress upon the evil of the material world elicited their defense of the essential goodness of the world created by God.*”³⁰ That of course, would beg the question: Should the information related to this arch-enemy of the human soul be reduced to a mere reactionary-type theology? Why then was Paul so careful to instruct the Corinthians for he forgave all persons completely, “*in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes*” (2 Cor. 2:11). The fact that he is not only a *deceiver*, as he did to David, but we are here learning that he is also a *schemer*; that he can outwit the unsuspecting saint. Of course, one of his main functional roles come into play in Job, that of the *Accuser*. Then we can assume, because so much (or so little, depending on the given environment) is ‘conferred’ on him, that he must be this big, bad, supernatural ‘dude’ that single-handedly wreaks havoc on God’s creation. The Bible says an emphatic “no!”

James Montgomery Boice, in his well-used compendium titled, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, walks us through a clear understanding that the devil is not a loner:

“According to the Bible, there are legions of fallen angels who, under the malevolent rule of Satan, are bent on opposing God’s rule and doing his people harm. They comprise a great and terrifying force, as the Bible describes them. But they are described for us not to induce terror but to warn us of danger so that we might draw near to God as the One who alone can protect us...

“The place to begin in preparing to stand against Satan and his hosts is with a knowledge of Satan himself, in both his strengths and weaknesses. And the place

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 18.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 18.

to begin knowing about Satan is the fact that he is both real and personal...Jesus bore witness of these truths when he referred to the devil by name (Mt. 4:10; 16:23; Lk. 22:31)..

“The idea of a personal devil has been denied by large segments of the Christian church and to some has become a laughing matter. Because of the revival of witchcraft and Satanism in recent years, it is perhaps not so much a laughing matter as before.”³¹

So many writers, artistes, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists and even theologians, have done enough to make Satan appear to be a mere caricature figure, that in the minds of their followers, he is only a figment of the imagination. That is reinforced by the fact that Satan (and his assigned agents) at times, masquerades himself as an angel of light. Or, we can settle that he masquerades – period. At one time, he is a conniving serpent in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), another time he is a government advisor (1 Chron. 21), another time he is being pompously impersonated through earthly kings (Isaiah 14:21; Ezekiel 28), yet other times he is on a personal mission – engaging the Lord Jesus while in His earthly mission.

Philip Yancey who is a strong advocate on the restraining power of a Sovereign God, observed in his book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, that when Satan, in his failed temptation of the Lord Jesus in the desert, did come away nor totally empty-handed:

“Though rebuffed in all three temptations, Satan may well have departed from the confrontation wearing a smirk. Jesus’ steadfast refusal to play by Satan’s rules meant that Satan himself could continue playing by those rules. He still had the kingdoms of the world at his disposal, after all, and now he had learned a lesson about God’s restraint. Restraint by God creates opportunity for those opposed to God...”

³¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill., USA, Revised Edition, 1986, pp. 171-172.

“From Satan’s perspective, the Temptation offered a new lease on life. The kids from Lord of the Flies could roam the island awhile longer, apparently free from adult authority.”³²

And if God’s *restraint* ‘induces’ others to oppose him, Satan would not let up on such an opportunity. Hence he came at Job firing on all cylinders. Many a precious saint over the centuries must have experienced torment; some inflicting their own souls, in an attempt to ascertain what was happening in their lives. History has had to watch holocausts, genocides, unimaginable torture brought to innocent souls, senseless killings in wars initiated by human vanity or trite philosophies. In homes, domestic violence and abuses of all description have reduced the sense of self-worth to many a victim. Rapes and murders, slavery and oppression, human exploitation and manipulation, have stained the halls of fame, as many are left to live in the shadows of their true selves. Satan has been busy, all right; and unlike the ‘energizer bunny’, whose battery eventually dies out, he will keep on that path of destruction, until He who holds the ultimate of all power says: “Time’s up!”

It is on one of these personal missions Satan was on when God decides to unmask him; so we can see him for who he really is. Job was the then ‘object lesson’ in God’s school of divine splendor; and many of us today are sitting in those classes – our lives are ‘ripped apart’, but we are afraid to ask why. The Book of Job comes to the rescue. And here is what we learn about him:

- In **Chapter 1:4** He is realizing that God is not petty and vindictive as he is; that he is actually allowed the opportunity to be among God’s angels who came before the LORD. Knowing what he did when he was privileged to be in heaven with God, he’d probably expect God not to trust him since he’s bad influence. But he was there, as today he’s in certain places.
- **1:5** God actually engages him in a dialogue. But the question is ostensibly asked for our benefit: “*Where have you come from?*” What do we hear? “Satan, since

³² Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, 1995, p. 79.

you are not omnipresent (as God is), that you can't be here, there, and everywhere at the same time, where was your location prior to this?"

- His answer also gave him away: "...*From roaming* (not like our cell phones) *through the earth and going back and forth in it.*" As we also indicated in *Lesson 2*, his answer gives us the picture painted by Peter that he "prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). In this case, Job was the available candidate. No offence to Planning, or the planning gurus; but Satan doesn't (have to) sit around an executive marbled table regurgitating Mission Statements, casting Visions, articulating Goals, Aims and Objectives. His philosophy (or motto) is encapsulated in three words: "*Attack!*" "*Kill!*" and "*Destroy!*" – Anything that belongs to God. So he roams – back and forth; he moves here; he moves there; he will move everywhere – but not all at once. That attack is on our motives; and he knows we're on fragile ground there; so he launches accusations on our motives, because that's where our true character is. Here are some of the ways this "*ACCUSER*" proceeds: He does so by:

(1) **Altering the truth** God gave to us. He did it to Eve in the *Garden of Eden*; and to Jesus in the *desert*. He succeeded in the former but failed in the latter. He knows that he cannot fight the truth, so his strategy is to twist it (that's taking it out of its context), or manipulate it (that is conveniently quoting part and leaving salient parts out).

(2) **Creating doubts** in the given circumstances: "*Does Job fear God for nothing?*" (1:9) The Heb. for the word "fear" here is *yare*, meaning "to reverence." He did recognize that Job had a reverence for God, but that it was undergirded with 'strings attached'. When the question is asked of us, and it will be if it has not yet been: "Is our worship to God pure? Or is it pushed by the "blessings" the 'prosperity proclaimers' insist that we *must* have, at all times?" what will our real answer be?

(3) **Challenging** our Integrity. "*But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face*" (1:11).

Now there are several Hebrew words for *curse* used in the very Book of Job with varying meanings. The one used here is *barak*, to “bid farewell”; similar to Job’s wife saying “bid farewell to (curse) God and die.” Unlike when (in 3:1) he “*opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth,*” in this case it’s *qalal*, which means to “lightly esteem, vilify, revile” – nothing of the strength of what Satan was insinuating. Satan was implying that Job’s service to God was rooted in his wealth – after all, he was the richest man in the entire East. But again, Satan was proved wrong.

(4) **Undermining** our sense of worth. “...*A man will give all he has for his own life...*” (2:4). He is trying to challenge our authenticity as to who we really are. And one has to admit: he’s been terribly successful in our generation. With the emphasis on skin toning and Botox, great abs, thick lips, projected boobs and buttocks, which in and of themselves, are not bad, until we begin to discover that they are often used as the façade to masquerade the emptiness many feel inside, is sad indeed. R. C. Sproul III captures that emptiness most succinctly in his book, *In Search of Dignity* which he *prefaced* by saying:

“The search for dignity is a titanic struggle, an epic adventure prodded by pain that will not go away.

Modern man has an aching void. The emptiness we feel cannot be relieved by one more gourmet meal, another snort of cocaine, or even a better job or a bigger house.

Dignity is never found in plastic. We must search further and probe deeper. Ours must be a transcendent quest – going beyond

the trivial to the ultimate questions of our worth as human beings.”³³

The commodities of the age give the *Accuser* plenty of ammunition with which to shoot at a generation that is already in turmoil and experiencing a serious identity crisis, making them easy targets to undermine.

(5) **Seeking out** the weak and helpless. “*But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face*” (2:5). After all, our physical bodies are the only legal right we have to exist both on this planet and ‘this side of eternity’. Until we are escorted to our Savior’s presence (“to be away from the body” 2 Cor. 5:8), we need our “flesh and bones” to function efficiently, to do the very will of God. For that health is not a vanity. Wellness is a necessity. It’s not unspiritual to want a great functioning body – God knows that, and so does Satan. So when Satan, as part of his accusation plan, seeks to assault the body with sickness and disease, he’s touching something very fundamental. We have seen *Alzheimer* caused many a dedicated servant of God even forget the members of their own family, and sometimes even forget who they are. How is God glorified in all this? It’s perhaps only in the unseen realm, where the real battle wages, that any meaningful account is being noted.

(6) **Envyng our cherished status.** “*Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has?*” We read these words as a mere narrative response, but remember their context: they come from one who ‘had it all’ (Ezekiel 28) and foolishly lost it because of arrogance and pride. So, seeing a ‘lesser creature’ than himself surrounded by divine protection, with no one being able to touch *him*, unless, as happened in Job’s case, they have received

³³ R. C. Sproul III, *In Search of Dignity*, Regal Books, Ventura, CA., USA, 1983, Preface Section.

permission, must be a teeth-grinding, fist-clenching, paralyzing feeling for the would-be attacker. In all this, it is important that the focus is not lost; that is, the child of God is not arbitrarily at the whims and schemes of the devil. It's important that we know that God has a vested interest in His children, whom He dearly loves and protects.

(7) **Repetitious acts of evil.** Being down-right sarcastic, let's give the devil some credit: he is persistent as a bull-dog (that's funny). But if you analyze the strategy he used in the *Garden of Eden* – appealing to fundamental 'instincts' in Adam and Eve: “*Lust of the flesh, lust of the eye (vanity), and the pride of life*” – and succeeded; tried the same technique on the 'Second Adam' (Jesus) in the *desert* – but failed; now John tells us that these same schemes of his are rooted in the system of the world (1John 2:16 *KJV*). So, they are repeated over and over and over; sometimes causing many a mighty to fall. And, the truth is, many who have not fallen *per se* (or should we say, have not been unduly exposed), serve God, as Paul says, with “fear and trembling” (Gk. *phobos kai tromos*, relating to being afraid of the awful) (1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 7:15; Phil. 2:12). This fear and trembling must not be misunderstood as being afraid of the devil; rather, its knowing our own propensity to evil, we have to be constantly vigilant that we do not grow weary in resisting his repetitious acts of temptation to evil.

Just looking at the account in Job reflects a somewhat 'repetitious' personality performance: He repeats the report of his “roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it” (1:7; 2:2). He tried the accusation that Job will “curse (God) to (His) face” (1:11), should God remove his favor of provision and protection from him. That failed; he levies the same accusation against Job if God were to touch his body with disease (2:5). We come across to the Book of Apocalypse, and there in Rev. 2:10 we are told that “*the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been*

hurled down” (underline added). “Day and night;” even to the close of the age, that’s repetitious.

CONCLUSION

It may or may not have been obvious that Satan, when examined in one of his primary roles, that of “the **ACCUSER**” of God’s people, his name befits his actions: **ACCUSER** - *- Altering truth, Creating doubts, Challenging our integrity, Undermining our self-worth, Seeking out the weak and helpless, Envyng our given status and Repetitiously using evil action to achieve his end.* He is not a creation of the Medieval Ages, or of those who indulge in the uncanny. God says he’s real. Jesus called him by name. He stops at no one in his game of temptation – he even tempted the Lord Jesus Christ. He is persistent; but keep him in context: he could only use whatever power that has been given to him. Let’s be aware of his devices, but give him more credit that will make him out to be more than who he really is. Of course, any ignorance of him on our part is relished by him. He glories in fact that many people carry an avalanche of misconceptions about him. That enables him to carry out his dark, dubious work in attacking God’s creation, since his real aim is to get at God the Creator.

***THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO
GOD***

EXERCISE ON LESSON VI

1. When we find ourselves giving Satan “too much credit,” what is the danger that could unconsciously happen?
2. What might have helped Job put the pieces of the “jigsaw puzzle” of his life together easier?
3. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians that he had forgiven the offender completely?
4. When we make “caricatures” and other misconceptions of Satan, what then is reinforced?
5. In an attempt to make sense of unusual things happening in their lives, what have many saints over the centuries have found themselves doing?
6. How long will Satan keep on the path of human temptation and destruction?
7. “*Attack! Kill! Destroy!*” Satan moves all out; where in us he realizes that we’re on fragile ground?
8. As a result, based on one of his main techniques, he is given a name that depicts his action, what is it?
9. What about the children of God that Satan envies, especially in light of what he lost?
10. In a very real sense, what about Satan’s performance throughout that suggests he lacks creativity?

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

LESSON VII

JOB - HOW DOES HE DEFEND HIMSELF, AND –BY EXTENSION – US?

“To go this radically new direction feels as if God’s claws are going so deeply into us

That they are cutting into our very heart.”

Peter Scazzero, author.

INTRODUCTION

There is a war of some sort that is going on over Job – and when we say Job, we are not separating the Book from the man who is the main character under scrutiny. The *war* is not so much theological in nature, as it is psychological in its *posture*. And lest some feel uncomfortable with that evaluation, we hasten to add that *that war* is, no doubt, spiritual as well, from its roots and in its design.

The Book of Job gives us all kinds of emotional and other psychological ‘hiccups’. For some of us, we hold an unexpressed dread, that by reading it, we are not sure if God is ‘setting us up’ for a character ‘workout’, similar to that experienced by Job. And if we can permit a personal admission, that throughout my (author’s) lifetime, I have read it well over fifty times (studied it much less than that though), and as a teenager, I ‘innocently’ prayed often, asking God not to allow me to go through what Job had to undergo; because I just didn’t think I had the capacity to endure such ‘brutality’. Can you handle the truth? To this day, after walking with God for more than half a century, I still don’t think I have the capacity to handle it. Have I? I have had to deal with situations in my life that told me quite clearly that God did not indulge my teenage prayers. That He is the One in charge, and determines what we go through from what we don’t – praise His Name! So, take courage, you are not the only one carrying ‘spiritual goose-bumps’.

There are those, as we hinted in *Lesson V*, who are afraid to look at Job in his humanity, lest they find God’s assessment less than perfect. So they put on their ‘boxing gloves’ in Job’s corner of the ring, punching away for all its worth. They refuse to correctly

contextualize God's statement of His beloved child; which, if misunderstood, poses an inherent, theological danger; because it would be saying that Jesus was not the only sinless man who walked the earth. And that has far too many heretical implications, which we are almost sure the Job protagonists do not intend: that can interfere with the *Doctrine of Salvation* – that man, because of the *Fall*, became a totally depraved creature, and therefore, is incapable of pleasing the holy and sovereign God whom he offended, all on his own. It can also encroach on the *Doctrine of Christ* – being the only perfect God-Man, absolutely sinless, and therefore, qualified to be the only *Substitute* for man's redemption. So, it's not just a casual defending of Job.

Of course, true to the principle of opposites, there is the other side of the fence where Job is being 'over-analyzed' with the hope of satisfying their pre-set thinking that Job must have had something up his sleeve which must be exposed. So while they may not be as brash as his three friends, telling him he must be guilty of moral impropriety, or as forth-right as Elihu, where he trashes him for 'attacking' God, they feel there is 'something in this mortar besides the pestle'. So, come on Job, stop hiding!

Setting the Scene

We would need to get pass all those *innuendos*, and simply stare the situation as one human being to another. Remember, God is not the One peevd over the situation. He invited it. He set up the drama. He knew what He was getting into. He knew the outcome of the saga of Job. He orchestrated to whole thing. He is God, so don't feel too obligated to force a theological position, or foster a philosophical stance. Take the experience for what is it worth – a traumatic one of incomprehensible magnitude – all channeled on one man who must endure the brunt of all the attacks, cosmic and local. You would become frustrated if all you are looking for is some philosophical leverage. You will remain hurt if all you are merely seeking is emotional relief. Your theological quandary will only widen if you fail to first see that you are dealing with another human being – like yourself, through whom God is intended to manifest His glory.

We are attempting to peak into the Mind of God, which we can never fathom. The best shot we have is to look at Jesus, who, in His earthly pilgrimage, and His exalted status,

“is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation” (Col. 1:15). And don’t begin to think that Jesus left the ‘portals of glory’ just to patronize our likes and dislikes. He is still on record as the most controversial Figure to have put foot on the planet. To quote Yancey in *The Jesus I Never Knew* again, he says:

“The more I studied Jesus, the more difficult it became to pigeon-hole him. He said little about the Roman occupation, the main topic of conversation among his countrymen, and yet he took up a whip to drive petty profiteers from the Jewish temple. He urged obedience to the Mosaic law while acquiring the reputation as a lawbreaker. He could be stabbed by sympathy for a stranger, yet turn on his best friend with the flinty rebuke, “Get behind me, Satan!” He had uncompromising views on rich men and loose women, yet both types enjoyed his company.

One day miracles seemed to flow out of Jesus; the next day his power was blocked by people’s lack of faith...He spoke eloquently about peacemaking, then told his disciples to procure swords. His extravagant claims about himself kept him the center of controversy, but when he did something truly miraculous he tended to hush it up. As Walter Wink has said, if Jesus had never lived, we would not have been able to invent him.”³⁴ That’s a frame of reference to keep in mind as we explore the Book of Job.

Some findings about Job

Remember the Book is in the category of the Wisdom Literature, so as the exploration proceeds, a poetic symmetry should reflect in the life of this stalwart in God’s *Hall of Fame*. We will meet his *family*, assess his *fortune*, experience his *fears, feelings* and ‘*folly*’, examine his *fair-mindedness*, be involved in his *fight*, be blessed by his *faith*, and, after being knocked *flat*, rejoice in his *fruitful comeback*.

³⁴ Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, p. 23.

Meet the Job's family

This is usually a delicate, if not difficult place to start; and the reason is nothing secret: we are at our most vulnerable in our family lives. Many who wax eloquent in the pulpits and behind seminary podiums are not always as prolific within the families. And this is not said in any condescending manner, because, as some point, we all have to deal with serious family issues of one sort or another; and sometimes, while we offer help as 'roving care-givers', we are in desperate need ourselves. Peter Scazzero, a man who, by God's mercy, bounced back from the brink of his family crashing, documents the journey in his book, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*. He also cites the painful story of the well-known Bob Pierce, who in 1950 founded what we know as World Vision – the world's largest Christian relief and development agency; an organization that serves more than fifty million people a year in 103 countries. Bob's passion for Jesus and for a world without hunger and disease drove him to achieve the impossible. Scazzero says Bob's friends saw him as "*a man restless to win souls,*" and "*never met a person with greater compassion.*"³⁵ But, to fast forward the tragedy: Bob no doubt had a world vision, but not a family vision. His daughter, who clamored for his attention and didn't get it, committed suicide, after the second attempt. His wife pleaded for his return from field to be with her, "*instead, he chose to fly on to Vietnam.*" That daughter pleaded "*to feel daddy's arms around me,*" before her first suicide attempt. An estranged wife, a resignation from the life's work in 1967, and death from leukemia in 1978, was what Bob left this earth with – a broken man, and a broken family. That is scary to say the least.

It may be a seasoned church leader, struggling to come clean from misgivings that may have haunted him sin childhood, now threatened to put his family and ministry in a scandalous tail-spin. Or, a high-profile leader of the world's most prestigious financial institution, designated for even higher office, but must wait out in prison till his name is cleared of sexual assault on a hotel maid. Or, it could be a popular former movie-star Governor of an ultra-modern State as California, seeing the demise of his 25-year marriage, because a secret of him fathering a child for 10 years, with a long-standing

³⁵ Peter L. Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, 2003, pp. 39-41.

Employee of the family, now coming to light. It could be us; it could be them; it could be anyone if we fail to set up proper parameters of our performance in our personal lives and families.

Job seemed to have been well aware of the demands of being a successful businessman, handling ministry and taking care of a large family – a balance not easily maintained. We could assume he had a thriving sex life; after all, his marriage produced ten children – 7 boys and 3 girls. But he spent time with them. He monitored their spiritual and social well-being. Apart from them having spiritual family clinics – even after they’re grown -, they seemed to have learned their father’s success patterns. They each had their own home (1:4); and they also embraced good family relations. Yet Job took nothing for granted; regularly he would call them apart to do a spiritual inventory: “*Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts...*” (1:5). One may ask: “Would children of that level of training likely curse God in their hearts?” Job took no chances; such was the caliber of this family man.

Assess Job’s fortune

Job lived in a time when one’s wealth was measured in one’s live-stock: “*he owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen and 500 donkeys*” (1:3). It was observed that the record did not indicate that Job owned lands. But the logics would follow that having that large quantity of animals, there had to be land to graze them; and there would have been vast amount of lands to maintain them, which would have included wells for the camels to drink.

It also states that he “*had a large number of servants.*” It is important to point out that the Hebrew word for “servants” here is *abuddah*, which implies paid “service in a household” – not slaves providing free labor. And naturally, to take care of that much livestock, would have required having a large number of employees indeed. Being “*...the greatest (Heb. gadol,) man among all the people of the East,*” is in the superlative sense. We can say that, compared to all the great people of his day, he was ‘head and shoulders’ above them all. It’s not every day people of such great wealth are also people of such great integrity. Job was a rare ‘breed’.

Experience Job's fears, feelings and folly

Several years ago a survey was done on how human beings perceived themselves, and it was discovered that most people who would fit the accepted description of being beautiful, handsome or good-looking, often feel very insecure. The reason rendered was that they feel they are not really loved for who they are, but merely because of how they look; and should anything disrupts that physical profile, they would be down-right rejected. Of course, that's in the field of psychology, and we did say that the Book of Job is very psychologically postured.

Might it be that *that* evaluation could hold true for wealthy, successful people? Job, we pointed out was, rich – 'filthy rich' – by the standards of his day. Everything he did bore success (of course, we know that it was God's favor hovering over him because of his faithfulness); and it was not a quiet success. But it would seem that in the inner recesses of Job heart and spirit, he was not at ease. Job somehow nurtured a haunting fear; the psychics today will want to credit it to some premonition. It even causes one to want to re-visit his "*regular*" performance (1:5) with his children, and ask: "Did he sense something that he wanted to ensure his children were not cursing God in their hearts?"

We agree it is not a lot said of this issue; but the quantity is not as relevant as to the quality of what was said. And the KJV brings this out in more piercing language: "*For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me*" (3:25). "*Feared*" here in the Heb. is *pachad*, "to fear, to be afraid" of something that's impending. It is fair to say that Job was ill-at ease, while basking in wealth and whatever else that goes with it.

Per chance one thinks that too much is being read into the statement, what he says after settles any doubt or query: "*I was not in safety (bilade shalah, "not safe", bilade shalav, "not at rest"), neither had I rest (ayin shaqat, "no quiet"), neither was I quiet (ayin nuach, "no rest"); yet trouble (rogez, that which causes "trembling") came*" (3:26). Of course, stated in all the colorful Hebrew Parallelism of the same thing being repeated for emphasis; and the same thing also said in different words. Job was not settled with himself.

In respect to his ‘folly’, it maybe that’s why, in his response to his friends, he may have been a little off-key when he started ‘raving’ about his credentials (12:3; 13:2) and his lack of “inferiority” compared to them. He even made that awkward statement when he accused them of long-windedness, when in fact, he was the one who talked and talked, almost incessantly. Yep, the guy was human, indeed.

Examine his fair-mindedness

If anyone has a problem with Job’s wealth and influence, they need to examine the sociological aspect of his life; for it is evident that this is one man on whom neither wealth nor prestige has any negative effect. Job went into the longest segment of his speech – this time a monologue – from Chapter 27 through to 31, with the possible exception of Chapter 28, which many believe could have been the author’s own pastoral input. But particularly in Chapter 29, we enter into Job’s own evaluation of his life and performance. Keep the poetry in mind so that we don’t just gloss over the wonderful words and forget that they represent a very real picture. The Zondervan Study describes this Chapter 29 as “*a nostalgic review of his former happiness, wealth and honor...29:1-25 A classic example of Semitic rhetoric, using the following symmetrical pattern: blessing (vv. 2-6), honor (vv. 7-10), benevolence (vv. 11-17), blessing (vv. 18-20), honor (vv. 21-25).*”³⁶ Job reminisces of the time of the material and other blessings that surrounded his life and expressed longing for some of those days to return. He knew and acknowledged it was God who watched over him; so there’s no room for conceit.

He went on to describe the type of honor his position in the society afforded him – among the young men, the senior citizens, and even those who held high positions gave the deepest respect. Not only was his character impeccable, but his reputation also was untarnished.

He distributed his wealth to assist the poor, the fatherless, the suffering and the widows; even the disabled and the disenfranchised. His benevolence was known all around.

³⁶ Zondervan Study Bible, p. 760.

He further reflected on his expectations, which can be capsule: I've lived a life in relation to the tenets of my faith, honoring my God through the people I honor, reaching out to the needy, listening to the cry of the poor, and speaking up for those unable to do so, with the reasonable understanding that one reaps what one sows. So I anticipate retiring peacefully and make my 'exist' in honor when my time comes. But for the moment, at least, that is not to be. Chapter 30 unfurled the venom and the fury of those who were once recipients of those blessings. Job's social life is turned into a living nightmare.

Be involved in the fight

The essence of this section was articulated in *Lesson III*. However, because of the titanic struggle Job experienced in this *fight*, where the total tenacity of his Belief System was tested to the core. The way the KJV reads James 5:11, "...*You 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*" (underline added), it is as if (apart what happened to God's Son at Calvary) the ultimate test that could have been thrown at God (via man), was thrown. "*The end*" (Gk. *telos*, that which is final); there are no more Satanic tricks in his bag to pull out. The NIV quotes that James 5:11 as, "...*You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about...*"

We have the finished script, so we know how it went and the outcome. But the fact that many of us, if not all of us, are subject to the same sifting, at one time or another, it would do us a world of good to 'walk' the experience with Job. The old Indian proverb: "Never criticize a man until you walk in his moccasins," is good advice indeed! Job's big struggle is that what he knows (both of his understanding of God's goodness, and the content of his own life and character) and what he is experiencing, don't seem to add up.

Yancey in *Where is God When it Hurts* brings in an additional perspective to Job's struggle. He dubs it "*Painful Freedom*":

"Job also hints at an argument that my mind effectively silences his three friends: the doctrine of man's freedom.

We often wish that everyone would “get what he deserves.” Well, imagine a world in which punishment for sin came as swiftly as physical pain. If you touch a flame, you are punished instantly with a pain warning. What would it be like if we were punished for sin immediately?

Everyone in the world would clearly know what God expected. If they obeyed Him, they’d feel good and be rewarded, like a trained seal given a fish. If they disobeyed, they’d be electrically shocked. What a just, consistent world that would be.

There is however, one huge flaw in such a neat world. It’s not all that God wants to accomplish on earth. There would be less true freedom in the world. We would act rightly because of our own immediate self-interest. Goodness would be tainted with selfish motives. We would love Him because of a programmed, inborn hunger, not because of a deliberate choice in the face of attractive alternatives.

It would be a B. F. Skinner, automaton world of action/response, action/response. In contrast, the Christian character described in the Bible is developed when we choose God and His ways in spite of temptation or impulses to do otherwise.”³⁷

This fight is multi-dimensional. It is accomplishing several things simultaneously. No wonder so much attention was channeled into it: God’s eternal attributes are under attack; Satan’s arsenal is being forced to come out in full swing; and man’s capacity, with God’s glory weighing on him is where the display is going on. So, without reverting back to the ‘Job-defending’ scenario – or its opposite -, we can see why Job understandably became disoriented; and at times, spoke from his disoriented state, which, if taken purely by the words that came out of his mouth, would tantamount to accusing God of being unfair, where he felt: “*God has turned me over to evil men and thrown me into the clutches of the wicked. All was well with me, but he shattered me; he seized me by the neck and crushed me. He made me his target; his archers surround me. Without pity, he pierces my kidneys and spills my gall on the ground. Again and again he bursts upon me; he rushes at me like a warrior*” (16:11-14). See the big picture here: Job, who is interpreting his experiences in this manner, is the same one that was most highly commended by the One he describes is attacking him.

³⁷ Yancey, *Where is God...*, pp. 68-69.

In the intensity of Job's struggle, he literally asks God to: "*Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors*" (13:21). Who, in their right mind, would ask the Sovereign Lord, Creator and Sustainer of all living things to withdraw His hand far from them? A disoriented man in Job's state would. Then the language became even more intense, and uncomfortably more distinct: "*Though I cry, 'I've been wronged!' I get no response; though I call for help, there is no justice. He has blocked my way so I cannot pass; he has shrouded my paths in darkness. He has stripped me of my honor and removed the crown from my head. He tears me down on every side till I am gone; he uproots my hope like a tree*" (19:7-10). Remember God, during Job's struggles had *had* to, uncharacteristically, leave him in the dark. This is similar experience (though with far greater implications and intensity) that our Lord Jesus had when He cried out on the cross: "...*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" – which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (Mark 15:34). God must have been pained to the heart – both in relation to Job, a man who He highly recommended, and His Own Dear Son, the darling of His bosom.

Be blessed by Job's faith

Disoriented, yes, but certainly not disillusioned. This man is a puzzle! His sense of direction is confused – for that's what 'disoriented' means -, but his faith waxes stronger. And we should be careful to point out that we are not dealing with *schizophrenia* here, the psychology is more on our part in trying to 'handle' the Book of Job, on our own terms. But there is a time when the 'disorientation' comes to the fore, then the man of unconquerable faith steps in and silences the 'dissident'. At one time he is cursing the day he was born (3:1-3) and wished to die, the next he is confident that, "*Though he (God) slay me, yet will I hope in him...*" (13:15) Job was totally convinced that God "*...knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold*" (23:10).

Most triumphant of all is that most famous faith-statement that has stirred many a hearts and burst forth in praise on my lips throughout the centuries and millennia:

*"I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand*

*upon the earth.
And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;
I myself will see him
with my own eyes – I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!” (19:25-27)*

Rejoice in His fruitful comeback

Chapter 42 says it all: God enters the fray; He has silenced the accuser – with His restraint power. He must deal with Job’s disoriented misgivings, correct the theology of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, restore to Job, first his sanity (that is his perspective of who is really important in all this), then restore Job’s family (very important; plenty children were added; the man went back having fun), his ministry (he now had to pray for his friends – oohs!), and his fortune –twice as much. That’s Job; that God!

CONCLUSION

The man Job is under everybody’s ‘microscope’. Thoughts and opinions sometimes fly erratic as bats in the twilight: some from ‘nervous’ dispositions – afraid the ‘applecart’ will be disturbed, some from bias mind-sets – refusing to take another look. But at the end of the day, we can philosophize, analyze, pontificate, do whatever, but it’s Job who lost all his children – in one blow, and all he had – in one go; then he ended up like an AIDS victim who also contacted leprosy before his marriage, dignity and self-respect was pulled from under him; and those were before his sanity started wavering. Now give it your best shot; if you were in his shoes, how would you want to be assessed? His life was impeccable; his reputation, honorable, in the community, he was the people’s God-father. God was pleased with him, and had such unshaken confidence that he could be tested to the point of God’s splendor. Thank God for Chapter 42.

***THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO
GOD***

EXERCISE ON LESSON VII

1. The Book of Job is said to give us “hiccups” of different sorts; which is one of them?
2. If we were to mistakenly think that when God said Job is “blameless”, we assume that it is similar to Christ be perfect and sinless, what Doctrines can that interfere with?
3. God is “not peeved” when we hold all these varying opinions (innuendos) about Job. Why is that so?
4. When we attempt to look into the Mind of God, where does our “best shot” come from?
5. If you were to rate Job’s family from 1 to 10, how would you rate it? And why that figure?
6. What are some things we can do to assist our lives and families from failing?
7. What question did Job ask of his children when they would come for family reunion?
8. Job, undoubtedly harbored fears and other misgivings before his calamity; what revealed that?
9. Job’s faith and perseverance were outstanding. Give one of his oft-quoted faith-statement?
10. Which is the Chapter that puts all Job’s life in proper perspective?

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

LESSON VIII

GOD - WHO CAN STAND BEFORE HIM?

“As the Creator, God shapes and fashions and brings bare being into form – a form which is truly reflective of the One who fashions it. And when God is finished with this process what he has made speaks of the God who made it.”
Francis A. Schaeffer - Author

INTRODUCTION

A disclaimer needs to be put in right at this point, and that is, we have been dealing with a very complex and difficult subject on the Book of Job so far, but we have come to a juncture where we are completely outside our competence-zone. This is when He who veiled Himself since after the opening of this intriguing story, now shows up – and we’re in deep trouble. It is as if an apprentice musician who has been fiddling around with his instrument, mesmerizing a musically daft audience who couldn’t tell an *A-sharp* from a *B-flat*, or the difference between a saxophone and a xylophone, and suddenly, Beethoven, Chopin and Mozart, who were in the neighborhood, popped by to say hello. The musician, knowing the persons who just entered the room, in that instant lost his...well...everything, including himself. An extremely poor comparison, yes, but at least the idea is conveyed.

Of course, it was Job who was beckoning to find Him (23:3); desperate for His ‘visible’ presence, that he would fill his mouth with arguments, and find out what His answer would be (23:4-5). Now he is about to find out. Keeping in mind that all during Job’s suffering, apart from him not making sense of what was going on, he was also obscured from that *promised presence* of God – one that He promised will always be there, particularly, He’ll be both the “*sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless*” (Psalm 84:11).

So God shows up; to answer His charges? No way! He’s about shifting paradigms; setting records straight. Suddenly ‘mountains’ start looking less than mole-hills; pain that was so excruciating, lose its point of origin; feelings of injustice, unfairness,

while) going through certain earth-shaking experiences, one can feel so violated in their humanity, and their dignity crushed, that it is quite possible for one to begin to feel less than a human being. God, in His opening address, assured Job that his humanity is intact. Didn't Job have serious issues, as many of us do oftentimes? And, like Job, we've all made our big hurrahs. Some felt that the circumstances were so unbearable, they recanted their faith, some forthrightly (that should be wrongly) turned their back on God. All of this, in the meantime, we were merely darkening God's *counsel*.

Job (the Book, the man) has helped me immensely during my own times of testing, when I would have otherwise been kicking and screaming, and, whether we want to admit it or not, yelling at God, since He, by virtue of His Omnipotence, has *all power* in His hands. Obnoxious as this may sound, have we ever felt like asking God: "Are You sure You know what You're doing?" "Can You really handle this stuff?" Dark, deep dungeon experiences can make us think (and say) bizarre things: *David* (several Psalms); *Asaph* (Ps. 73); *Jeremiah* (20:7-8); *John the Baptist* (Matt. 11:2), plus many others from Scripture. But also within recent times (not ignoring the period of the Church's history), stalwarts of the faith, such as C. S. Lewis (as seen through much of his work), Francis Schaeffer (former agnostic, who admitted he had to reach a *watershed* in his life, before he can go on with his faith), are among a long line of us. So Job was only the 'prototype' of many, if not most or all of us – darkening God's *counsel with words without knowledge*.

38:3 *Brace yourself like a man*; the LORD is issuing the challenge. But is He being a little humorous here? The Almighty knows that man, on his own terms, or turf, could never successfully contend with God. There would have to involve an avalanche of divine 'concessions', which include 'theophanic' appearances (God assuming a human form as with case of Jacob in Genesis 32:22-32), God stripping Himself of His divinity, among others. But bracing oneself is what is required to be able to handle Big-picture theology. If it was indeed humor, God was really in the mood, for Him, knowing man's response would be zero, still proceeds to say, *I will question you, and you will answer me*.

38:4 Now the humor moves into sarcasm, for God, instead of attempting to answer Job's searching questions (although legitimate in their right), opens the cosmic curtains and

proceeds to give Job a ‘tour’ of the universe. *Where were you (Job) when I laid the earth’s foundation?* Beyond the literary style, what a profound question/statement! Because right at this point, the entire “Big Bang Theory” concept becomes seriously compromised: the earth has a foundation, which implies planning, a ‘blueprint’, architectural design and a Designer. *Tell me, if you understand* (Please, Sovereign LORD, You know I don’t). Bernard L. Ramm, author, apologist and Theologian-in-Residence at First Baptist Church of Modesto, Cal., states Job’s predicament in his book, *A Christian Appeal to Reason* (first published in 1972 as *The God Who Makes a Difference*):

“If Job cannot comprehend the creation in which he lives, how can he ever hope to comprehend the secret providences of God? If he flubs his test about the creation that surrounds him, he must then be infinitely confused about the overarching providence of God whereby God controls and cares for the moral, spiritual and eternal concerns of man.

But Job does trust God in creation. He does rely upon the seasons and cycles of nature. And if Job can trust God in creation, why can he not trust God in providence? Job’s attitude should then be as follows: if he can trust God in creation and in the ordinary course of providence, he must then also trust God in the higher providences, in the secret counsels to which he is not privy. The problem of evil is not solved for Job, but Job learns how to live with it. He learns that he may well trust God in the mysteries of evil, for he has learned to trust God and his goodness and wisdom in the clarities of creation.”³⁸

We are making progress. With every ‘step’ on this *tour*, we, like Job, are beginning to see something emerging – one that is doing a world of good to the soul, while the mind gathers nourishment.

38:5-11 As the LORD, the *Eternal Tour Guide* continues, Job begins to experience that which is beyond a mere *coherency* of neatly compiled facts and data; he’s given *certitude* – that feeling of absolute certainty that this is going turn out great after all; and that all

³⁸ Bernard L. Ramm, *A Christian Appeal to Reason*, Word Books Publishers, Waco, Texas, USA, 1977, p. 138.

will be well that ends well. More of the language of structure and order keeps coming through concerning this magnificent earth that most of us take for granted. Then there are some among us, albeit trained in their own field of scientific discipline, try to presume on certain hypotheses, that the earth, and the universe, is the result of all kinds of cosmological accidents of the distant past. God refutes that: *Who marked off its dimensions...Who stretches a measuring line across it?* Accidents that are altruistic in themselves, do not have previously marked-off patterns and dimensions? They just happen, ad hoc and all. We are abusing that *flash of the obvious*. There is far too much going for us by way of order and design for us not to think that an Intelligent Designer is not behind it all. If we are to imply that the “*Cosmic Bench*”³⁹ is empty, then we have to come up with something...someone to tell us why is there a “*Bench*” in the first place from which power flows, authority exudes, order emits, structure initiates; where the feeling of love, joy, ecstasy exhilarates; where responsibility, and accountability and purpose are channeled. Otherwise, we are indeed just *full of fury* and sounding it out.

Henry M. Morris, Director for the Institute for Creation Research, in the compendium, of which he is the editor, *Scientific Creationism*, states what he sees as the purpose of creation:

“The earth, with its unique hydrosphere, atmosphere, and lithosphere is, so far as all the actual evidence goes, the only body in the universe capable of sustaining higher forms of life such as man. This, of course, is exactly as would be predicted from the creation model. The earth was created specifically to serve as man’s home.

*The evolutionary model of earth history has to presuppose changing structure over the ages, with its physical features gradually evolving to permit the later evolution in life. There is no evidence of this, however.”*⁴⁰

God is just beginning, and He seems to be having fun: *On what were its (the earth’s) footings set, or who laid its cornerstone – while the morning stars sang together (there*

³⁹ Keller, p. 157.

⁴⁰ Henry M. Morris, *Scientific Creation*, Creation-Life Publishers, San Diego, Cal. USA, 1974, p. 32.

was – and is - harmony in the design and purpose of creation, and that was expressed through the singing of the angelic beings) *and all the angels shouted for joy?* They made a thunderous noise of approval of the majestic sight that was before them. Here would be something to ponder on: if these angelic beings are more or less perfect creatures (and note, we said *creatures*), in their design, in their function and in their environment, and they were so impressed by what they saw that they burst forth with spontaneous praise, in honor to God for a job well done, that must have been majestic indeed. ...*The sea...the clouds...the proud waves*, all reverberates in a cosmic symphony.

38: 12-41 God now moves in a direction, perhaps not given much consideration or thought before, that the works of creation and its functions are effecting, not only the ‘performance’ will of God, but His righteous will as well. He asks, *Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place* (implying that He does, and with the intent), *that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it?* The *morning* and the *dawn* actually do that? And anticipating our next question, God proceeds to tell Job “how”: as *the earth takes shape like lay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment...the wicked are denied their light, and their upraised arm is broken*. So Job is made to understand that despite what he may have personally experienced, the *Principles of Justice* are at work in the universe. Job is further given insight into:

- **Oceanic** - vv. 16-17 They are like *the gates of the shadow of death*.
- **Geography** - vv. 18-21 It is in *the vast expanse of the earth...darkness reside*
- **Climatic Conditions** – vv. 22-30 It’s *snow...hail...lightning...winds...rain* plus.
- **Astronomy** – vv. 31-33 *Pleiades...Orion...the constellations...laws of...heavens*
- **Atmospheric Conditions** – vv 33b – 38 *can you raise your voice to the clouds?*
- **Zoology** – vv. 39-41 and continues in the entire of *Chapter 39*

40:1-2 The first divine discourse has ended, but Job is still in the ‘hot seat’. With the second one underway, Job is now being confronted by the LORD directly, based on his

contentions that *the Almighty will correct in him*, along with his accusations he levied at his Maker. He (Job) is allowed the opportunity to speak for himself.

40:3-5 Job displays a beautiful attitude of humility, which is characteristic of him – and wise, too -. *I am unworthy – how can I reply to you?* Unwilling to speak further complaints; the whole atmosphere is so humbling, Job was able to muster, *I spoke once, but I have no answer – twice, but I will say no more.*

40:6-8 As the LORD speaks, the *storm* still continues to surround Him, so Job must again *brace himself like a man* for this second level of divine discourse. This time, on the cosmic tour, He directly confronts concerning Job’s challenge on His *justice*, and asks if he would discredit it (by virtue of what Job must have seen and experienced). As the Wise man, Solomon said in Eccl.8:11, “*When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.*” Now that regrettably, wields both ways: because when justice is in fact seemingly delayed, the righteous, like Job, begin to think that God is unfair, if He hasn’t fallen asleep, that is. Until we, like Asaph, when we enter “*the sanctuary of God; then (we understand) their final destiny*” (Ps. 73:17). But, in the meantime, we are wrong, as Job was, about God’s Justice.

40:9-24 This segment, also carried over into the whole of *Chapter 41*, is presented mainly in poetic imagery that is in exaggerated form. Because there is the mention of some creatures like *the behemoth* (40:15), which, though in the Hebrew refers to an animal that is par excellent among beast, is uncertain whether it was an elephant, or hippopotamus, or it could even have been referring to a mythical creature.

The similar argument holds for the creature in 41:1, *leviathan*, though less mysterious, but still more terrifying than the previous one (41:10), it seems a little more identifiable as the Hebrew name means “great water animal”, and could there be the crocodile or the alligator.

We are not to get lost in transitions here, though. The fascination of the creatures must not obscure the fact that they have a Creator, who is far more powerful and terrifying than all of them combine; and that Job’s tour and his crash course must not lose sight of

what occasioned them in the first place – a chronic lack of knowledge and understanding as to why a holy, just, righteous, loving, all-powerful God could have seemly sat idly by and watch the painful carnage of one of His most highly recommended children, at the hands of the accuser of the brothers. And, in the meantime, a scourging of defamation, bad advice, and accusations from some ‘physicians of no value’ (13:4 *KJV*) was in serious progress. But the LORD of glory will have, not just the final say, but (if we can permit an uncharacteristic redundancy) also the *ultimate* say.

CONCLUSION

What are we concluding, the Lesson or the Study, because either way, it’s a tall order? When the Book started, the LORD shows up; when it’s about to close, the LORD shows up again. Is one to deduct from this that because He is the *Alpha* and *Omega* – the First and the Last -, He will always be the Ultimate One from whom all things come and to whom all glories go? This author’s hope and prayer is that the personal insertions, due to the fact that it was virtually impossible so separate this Course as an academic exercise and one’s personal walk with the Lord, have not, in any way distracted the reader from his or her purpose.

Though we are aware that Satan would have his agents placed in strategic positions to carry out his dubious work, one still finds it difficult to conceive how, amidst the overwhelming evidence (Keller calls them “*clues*”) pointing to the ‘Maker-ship’, Ruler-ship, Ownership and Sustaining Power of an Infinite God, man will want to disown His existence; and the primary argument is that if He was there, there would not have been all this evil in the world. Well, that’s why the Book of Job has been given to us, so that we could grapple with this uncomfortable subject. When cannot deny evil’s existence. We cannot say that it doesn’t raise myriads of questions – questions that will cause us, even when we have found answers, to ‘flip-flop’, because of the emotional beings we are. But we would understand that there is purpose in everything – including untold suffering. Job is a masterpiece; I hope you loved it, as I did!

***THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO
GOD***

EXERCISE ON LESSON VIII

1. What might we learn from the “storm” that accompanied God manifested Presence?
2. Frightening as God’s Presence was, what was reassuring about the first words He uttered?
3. Job, us, there is a common error; when we are exasperated, we can lose focus and do what?
4. Job was overwhelmed with the tragedy of his life; but how did God handle his life’s drama?
5. Obnoxious as it may sound, what have most of us felt like asking God at times?
6. We understand God laid the foundation of the earth, how does that treat the “Big Bang theory”?
7. God gave Job a ‘crash course’ in a wide variety of subjects, what does that say of God?
8. “Sentence delayed does two things, wicked man’s heart progresses with evil; what’s the other?”
9. What was Job’s attitude when the LORD was through with the first divine discourse?
10. The LORD showed up at the beginning and at the end of the book, what might that teach us?

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

ANSWERS ON LESSON I

1. What can likely happen if the Book of Job is read or taken superficially?
It can seem as an *affront* to all Systematic Theology teaches and upholds!
2. If we were to see the Book of Job as a mere treatise on the issue of *Why does the Righteous Suffer?* How are we likely to treat the extended dialogues?

We are likely to treat them as mere incidentals or peripherals to the core meaning!

3. In God's evaluation of the arguments of Job's friends, we see that He was angry with them and therefore, rebuked them. Why was this so?

Because their arguments stemmed from what could be dubbed a *Theology of Inadequacy*!

4. What was the big hermeneutical question? **How in-depth should one go in establishing an exegetical position, and/or making life-applications from the Book!**

5. List one of the mentioned philosophical positions that carry an appearance of human travesty?

To be *called-in* (to the cosmic court) without being *consulted* (or any other)!

6. List another? **To be *accused* even after you would have been *acquitted* of all charges (or...)!**

7. To be *vandalized* for a prolonged period (though later to be *vindicated*) seems like a violation of what Biblical principle, in the interim?

The principle of *Obedience and eating the good of the land*!

8. Job's friends were undoubtedly in a theological dilemma; how can we still get some value from reading them?

By remembering that they were *not privy* to the background scenes of the cosmic drama that we are privy to; so we *walk with them*!

9. In light of the Book's overwhelming theological posture, what does that do to finding a theme?

One becomes hard pressed to state a theme dogmatically!

10. What about the Book of Job or the character himself would one find surprising?

That nowhere in the Gospels the Book of Job is mentioned – not even by Jesus!

***THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO
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ANSWERS ON LESSON II

1. What consequence has resulted from the Fall of man?

It has made him, at his best state, ‘lighter than vanity’!

2. What are we to understand by the character-reference on Job being “blameless and upright”

That it refers to spiritual and moral uprightness, but not sinless-ness!

3. What fatherly-priestly practice Job would exert over his children?

Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering – regularly!

4. What pragmatic but unspiritual advice that Solomon gave in light of the seeming common consequence that happens to both the righteous and the wicked?

Do not be overrighteous, or overwicked!

5. What unusual circumstance existed as the angels came to present themselves before the LORD?

Satan also came among them!

6. Satan said he was roaming the earth. Why there and not the other areas of the vast universe?

Because earth has ‘something’ that is of special interest to him – Job, and us – the apple of God’s eye!

7. Though seemingly negative on the surface, what is a positive perspective that would stimulate our desire to want to please God, even as He is seen selecting Job for a terrible ordeal?

When we understand that He keeps references on us; not just the hairs on our head being numbered!

8. Sticking to the pure facts, how was Job brought into this conversation between God and Satan?

God was the One who introduced Job’s name in the conversation!

9. To redress the imbalance, God could have done something unusual, but He chose not to. What was that?

He could have simply thundered out and exterminated all dissenting voices!

10. Adversity could come from God, from Satan, and from one’s own undoing. What is a fourth source?

A fourth source could be the natural breaking down of the complex things in life to simple!

***THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO
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ANSWERS ON LESSON III

1. What about the Book of Job that can at times throw you in a quagmire of theological uncertainty?

When at one point you think you've grasped it, only at another point to meet a seeming impasse!

2. Where does this kind of problem begin?

It begins with our thinking process!

3. What is the connection with the Law of Reciprocity and the Word of God?

That if we are willing and obedient, we eat the good of the land [Any answer to this effect]

4. What is it that many of us do to give Satan ammunition to work against us?

We oftentimes treat God as though we think He's our Executive Errand Boy!

5. What are we instructed to do as we see the bigger picture of our lives?

By taking the fight to the real source and stop boxing our own shadow!

6. With the favor of God uncharacteristically removed, what is even worse than that we face?

We come face to face with the frightening *Silence of God!*

7. Yes, God at times, allows us to 'rant and rave', but what should we always keep in mind?

That He, the Sovereign Lord, is the *Potter* and that we are but *clay!*

8. While Job's life was disintegrating, what was his worst encounter?

When it seemed that God was not even listening to him!

9. What will put all our queries, uncertainties and doubts into the corner of insignificance?

When we are impacted with the reality of a divine encounter!

10. What else would likely happen to our paradigms?

Our paradigms will shift completely – in the positive direction!

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

ANSWERS ON LESSON IV

1. What Scripture is helpful when we are involved in the assessing others' concepts teachings, etc.?

Proverbs (27:17) "As iron sharpens iron so one man sharpens another."

2. Job's friends may have meant well, but what term is used to show their level of theology?

It was a *Theology of Inadequacy*.

3. If tradition has it that Eliphaz hailed from a land of wisdom, what should we then expect?

That a measure of wisdom should emanate from whatever he shares

4. What appeared to be in bad taste when Job's friends initially came to meet with him?

The fact that they had to meet and agree together the course of action to be taken before visiting a grieving father.

5. What time did they feel at ease to start voicing what was probably plaguing them?

After Job broke the seven days and nights of awkward silence.

6. What did Bildad say (in 8:2-3) that showed up some of the possible heated tension?

He asked Job to be sensible and stop treating them as though they were considered cattle, or that they were stupid.

7. Considering the sheer volume, Job's friends spoke a total of 211 verses, Job 513; what accusation did Job make on his friends that could be interpreted as funny?

That was when he accused them of being long-winded in their speeches.

8. What is the underlying point with the kind of knowledge Job's friends had of God that we should be wary of?

That we could have the information down to a "T" and still miss God.

9. What did Timothy Keller point out as the basic premise for religion?

The premise is, that if you live a good life, you ought to get good rewards.

10. What discomfort did Job's friends leave us that most of us would rather avoid?

We would rather not have to open up within our own assumptions.

***THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO
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ANSWERS ON LESSON V

1. What is the meaning of the Hebrew name for Elihu?

Elihu's Hebrew name means "he is my God"

2. Roy Zuck, in his defense of Elihu says that critics level four main arguments; what are they?

(1) He was not known before; (2) Author's addition, because his style and language differ; (3) He added nothing to the argument; and (4) Job never bothered to answer him.

3. Suffering, regardless to how intense, does not give us a certain license; what is that?

It does not give us the license to sin.

4. Of all of Job's supposedly friends and counselors, whose was the most profound in declaration?

The most profound among them was Elihu.

5. Some people feel compelled to 'protect' Job; what are they afraid of?

They are afraid that his character would show up as flawed, thereby interfering with their perception of him.

6. What about the Sovereign that is a marvel all of its own?

The fact that He allows us to rant and rave, and vent about Him that we do not even understand.

7. There are other people who are bent of showing up Job as flawed, what's the underlying motive?

The underlying motive lies in the fact that they feel Job just can't be all that good.

8. At the end of it all, neither Job, nor Elihu, nor any of us could say what?

Neither of us could say we are perfect in the truest sense of the word,

9. What was Elihu's main postulation over Job's situation?

His postulated that Job was suffering because was teaching him a lesson in humility.

10. What in all this is difficult for us to understand and explain?

How the execution of the justice of God is 'supervised' and 'monitored' by His love.

***THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO
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ANSWERS ON LESSON VI

1. When we find ourselves giving Satan “too much credit,” what is the danger that could unconsciously happen?

We could unconsciously be worshipping him!

2. What might have helped Job put the pieces of the “jigsaw puzzle” of his life together easier?

If he had ‘factored’ in Satan, his being and doings, into his theology!

3. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians that he had forgiven the offender completely?

So that no opportunity would have been made for Satan to outwit them!

4. When we make “caricatures” and other misconceptions of Satan, what then is reinforced?

Reinforced is the fact that he can more comfortably masquerade himself as an angel of light!

5. In an attempt to make sense of unusual things happening in their lives, what have many saints over the centuries have found themselves doing?

Many have experienced torment and inflicted their own souls in the process!

6. How long will Satan keep on the path of human temptation and destruction?

Until when He who holds the ultimate power in His hands says, “Time’s up!”

7. “Attack! Kill! Destroy!” Satan moves all out; where in us he realizes that we’re on fragile ground?

He realizes that we’re on fragile grounds in the area of our motives, so he attacks there!

8. As a result, based on one of his main techniques, he is given a name that depicts his action, what is it?

The “Accuser” of the brothers!

9. What about the children of God that Satan envies, especially in light of what he lost?

He envies our God-given status!

10. In a very real sense, what about Satan’s performance throughout that suggests he lacks creativity?

He is repetitious in his doings, since from the *Garden of Eden* to the *Apocalypse*!

THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO GOD

ANSWERS ON LESSON VII

1. The Book of Job is said to give us “hiccups” of different sorts; which is **one** of them?

It can give us emotional or other psychological ‘hiccups’.

2. If we were to mistakenly think that when God said Job is “blameless”, we assume that it is similar to Christ be perfect and sinless, what Doctrines can that interfere with?

It can interfere with both the Doctrine of Salvation and the Doctrine of Christ!

3. God is “not peeved” when we hold all these varying opinions (innuendos) about Job. Why is that so?

He’s not simply because it is He who invited it and orchestrated the whole thing...!

4. When we attempt to look into the Mind of God, where does our “best shot” come from?

Our “Best shot” comes from Jesus Who whether earthly or heavenly, He is the “Image of the Invisible God.”

5. If you were to rate Job’s family from 1 to 10, how would you rate it? And why that figure?

This Answer is Personal – It does not carry a Right or Wrong!

6. What are some things we can do to assist our lives and families from failing?

Among other things, set up proper parameters for our personal and family lives.

7. What question did Job ask of his children when they would come for family reunion?

“It may be that they have sinned and cursed God in their hearts!

8. Job, undoubtedly harbored fears and other misgivings before his calamity; what revealed that?

When he said “What I feared has come upon me; and what I dread has happened to me.”

9. Job’s faith and perseverance were outstanding. Give one of his oft-quoted faith-statement?

“Though He slay me...”; “I know my Redeemer lives...” etc.

10. Which is the Chapter that puts all Job’s life in proper perspective?

Chapter 42

***THE BOOK OF JOB – A TEDIOUS JOB FOR MAN, A TRIUMPHANT JOY TO
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ANSWERS ON LESSON VIII

1. What might we learn from the “storm” that accompanied God manifested Presence?

They serve to clear the highway of all obstacles for the highway of His holiness.

2. Frightening as God’s Presence was, what was reassuring about the first words He uttered?

“Who is this?” Reassurance comes when we know He thinks of us as persons – not objects to use.

3. Job, us, there is a common error; when we are exasperated, we can lose focus and do what?

We can speak with words without knowledge and darken God’s counsel!

4. Job was overwhelmed with the tragedy of his life; but how did God handle his life’s drama?

When He approached him, He unveiled the “Cosmic Curtain” to walk him through!

5. Obnoxious as it may sound, what have most of us felt like asking God at times?

“Are You sure You know what You’re doing?”

6. We understand God laid the foundation of the earth, how does that treat the “Big Bang theory”?

It renders void, because foundation must have planning, design, structure, etc.!

7. God gave Job a ‘crash course’ in a wide variety of subjects, what does that say of God?

It says the He, God, is Lord over everything – and the knowledge of them as well!

8. “Sentence delayed does two things, wicked man’s heart progresses with evil; what’s the other?”

The righteous can at times feel that justice is being denied –as in Job’s case!

9. What was Job’s attitude when the LORD was through with the first divine discourse?

He was humbled; he said: “I am unworthy”

10. The LORD showed up at the beginning and at the end of the book, what might that teach us?

That He is the *Alpha* and *Omega* – the *First* and the *Last*

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BIOGRAPHY

George Raymond Frederick, born on the Island of Saint Vincent on April 30, 1948, has been converted to Jesus Christ from the age of 8 ½ years. He started preaching at the age of 19; and over the last 44 years has pastored five (5) churches between Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. As an Ordained Bishop of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies, he has supervised some twelve (12) congregations. During those 44 years he has functioned as pastor, evangelist and teacher to the church.

His secular training as a Financial Consultant has seen him as the Senior Manager of an Insurance and Investment Firm. George, as a Motivational Speaker, has spoken on local and international platforms across the Region. He's a regular trainer for local Senior and Junior Civil Servants in the Government Departments, Banks and several other Business Firms. Apart from his Management Diploma from LIMRA, Atlanta, a professional Registered Financial Consultant (RFC) and a regular member of MDRT of Premier Professionals, he holds both a B.A (Hon.) and an M.A. (Hon.) in Theology and Biblical Studies from SVGITE/MINTS, Miami. George is also married to the Grenadian born Elsie, and together they have three fantastic girls: Sharon, Raémona & Raquel.